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Fence the Ego

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1.

FENCING A ROOF

On the verse,¹ “If you build a new house, you shall make a *maakeh*, a railing, for your roof,” *Sifri* comments: “The word ‘house’ is used to include the *Heichal*.”²

In other words, the railing around the roof of the *Heichal*³ was (not only for “beauty,”⁴ but it was) obligatory — a fulfillment of the mitzvah of *maakeh* {the mitzvah to install a railing}.

There is a well-known question:⁵ Halachah dictates that synagogues and Torah study halls⁶ are **exempt** from the mitzvah of *maakeh*, as the Gemara expounds:⁷ “*Your roof* — excluding synagogues and Torah study halls.” Why, then, was the *Heichal* obligated to have a *maakeh*?

2.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE HEICHAL

The Rogatchover Gaon answers:⁸ The obligation to install a *maakeh* takes effect (as it says in *Sifri*)⁹ “from the moment an edifice is {considered} new”¹⁰ — as soon as the structure is completed (even before it is used). Since, halachically, the Temple was “built as a mundane structure and was consecrated only **afterward**,”¹¹ it turns out that when the Temple first became something “**new**,” it did not possess any sanctity. Consequently, it was obligated to have a *maakeh*.

¹ *Devarim* 22:8.

² {The central Temple structure that housed the Ark, the *Menorah*, etc.}

³ *Midos* 4:6; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 4, par. 3.

⁴ As explained in *Sifri DeVei Rav* on *Sifri*, *Devarim* 22:8.

⁵ *Sifri DeVei Rav* on *Devarim* 22:8; *Minchas Chinuch*, “mitzvah 546”; et al.

⁶ {In the original, “*bais midrash*.”}

⁷ *Chullin* 136a.

⁸ *Tzafnas Paneach* on *Devarim* *ibid.*; *Tzafnas Paneach* on *Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*, *ibid.*

⁹ *Sifri*, *ibid.*

¹⁰ “משעת חידושו” — This is the wording of *Yalkut Shimoni* on *Devarim* 22:8; et al.; our ed. of *Sifri*, *ibid.*, says, “הדשותו.”

¹¹ *Me'ilah*, ch. 14, mishnah 1.

This proposed solution, however, requires serious scrutiny:

a) Synagogues and Torah study halls are exempt from *maakeh* (not due to their sanctity, but) because the wording, “**your** roof,” excludes these edifices, since synagogues and Torah study halls do not have {private} owners.¹² Accordingly, the *Heichal* should have been exempt from *maakeh* because although it was built as a mundane structure, it still did not satisfy the scriptural criterion — “your roof.”

We cannot answer the above difficulty by postulating that the Rogatchover’s solution is based on Rambam’s explanation of why synagogues and Torah study halls are exempt. Rambam explains that synagogues and Torah study halls are exempt from *maakeh* (not because they are public property, but) “because they are not made to function as a **residence**.”¹³ However, the *Heichal*, which was initially built as an ordinary structure, could have been used initially as a residence; therefore, the *Heichal* was obligated to have a *maakeh*.

{Still, the Rogatchover’s solution remains problematic} because although the *Heichal* was built as an ordinary structure {which could have been used initially as a residence}, since it was built **for the purpose of serving as part of the Temple**, it seems reasonable that the Temple would not have been used (or was even prohibited from being used) for ordinary purposes.¹⁴

b) A house obligated to have a *maakeh* converted into a synagogue (or into something similar — an edifice exempt from *maakeh*) is automatically released from its prior obligation to have a *maakeh*.

¹² Rashi on *Chullin* 136a {s.v., “battei kneisiyos”}.

¹³ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Rotzeach U’shmiras Nefesh*,” ch. 11, par. 3.

¹⁴ Note the prohibition of building a house in the form of the *Heichal* (*Avodah Zarah* 43a and sources cited there; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 7, par. 10).

3.

A QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP

We can posit the following explanation:

Rashi explains that the wording “your roof” excludes synagogues and Torah study halls {from the *mitzvah* of *maakeh*} because “no one has a stake in them, for they also belong to those living overseas.”¹⁵ With these remarks, Rashi explains the distinction between synagogues and a domicile owned by partners:

A domicile owned by partners is obligated to have a *maakeh*. As the Gemara explains,¹⁶ although “רֹאשׁ, your roof” {in the singular} implies that the obligation only applies to “your {individually owned} house, and **not** one belonging to partners,” nevertheless, since the verse provides the reason for the mitzvah — “if a fallen one falls from it,”¹⁷ a concern regardless of the number of owners — the mitzvah also applies equally to a house owned in partnership.¹⁸

On this basis, the following is difficult: Why are synagogues and Torah study halls different {from all other structures} in that they are excluded from {the obligation to build a *maakeh* by} the words “your roof”? Even if the roofs of synagogues and Torah study halls are not “your roof,” the concern raised in the verse, “if a fallen one falls from it,” must be addressed.

Accordingly, with his interpretation, Rashi explains that there is no one to hold accountable concerning synagogues and Torah study halls: The obligation of *maakeh* is imposed upon the owners of a house (and in the case of a house belonging to partners, the obligation of *maakeh* is imposed upon each of the partners). However, none of the townspeople (who built the synagogue or the Torah study hall) have part-ownership of the synagogue or the Torah study hall,

¹⁵ Rashi on *Chullin* 136a (his first reason; his second reason is discussed in Section 5).

¹⁶ *Chullin* 136a.

¹⁷ {*Devarim* 22:8.}

¹⁸ As Rambam writes in *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Rotzeach*,” ch. 11, par. 2: “The obligation stems solely from the fact that one may fall.”

since synagogues and Torah study halls “also belong to those living overseas.”¹⁹ Therefore, imposing the obligation of installing a *maakeh* on the townspeople is impossible.

Although we find, in regards to other laws, that the townspeople are considered to be the owners of a synagogue, etc., this is not a contradiction. Concerning the obligation of *maakeh*, what is relevant is (not only the actual {financial} ownership of the synagogue, etc., which belongs only to the townspeople, but also) that it serves as a place where these owners are entitled to reside.²⁰

However, this is not the case concerning a synagogue since all Jews have the right to enter and use any synagogue in all the cities around the world. In the words of the Rogatchover: “Regarding {the obligation to make a} *maakeh*... it is contingent on {the edifice serving as an exclusive} **dwelling**, and a synagogue’s dwelling is for **everyone**.”²¹

4.

A JOINT ENDEAVOR

On this basis, it is clear why the *Heichal* was also obligated to have a *maakeh*:

All Jews had a {financial} stake in the Temple — (similar to) a partnership — both in the Temple site which King David bought from Aravna the Yevusi with money collected from all the tribes,²² as well as in the Temple structure itself, which was built using communal donations. (And just as all Jews participated in donating toward the *Mishkan*, it is reasonable to presume that all Jews contributed toward the fund and treasury used for the building [or upkeep] of the Temple.)

¹⁹ Consequently, their share is undefined; alternatively, it is not worth a *prutah*, and so on; see fn. 31 in the original; this requires further clarification.

²⁰ As the concern of “if a fallen one falls from it” depends on it.

²¹ *Tzafnas Paaneach Mahadura Tinyanah* 87a; see also *Responsa of Tzafnas Paneach*, Dvinsk, vol. 2, ch. 13.

²² *Sifri* (and Rashi) on *Re’eh* 12:14; *Zevachim* 116b; Rashi on *Yoma* 11b, s.v., “*ella*.”

When an individual donated to the treasury, he would “give it to the community wholeheartedly”²³ (unlike money belonging to a few individuals in a partnership). However, his sincerity did not revoke his share (entirely). (As known, proof of this is based on Moshe’s petition to Hashem [regarding Korach and his assembly]: “**Their** portion [in the communal daily sacrifices] should not be accepted.”)²⁴ Therefore, the {ownership of the} Temple was (at least) **akin to** a partnership of all Jews.

And since every Jew has a **share** in the Temple, **as explained above** (and as can also be logically inferred from the daily sacrifices), they were obligated to install a *maakeh* when the Temple was built.²⁵

And in order {for a house} to be obligated to have a *maakeh*, it is not necessary to be “your roof” in the complete sense of the term (as explained above in Section 3 — a house belonging to partners is also not truly “your roof”). We must prevent the danger {of someone falling from it, as raised in the verse}, “if a fallen one falls from it.”

5.

A DWELLING

We can still ask:

The obligation to install a *maakeh* applies specifically to a “dwelling place”²⁶ (otherwise, a building “doesn’t need one”).²⁷ This is (also) why synagogues and Torah study halls are exempt from *maakeh*, as a synagogue is “not a dwelling place.”²⁸ [This is true especially according to Rambam, who **only** brings the reason, “because they are not made for residence,” as discussed in Section 2.]

²³ *Rosh Hashanah* 7b.

²⁴ Rashi on *Bamidbar* 16:15; *Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah* sec. 18, par. 1.

²⁵ In contrast to a synagogue, etc. (which is not built from a communal fund of **all** Jews) the obligation cannot be imposed (only) on the townspeople in a matter which is pertinent to all Jews. This needs further clarification.

²⁶ *Sifri* on *Devarim* 22:8; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Rozteiach*,” ch. 11, beg; *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Choshen Mishpat*,” beg. of sec. 427; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* “*Choshen Mishpat, Hilchos Shemiras Guf vahaNefesh*,” par. 1.

²⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, *ibid.*; *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid.*; see Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid.*

²⁸ Rashi on *Chullin* 136a {his second reason}.

The *Heichal* was not a dwelling place {therefore, shouldn't it be exempt from the mitzvah of *maakeh*}?

Regarding this question, we can posit that a dwelling is associated mainly with **eating**. For example, regarding the mitzvah of sukkah, the halachic requirement is that “you shall sit²⁹ {in a sukkah} similar to the way you dwell,”³⁰ and “the **primary** mitzvah of dwelling in a sukkah” is fulfilled by **eating** {one's meals} in the sukkah.³¹

Therefore, the Temple was a “dwelling place” because the holy offerings were designated to be eaten there. Although the holy offerings generally took place in the Temple courtyard and not in the *Heichal* ({the part of the Temple} that had a *maakeh* [on its roof]), halachah permitted and even required (during a time of need,) the *kodshei kodashim*³² to be consumed in the *Heichal*.³³

[True, in extenuating circumstances, a scholar may also eat in a synagogue³⁴ (and how much more so in a Torah study hall). Nonetheless, the synagogue is **not** deemed a “dwelling place” and therefore, this poses no difficulty.³⁵ In that case, the dispensation to eat is granted because such eating and drinking (and sleeping) is **temporary**. Therefore, these places are not deemed to be a “dwelling place” obligated in the mitzvah of *maakeh* as they resemble only **temporary** lodging (such as a sukkah,³⁶ or a {rented} home outside of Israel {that one has lived in} for less than thirty days. These dwellings are exempt from mezuzah).³⁷

²⁹ {*Vayikra* 23:42 — “בבִּפְתַח תְּשֻׁבוּ, you shall dwell in sukkos” — the verb “תְּשֻׁבוּ” literally means “sit.”}

³⁰ *Sukkah* 28b; see sources listed there; *Tur, Shulchan Aruch*, (and Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*) beg. of sec. 639.

³¹ Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid.*, par. 12; see *Tur*, *ibid.*; commentators on *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid.*, end of the chapter.

³² {Lit., “holy of holies,” referring to the holiest grade of sacrifices, whose meat had to be eaten in the Temple.}

³³ *Zevachim* 63a; *Sifri “Korach,”* 18:10; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Maaseh HaKorbanos*,” ch. 10, par. 3; see *Minchas Chinuch*, “Mitzvah 184.”

³⁴ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefillah*,” ch. 11, par. 6; *Tur, Shulchan Aruch*, beg. of sec. 151 and commentaries; see *Talmudic Encyclopedia*, entry “*Beis Knesses*,” p. 195; see sources listed there.

³⁵ See *Rama* *ibid.*

³⁶ *Sukkah*, beg.

³⁷ *Menachos* 44a; *Tur, Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 286, par. 22; *Beis Yosef*, *ibid.*; *Shach*, *ibid.*

Conversely, the consumption of *kodshei kodashim* was **mandated**. After all, the **mitzvah** status³⁸ of *kodshei kodashim* grants these offerings prominence,³⁹ especially since they must be eaten “*for distinction – for greatness.*”⁴⁰ Since the Torah instructed that *kodshei kodashim* be eaten in the *Heichal* (at least in times of duress), it is considered a “dwelling place.”]

6.

RAIL IN THE EGO

The explanation of the difference between a synagogue, etc., and the Temple (regarding the obligation of the mitzvah of *maakeh*), according to the deeper dimension of Torah, will be understood by explaining the critical relevance of *maakeh* in our spiritual *avodah*:⁴¹

The deeper meaning of the clause, “you shall make a railing for your roof... if a fallen one falls from it” is: “Your roof, גג,” symbolizes הגבהה, haughtiness; and גאווה, arrogance. The clause, “you shall make a railing for your roof,” means that we should rail in and confine our arrogance.⁴² “If a fallen one falls from it” — because arrogance is the root of every spiritual fall; as is known,⁴³ the negative character traits of a person stem from his ego and arrogance.

This is the general lesson that we learn from the fact that even the *Heichal* required a *maakeh*:

We may imagine that the preventative measure of a *maakeh* is necessary only for an “ordinary dwelling,” whose “roof, גג” (haughtiness, גבהות, and arrogance, גאווה)⁴⁴ is unadulterated arrogance, the opposite of holiness.

³⁸ {In the original, “מצוותיה אהשביה” — the very fact that there is a mitzvah concerning an item gives the item significance.}

³⁹ See *Bechoros* 10a; Rashi (on *Beitzah* 27b) s.v., “*challah*.”

⁴⁰ *Bamidbar* 18:8 {and Rashi on the verse}; *Zevachim* 91a (and the sources listed there).

⁴¹ {Divine service.}

⁴² *Shelah*, “*Torah SheBiksav*,” end of “*Ki Seitzei*”; see the Mezritcher Maggid’s *Or HaTorah*, “*Ki Seitzei*,” on this verse, et al.

⁴³ See discourses on the verse, “*Reishis Goyim Amalek*.”

⁴⁴ {The sichah may be alluding here that גג stands for these two words: גבהות, גאווה.}

However, when dealing with the Temple, which is entirely holy, even its roof symbolizes a holy *avodah*. As the verse says, “and his heart was *elevated* in the ways of Hashem.”⁴⁵ And as our Sages teach, “A Torah scholar should possess an eighth-of-an-eighth of pride.”⁴⁶ What is the need **here** for a protective *maakeh*?

The Torah teaches us that even the roof of the Temple needed a *maakeh*, and more so, in the Temple itself, there was a *maakeh* on the roof of the **Heichal** and also on the roof of the **Holy of Holies**.

This is because even someone who has reached the most incredible heights needs to be protected and railed in through the feeling of *bittul*.⁴⁷ Moreover, “utensils that were {fashioned and} completed in purity need immersion to be fit for *kodesh*.”⁴⁸ ⁴⁹ {On a deeper level, as applied to a person:} Even when we are on a level that gives us reason to think that we are a “completed” utensil, a utensil completed **in purity**, it is specifically **then**⁵⁰ that we need to undergo “טְבִילָה, immersion” — which has the same letters as בִּטּוּל, *bittul*⁵¹ — “to be fit for *kodesh*, holiness.”

7.

A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Understood straightforwardly, the mitzvah of *maakeh* is not so much for protecting **oneself**; instead, it is (primarily) about protecting **another** person from falling from “your roof.”

The same is true regarding the spiritual aspect of the mitzvah of *maakeh*. The intention of making a “fence for your roof” is not only to protect yourself

⁴⁵ *Divrei Hayamim II* 17:6; *Torah Or*, 91b, 119c ff; *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, 15c; et al.

⁴⁶ {*Bittul* refers to self-nullification in the presence of Hashem, transcendence, and the negation of ego.}

⁴⁷ *Sotah* 5a; see *Torah Or*, *ibid*.

⁴⁸ {Lit., “holy,” meaning, utensils used in conjunction with the sacrifices (*kodshim*).}

⁴⁹ *Mishnah in Chagigah* 20b; see *Or HaTorah, Vayikra*, (vol. 2), “*Drushim lePesach*,” p. 455.

⁵⁰ Note what is stated in *Torah Or*, 120a, that one should only have an eighth-of-an-eighth of pride when he is beginning his *avodah*. Subsequently, he should be in a complete state of *bittul*.

⁵¹ Just that the *vav* is interchanged for a *hei* (*Siddur im Dach*, end of “*Kavanas HaMikvah*,” end of 154d.)

from a spiritual fall but to protect another Jew. “Your roof” — your haughtiness and arrogance — should not cause someone else to fall spiritually.

A Jew must be engaged in spreading Judaism and bringing Jews closer to their Father in Heaven. These efforts are also alluded to in the verse, “If you build a new house” (according to its deeper meaning), which connotes that a Jew should not suffice with his *avodah*. Instead, he must build a **home** for Hashem. A Jew must establish an entirely wholesome “home” and environment permeated with Judaism.⁵²

But if he has arrogance when spreading Judaism, it is not only a flaw in **his** (personal) *avodah*, but his arrogance can cause a decline in the Jew he needs to influence. If he tries to affect someone with words that come from the heart, without ulterior motives, etc., his words will assuredly enter the other person’s heart and have their effect.

However, if ego and arrogance are mixed into his words, aside from the fact that they impede his message from influencing and successfully bringing someone closer, his message is likely to have the exact opposite effect: Speaking arrogantly can, Heaven forbid, **distance** the listener.

Additionally, Scripture cautions us: “If **a fallen one** falls from it.” Our Sages explain: “He was destined to fall from the Six Days of Creation.... Nevertheless, merit is brought about through those who are meritorious and liability through those who are liable.”⁵³

A Jew can argue that the other person’s descent is not his fault. After all, the person who fell was “**destined** to fall.” Moreover, a Jew can argue that the person who fell is “a fallen one” — someone who has **already** fallen.⁵⁴

⁵² See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, pp. 210 and 212 where this concept is discussed at length.

⁵³ *Shabbos* 32a; Rashi on *Devarim* 22:8.

⁵⁴ See *Paneach Raza* on *Devarim* 22:8, which states that the Hebrew word used in this verse for “one who falls” — הַנָּפֵל (*hanofel*), is written without a *vav*, and thus, it can be read as הַנָּפֵל (*hanafal*) — “one who has {already} fallen.”

If the other person was upright, he would be capable of discerning the difference between the truth in the message (the words of **Torah**) and the ego (of the person delivering the message) that is intermixed with the message. As our Sages put it,⁵⁵ “He consumed the inside {of the fruit} and discarded the rind.”⁵⁶

It drags the other person down further only because the other person is **already** “a fallen one” when he senses ego, etc. {A Jew can continue to argue:} “Why am **I** guilty for this to the extent that I should address **my** ‘roof’ so that a person who is already classified as ‘a fallen one’ should not experience another greater fall?”

He is told that although the other is deemed to have fallen, you must ensure that “**your** roof” should not precipitate the descent of even the fallen.⁵⁷ You need not be among those about whom Scripture says: “Liability is brought about through those who are **liable**.” You should not be the cause of someone else’s fall.

8.

YOUR INNOVATION IS NEEDED

In response to this, a person can object and think to himself: Since I am aware that I have an ego, why should I subject myself to the doubt as to whether I can construct a *maakeh* that will be sufficient to prevent the spiritual fall of (myself and) another person? {Instead,} I will not busy myself with “building the house for Hashem” and especially with fortifying another Jew and bringing him close!

⁵⁵ *Chagigah* 15b.

⁵⁶ Analogous to the dictum: “Accept the truth from whoever says it” (Rambam’s *Introduction to Mishnah*, “Preface to tractate *Avos*”).

⁵⁷ As in the case of a *maakeh* in the literal sense, where although “he was destined to fall from the Six Days of Creation,” “there is a great punishment **for the one who causes** him to fall” (*Rabbeinu Bachya* on *Devarim* 22:8).

The verse prefaces with a blessing:⁵⁸ “If you build a new house.” This means that a Jew must build a home for Hashem by infusing Judaism into his environment, as explained above. He cannot rely on others; he must make a “**new** house.” Every Jew is given a part of the world⁵⁹ that **he** needs to refine and in which **he** needs to **innovate**, thereby making a dwelling for Hashem. A person cannot rely on the *avodah* that was performed in the previous generations, nor on the *avodah* of other Jews in his age. Instead, he must construct **his** portion of the world, which is **his unique mark** (and not that of others).

Therefore, when he meets another Jew — which itself (is by Divine providence and therefore) indicates that the other person’s refinement is interlinked with **him** — he must involve himself with him.

Even if the other Jew is “a fallen one,” and “your roof” can cause him a (further) descent, should the other Jew — whose refinement depends on you — **lose out** because of your ego and your arrogance? Make a *maakeh* and fence in your ego! You are not free to absolve yourself from getting involved with another Jew.

Chassidim tell a well-known story about the Mittlerer Rebbe:

The Mittlerer Rebbe had stipulated that the Chassidim who visited Lubavitch were to publicly repeat {discourses of} Chassidus in the villages they would pass through on their return home. A particular young Chossid publicly repeated Chassidus remarkably well but complained to the Mittlerer Rebbe. The young Chossid felt that he experienced a sense of arrogance while reviewing Chassidus; therefore, he wanted to step away from this activity. The Mittlerer Rebbe guided him: “An onion⁶⁰ you may become, but Chassidus you must teach!”

⁵⁸ *Tanchuma*, quoted in Rashi on *Devarim* 22:8.

⁵⁹ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 37, 48a.

⁶⁰ {Note that an onion eaten by itself tastes bitter but lends flavor to food.}

9.

THE PURPOSE OF IT ALL

Based on all of the preceding, we can also understand the difference between synagogues, etc., and the Temple.

Synagogues and Torah study halls are places meant for prayer and Torah study — the spiritual *avodah* that a person does inwardly and with himself. The Temple, on the other hand, symbolizes the **general** *avodah* of a person, not only the *avodah* done with the self, but also (and in fact — primarily) the *avodah* of making a *dirah batachtonim*,⁶¹ transforming material matters and the world at large to a home for Hashem.

For this reason, one of the primary functions performed in the Temple was the offering of sacrifices. It included offering up a **physical** animal to Hashem, {with parts} eaten by the kohanim and owners. This was a process of *avodas habirurim*.⁶²

Similarly, the function of the Temple generally was to influence the world. Therefore, the windows of the Temple were designed as “{outwardly} widening windows”⁶³ so that the light should **shine** and light up the outside and testify “to all people of the world that the *Shechinah*⁶⁴ rests upon the Jewish people.”⁶⁵

A *maakeh* serves primarily to avert the danger alluded to by the phrase, “if **a fallen one** falls from it” — for someone on the level of “a fallen one” — as well as to protect the person himself when busy with work requiring a descent from his spiritual level for the sake of refining the world (“you build a new house”).

⁶¹ {Lit., a dwelling in the lower realms — making our physical world a home for Hashem; this is the goal of Torah and mitzvos and the ultimate purpose of Creation.}

⁶² {Lit., the service of refining;. It connotes refining and elevating the physical world by using material goods for the sake a mitzvah or for other holy pursuits. }

⁶³ {*Melachim I* 6:4.}

⁶⁴ {The Divine Presence.}

⁶⁵ *Menachos* 86b.

Therefore, a synagogue and a Torah study hall, where a person is **disconnected** from worldly matters, do not need a *maakeh*.

Conversely, the Temple needed the protection afforded by a *maakeh* because the Temple altered the physicality of the world. This is expressed in our spiritual *avodah* of building a home for Hashem — transforming our material **environment** into a Divine abode.

Nevertheless, the acme of perfection is correlated specifically with the Temple because its *avodah* fulfills the purpose of Creation: to “build a new house,” making a home for Hashem in the lower realms.

Through this effort, we will also merit the building of the Third Temple speedily in our days!

— From a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Matos*, 5741 (1981)