



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 18 | Massei | Bein HaMetzarim

## Builders and Readers

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## 1.

### TEMPLE DESTRUCTION = A TZADDIK'S PASSING

There is an apparent and obvious connection between *parshas Massei* and the time of year when it is read.<sup>1</sup> *Parshas Massei* is always read in close proximity to Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av, on either Rosh Chodesh itself, the next day, or Shabbos *mevarchim* Menachem-Av. And for the first time, we are informed in this *parshah* that Aharon's passing was “**in the fifth month, on the first of the month.**”<sup>2</sup> Aharon's demise is described at length earlier in *parshas Chukas*,<sup>3</sup> but the date of his passing (and the length of his life) is only mentioned in this *parshah*.<sup>4</sup>

This connection {to our *parshah*} is not merely based on the closeness in **time** to Aharon's passing, as mentioned; there is also a **thematic** connection: The destruction of the Temple — the burning of the House of our G-d — was in the month of Menachem-Av,<sup>5</sup> and our Sages teach that “the passing of a tzaddik is like the burning of the House of Hashem,”<sup>6</sup> and, “Hashem considers the passing of the tzaddik to be more severe... than the destruction of the Temple.”<sup>7</sup>

We find two opposite responses to the passing of a tzaddik: On one hand, it is a time to “cry and mourn”<sup>8</sup> over the physical absence. On the other hand, it is a time to learn from “his deeds, his Torah, and his *avodah*,<sup>9</sup> that he served {Hashem} throughout his life,” in order to continue {his legacy} and go in his ways, as he has instructed us.<sup>10</sup> If we behave this way, then the teaching of our

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<sup>1</sup> See *Shelah*, “*Torah Shebiksav*,” (p. 366 ff.): “These three *parshiyos* (*Matos*, *Massei*, and *Devarim*) are always read during the Three Weeks because they are the appropriate readings for the time.” *Shelah* then explains their thematic connection with the three weeks. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 378, and the sources cited there.

<sup>2</sup> *Bamidbar* 33:38 {the first day of the fifth month is Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av}.

<sup>3</sup> *Bamidbar* 20:28.

<sup>4</sup> See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 8, p. 198 and on.

<sup>5</sup> And Rosh Chodesh incorporates the entire month in it.

<sup>6</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 18b.

<sup>7</sup> *Eichah Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 9 (37).

<sup>8</sup> See *Moed Kattan* 25a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Aveilus*,” ch. 12, par. 2.

<sup>9</sup> {Divine service.}

<sup>10</sup> See *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hakodesh*,” epistle 27, and its explication.

Sages that if “his children are alive,” then “he is also alive”<sup>11</sup> applies. In the words of the mishnah, regarding Aharon: “Be of the disciples of Aharon.”<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, concerning the commemoration of the Temple’s destruction: On one hand, on the anniversary of this event, the Torah obligates us to “mourn over Yerushalayim.”<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, this is specifically a time that we need special encouragement (a) to avoid falling into despair over the exile, G-d forbid, knowing, as it says at the conclusion of the *haftorah* of *Massei*, “But now,<sup>14</sup> you call Me, ‘Father!’ and you say: ‘You are the Master of my youth’”;<sup>15</sup> even better — (b) to encourage oneself and Jews, in general, in this time of doubled and redoubled darkness of “*ikvesa d’meshicha*,”<sup>16</sup> in addition to it being the “Three Weeks,” by strengthening our belief in the principle to “await his coming every day,” and increase our study and exploration of “the shape of the Temple<sup>17</sup> and its plan,<sup>18</sup> its exits and its entrances, its appearance, and all its laws.”<sup>19</sup> This leads to what our Sages taught, “Hashem said to Yechezkel:<sup>20</sup>

The study of {the Temple} is as important as building it. Go tell them this. And they should busy themselves reviewing the Temple’s design as described in the Torah. As a reward for its reading, for their dedication to learn it, I will deem it as if they were involved with the Temple’s building.

As this is true for the Temple, so is it true about the passing of the righteous: By following in their ways, “he is also alive,” as discussed. The true life of a tzaddik — “the life of a tzaddik is not his corporal life but rather his spiritual life; namely, his faith, awe, and love {of Hashem}”<sup>21</sup> — extends to and “lives and endures” within “his children,” namely, his disciples and their disciples.

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<sup>11</sup> *Taanis* 5b; see *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hakodesh*,” explaining the teaching of our Sages that a righteous person is **more** present after his passing than during his lifetime.

<sup>12</sup> *Avos* ch. 1, mishnah 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Taanis* 30b; for the detailed laws and customs surrounding the “Three Weeks,” see *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” 551:2-4-9-16 ff., and the commentaries there.

<sup>14</sup> {After Hashem had punished the Jewish people by withholding the rain (*Radak*).}

<sup>15</sup> *Yirmiyahu* 3:4.

<sup>16</sup> {Lit., “the heels of Moshiach,” the period just before Moshiach’s arrival.} Conclusion of tractate *Sotah*.

<sup>17</sup> {Its external walls in all four directions (Rashi, *Radak*).}

<sup>18</sup> {The number of side-chambers and chamber complexes (Rashi, *Radak*).}

<sup>19</sup> *Yechezkel* 43:11.

<sup>20</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma*, “*Tzav*,” sec. 14.

<sup>21</sup> See *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hakodesh*,” epistle 27, and its explication.

The above adds to the special emphasis on connection between the Temple's destruction of (in the month of Av) and Aharon's passing (on Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av): Baseless hatred<sup>22</sup> caused the destruction of the (second) Temple, and this sin is rectified through baseless love, adhering to the maxim: "Be of the disciples (who are called children<sup>23</sup>) of Aharon, **a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, one who loves the creatures** and draws them close to Torah."

## 2.

"AS IF" OR ACTUALLY?

Seemingly, we may ask: When discussing the passing of a tzaddik, we use the wording, "just as his children are alive, **he is also alive**" (and not, "as if" he is alive) — since through "his children" going in his ways, etc., it brings about that "he is also alive," since the life of a tzaddik "**is not** corporal life **but spiritual life**"; therefore, "**he is alive**" (in his genuine sense of life — his "spiritual life" is literally extended further).

However, regarding the involvement in {studying} the design of the Temple, what's relevant is the **physical** Temple (in order to offer physical sacrifices — as opposed to the time when it is in ruins, when prayers<sup>24</sup> were established in place of the **sacrifices**). Consequently, the above-mentioned **speaking** and studying, that Hashem **considers** "**as if** they were involved with building the Temple," is seemingly only equivalent to the verbalization of prayers!

Yet this is not the case. When the Torah of **truth** compares two things (as in this case, in which learning about the design of the Temple is considered as if they were involved with building the Temple), it is because they are truly **the same thing**:

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<sup>22</sup> *Yoma* 9b.

<sup>23</sup> *Sifri* and Rashi on *Devarim* 6:7.

<sup>24</sup> *Berachos* 26b; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* (and Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*) "*Orach Chaim*," sec. 98, (par. 4).

It is only that since the physical results of this study only materialize later, we use the wording, “as if” — but even before it actually materializes (as in our case — before we may or can rebuild the Temple physically) — it is not that our study of the design of the Temple is merely **commemorative** (and the like) of the Temple’s construction, or (also) that Hashem rewards us for it just as he grants reward for the Temple’s construction. Rather, it is through the involvement **in studying, we are** involved in **building** the Temple.

### 3.

#### HOW DOES IT WORK?

This can be better understood by exploring the teaching of our Sages about sacrifices: “Anyone who studies the Torah pertaining to a *chatas*<sup>25</sup> is considered as if he had offered a *chatas*, and anyone who studies the Torah pertaining to an *asham*<sup>26</sup> is considered as if he had offered an *asham*,”<sup>27</sup> and so forth. The designation “as if he had offered” does not merely refer to a reward, or that Hashem atones for the person’s sins by his study (that is, it has the same effect) just as a sacrifice would. Rather, (at least according to some opinions) it has the status of a sacrificial offering. In fact, the halachah regarding {reciting} the “Torah section of sacrifices” is that “one should only recite it during the day because sacrifices are not offered at night.”<sup>28</sup> Likewise, we find several laws and halachos concerning the review of sacrifices that require their implementation to resemble the actual offering of the sacrifice.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> {Often translated as “a sin-offering,” it was brought for the violation of specific sins.}

<sup>26</sup> {Often translated as “a guilt-offering,” it was brought for the violation of other specific sins.}

<sup>27</sup> End of tractate *Menachos*.

<sup>28</sup> Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 1, par. 13 (first version).

<sup>29</sup> See Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 1 par. 11 ff (first edition): “Since every offering requires libations, therefore... (par.11). One should first recite the portion of the sin-offering and afterward the portion of the burnt-offering, because the sin-offering... (par. 12). It is necessary to recite the section of the offerings standing... resembling their actual offering, which was performed upright (par. 14). However, one should not recite this after the portion of the sin-offering... as this would be **like offering unsanctified animals in the Temple courtyard** (par. 15).

See also the **continuation** of *Tanchuma*, “*Tzav*,” sec. 14 , “Why do children begin by studying the book of *Vayikra*?... Because they are pure... ‘Let them begin with the order of the sacrifices — let the pure ones come and occupy themselves with the acts of purification. **Hence**, I consider it for them as if they are standing and offering sacrifices before Me.” See *Etz Yosef* there: “Because occupying oneself {in the laws of sacrifices} is considered as

Likewise, and even more so, this is true concerning the study of the Temple's design (which the Midrash compares to the study of the laws of sacrifices), as is clear from the wording in the Midrash. Yechezkel argued:<sup>30</sup>

“Until now, we have been languishing in exile in the lands of our enemies, and You want me to inform the Jewish people about the design of the Temple? What can they **do**? Better to leave them be until after they are liberated from exile ....”

Hashem responded:

“Because My children are in exile, should **the construction of My home be suspended**? They should be involved in learning about the Temple.”

Hashem's response implies that by such learning, “the construction of My home” is **not** suspended.

To explain further: The mitzvah, “they shall make Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell in their midst”<sup>31</sup> applies for all time.<sup>32</sup> Every Jew<sup>33</sup> is obligated to build the Temple. Therefore, when Jews cannot actually build the Temple because of forces beyond their control, they still have the obligation and mitzvah to be involved in its review.<sup>34</sup> By doing so, “it is as if you are **building** it.”<sup>35</sup>

Meaning, we study the Temple's design, etc., not only as a **remembrance** of, and a spiritual link to, the construction of the Temple because we cannot actually build it; rather, involvement in this study falls within the parameters of the mitzvah to build the Temple.<sup>36</sup>

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if they offered them, it is fitting for the children..., as it is prohibited to offer sacrifices while in a state of impurity.”

<sup>30</sup> *Tanchuma*, “*Tzav*,” sec. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Shemos* 25:8.

<sup>32</sup> See *Or HaChaim* on *Shemos* 25:8: “It is a positive mitzvah which applies at all times... even when the Jews are in exile....”

<sup>33</sup> Although the construction of the Holy Temple is “a commandment that is obligatory upon the community at large and not upon each individual” (Rambam's *Sefer Hamitzvos*, “Positive Mitzvos,” at the end), Rambam writes (“*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 1, par. 12): “Everyone must build and assist in its construction both personally and financially; both men and women.”

<sup>34</sup> {In the original Hebrew, “בקר”יה.”}

<sup>35</sup> {*Tanchuma*, “*Tzav*,” sec. 14.}

<sup>36</sup> Note Alter Rebbe's *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 1, par. 4 (based on the writings of the Arizal): “Every Jewish soul is obligated to fulfill all 613 mitzvos. When it comes to fulfilling the mitzvos through speech and thought, this refers to studying their halachos, as the Sages said... that anyone who engages in the study of the laws of the sin-offering is considered as if they have actually offered it.” Refer to *Likkutei Torah*, beginning of *parshas Pinchas*. See *Baer Sheva* in the end of his preface: “The early generations already understood that studying about the *mitzvos* that are not practiced in our time is even more necessary.... This is because, for our spiritual

## 4.

### A CURRENT MITZVAH

We can posit that Rambam alludes to this concept with the choice of his introductory verse at the beginning of *Sefer Avodah*:<sup>37</sup> “Seek the welfare of Yerushalayim; may those who love you enjoy tranquility.” By introducing all of *Sefer Avodah*, and the laws of the Temple, with this verse, Rambam hints and reveals that there is an obligation and commandment to “seek the welfare of Yerushalayim” (verbally, etc.), which refers to studying the laws of the Temple and *Sefer Avodah*.

If Rambam’s intention was that we should study these laws (only) as a “**remembrance** of the Temple,” then he ought to have cited the verse that the Gemara<sup>38</sup> uses for this idea — “From where do we know we establish remembrances of the Temple? As it says,<sup>39</sup> ‘It is Zion whom no one seeks’ {This verse teaches} by inference that it {the Temple} needs to be sought {through acts of remembrance}.” By specifically citing the verse of “**seek the welfare** of Yerushalayim,” Rambam emphasizes that there is a particular obligation to study and be involved with the details and minutiae (in accordance with the wording, “**seek** the welfare”) of the laws of the Temple — not only as a commemoration of the Temple of the **past** and to know how to rebuild it in the **future**, but as a **present** obligation and commandment for building the Temple right now.

In contrast, the verse (and wording), “It is Zion whom no one **seeks**,” only teaches us that there is an obligation of “seeking” along the lines of a **remembrance**.

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perfection, we need to examine and act upon all aspects of our holy Torah. When it comes to the aspects of the Torah that are not practiced today, it is impossible to fulfill them through action. Therefore, examination and study alone suffice to fulfill our examination and practice simultaneously.

<sup>37</sup> *Tehillim* 122:6.

<sup>38</sup> *Rosh Hashanah* 30a; *Sukkah* 41a.

<sup>39</sup> *Yirmiyahu* 30:17.

On this basis, we can see that the reason we study the laws of the Temple is not only to know how to build it in the future,<sup>40</sup> but also because it is relevant to our present obligation to build it by “seeking the welfare of Yerushalayim” through studying these laws.

## 5.

### IMPERFECT YET COMPLETE

We find a similar concept in practical halachah when it comes to the mitzvah of *teshuvah* and conversion:

Consummate *teshuvah* and atonement for an (inadvertent) sin involves verbal confession and a sacrifice.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, in the period of exile, when bringing a sacrifice is impossible, complete atonement is achieved through *teshuvah* (and verbal confession). Doing so fulfills the mitzvah of *teshuvah* perfectly.

The practical halachic ramifications of {the above in regards to}, “Do not place your hand with a wicked person to be a false witness”<sup>42</sup> are well known.<sup>43</sup>

An even stronger point that relates to our case — the process of conversion: Although it is necessary for a convert to undergo “circumcision, immersion, and the offering of a sacrifice”<sup>44</sup> for him to enter the covenant,<sup>45</sup> “nowadays, when there are no sacrifices, he needs circumcision and immersion.”<sup>46</sup> And those steps complete the conversion process. The fact that “he will offer a sacrifice when the Temple will be rebuilt” has no bearing now on the finality and integrity of his conversion.

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<sup>40</sup> See Rambam’s Introduction to his *Commentary on Mishnah*, regarding tractate *Middos* — cited below in the text.

<sup>41</sup> See *Mishneh Torah*, beg. “*Hilchos Teshuvah*.”

<sup>42</sup> *Shemos* 23:1.

<sup>43</sup> *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Choshen Mishpat*,” end of sec. 34. {*Halachah* addresses the rule that people known to be wicked are disqualified to serve in court as witnesses. Yet after they do *teshuvah*, they are again deemed to be qualified.}

<sup>44</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Issurei Biah*,” ch. 13, par. 4, quoting from *Kerisus* 9a.

<sup>45</sup> {I.e., to become Jewish.}

<sup>46</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Issurei Biah*,” ch. 13, par. 5, based on *Kerisus* 9a.



## 6.

STUDY = BUILDING

Based on what was explained above (in Section 3), we can clarify what Rambam says in the Introduction to his *Commentary on Mishnah* regarding tractate *Middos*:

This {tractate} contains nothing more than a description recounting the dimensions of the (Second) Temple, its design and structure, and everything about it. The purpose of this is because when it will be rebuilt, speedily in our days, we must take care to build it {according to} these forms, designs, and dimensions, for they were {communicated} with the Divine Spirit, as it says,<sup>47</sup> “All was in writing, from the Hand of Hashem, which He gave me to understand.”

*Tosfos Yom Tov*<sup>48</sup> forestalls the following conundrum: The construction of the future Temple will not be similar to the design of the Second Temple, as Rambam himself writes in the *Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*:<sup>49</sup>

The future Temple, though mentioned in the Book of *Yechezkel*, is neither explicit nor explained. Thus, the people {in the time} of Ezra built the Second Temple according to the structure of {the First Temple, of} Shlomo, and **akin** to what is explicitly stated in *Yechezkel*.

So what, ultimately, is the benefit of knowing the dimensions of the Second Temple?

*Tosfos Yom Tov* explains that by studying tractate *Middos*, the construction of the future Temple will be simplified, as certain aspects of its construction are identical to those of the First and Second Temples. While there will be differences between the Second Temple and the future Temple, for, “Hashem will open our eyes... to grasp that which is obscured in the words of *Yechezkel*, and we will build it {accordingly}, we, nevertheless, need the description of the Second Temple. After all, most fundamentals of the structure are based on the design of Hashem that He conveyed to David, and it will never change.” This is Rambam’s point in citing the proof-text, “All was in writing,

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<sup>47</sup> *Divrei Hayamim I* 28:19.

<sup>48</sup> *Tosfos Yom Tov*, “Preface to tractate *Middos*.”

<sup>49</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 1, par. 4.

from the hand of Hashem, which He gave me to understand” (which David said to Shlomo).

This is still not entirely clear: If there will be numerous differences in the future Temple, and we will depend on “Hashem opening our eyes... to grasp that which is obscured in the words of Yechezkel,” what is the necessity of “recounting the dimensions of the (Second) Temple, its design and structure and everything about it”?

Based on the above explanation, this is understood: Since the mitzvah, “They shall make for Me a sanctuary,” is constant, we can posit that there is always a mitzvah to be involved in **constructing** the Temple. Meaning, the mitzvah consists not only of the actual study and knowledge of the laws of the Temple, but also of the Jewish people doing everything they can to be ready to build it immediately,<sup>50</sup> which fulfills the teaching that “the construction of the Temple is not suspended,” as explained above.

Although in the future, we will rely upon “Hashem opening our eyes... to grasp that which is obscured in the words of Yechezkel,” or on {the fact that} “when it will be rebuilt, Moshe and Aharon will be with us,”<sup>51</sup> and they will reveal how things should be done, this does not detract from the mitzvah of being involved in this study, which is part of the building of the Temple. Those future events are just an advantage we will gain in the times of Moshiach.

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<sup>50</sup> See Rashi on *Yechezkel* 43:11, on the words “so that they keep”: “They will learn the matters about the measurements from you so that they will know how to do them at the end of days {of exile}.” See also the beginning of *Tzuras Habayis*: “Hashem instructed the prophet to tell the Jewish people to apprehend everything to do with the dimensions of the building, and guard the design in their hearts. **Perhaps Moshiach will arrive today**, and nobody will be able to partake in the construction of the Temple.”

<sup>51</sup> *Tosafos* on *Pesachim* 114b, s.v., “*echad*”; see *Yoma* 5b.

## DOING OUR PART

Just as this applies to the study and knowledge of the design of the Temple, we can posit that the same is true for the actual construction of the Temple:

As known, there are two opinions regarding the manner in which the future Temple will be built:

- a) “It will be revealed and come from Heaven, as it says,<sup>52</sup> ‘the sanctuary, Hashem, {that} Your Hands established.’”<sup>53</sup>
- b) It will be constructed by man; Moshiach will build the Temple.<sup>54</sup>

One way<sup>55</sup> to mediate between these two opinions: The part of the Temple that is explained by, and understood from, the “narrative” in tractate *Middos* (in Rambam's words, “resembling what is explicated in *Yechezkel*”) will be built by human efforts; the details that are “not explained and clarified” will be revealed from Heaven by Hashem.

[Alternatively, the Temple in this world, below, will be built by human efforts — through Moshiach (to whom it will be revealed that which “is not explained and clarified”) — and the Temple below will “enclothe” the Temple in the Heavens.<sup>56</sup> This is similar and **analogous** to the Heavenly fire that was invested within the fire below,<sup>57</sup> as “it is a mitzvah to bring ordinary fire.”<sup>58</sup>

Through this {that the Heavenly Temple is enclothed in the earthly Temple}, the future Temple will be infused with permanence.]

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<sup>52</sup> *Shemos* 15:17.

<sup>53</sup> Rashi on *Sukkah* 41a; *Rosh Hashanah* 30a, and *Tosafos*, ad loc., and in *Shavuos* 15b, s.v., “*ein*,” and *Tosafos* concludes: “so, too, is this explained in *Midrash Tanchuma*” (we can posit this refers to *Tanchuma*, “*Pekudei*,” sec. 11). *Zohar*, vol. 1, 28a; vol. 2, 59a, 108a; vol. 3 221a.

<sup>54</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 11, beg. and end.

<sup>55</sup> For alternate approaches, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 98; vol. 13, p. 84.

<sup>56</sup> *Aruch La'ner* on *Sukkah* 41a, s.v. “*ee nami*,” gives an explanation along these lines.

<sup>57</sup> {Although a fire would descend from Heaven onto the Altar to consume the sacrifices, the *kohanim* were still required themselves to ignite a fire on the Altar.}

<sup>58</sup> *Eruvin* 63a; *Yoma* 21b.

This explains the reason for the difference and variance between the two above-mentioned positions — Rambam’s position that Moshiach will build the Temple, and the position of *Zohar* and *Midrashim* that the Temple will be built by Heaven:

Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah*, being a work of **halachah**, emphasizes the aspect of the Temple’s construction that will be built by the Jewish people, as halachah considers the construction of the Temple to be a mitzvah incumbent upon the Jewish people. (And by doing so, they fully fulfill their obligation.)

However, those aspects of the future Temple that will be revealed **by Heaven** are not part of the obligation and mitzvah of building the Temple incumbent upon the Jewish people.

However, the Midrash and *Zohar* (the inner dimension of Torah) address the ideal state and ultimate goal of the future Temple. This will be achieved by the **enhancement** that the Temple will receive from Heaven — “the building of Hashem.”<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, the Midrash and *Zohar* emphasize the construction performed by Heaven.

It is now clear that when an aspect of the Temple is revealed from Heaven in the times of Moshiach, it is not on account of a flaw in the construction performed by human efforts through our righteous Moshiach, G-d forbid.

Through our acts of construction, we fulfill the mitzvah of building the Temple in its entirety. Afterwards, Heaven will reveal and contribute its dimension.

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<sup>59</sup> *Zohar*, vol. 1, 28a; vol. 3, 221a.

## 8.

### STUDY AS IF YOU ARE BUILDING

On this basis, our study of the design of the Temple nowadays is “considered by Me **as if** they would be involved in building the Temple” — or, according to the other version, “Since you are involved in it, it is **as if** you are building it” — is more palatable. (This applies from both perspectives:)

According to all opinions, then, the ultimate wholeness of the Temple will be achieved through what “Heaven will reveal and contribute.” And specifically, **this** element (that is not built through human efforts) introduces eternity into the Temple, as the verse says, “If Hashem will not build the house, its builders toil in it in vain.”<sup>60</sup> Meaning, (the First and Second Temples were “buildings built by people, which do not endure,” but) the Third Temple will endure forever because it will be “the building of Hashem.”

Therefore, the fulfillment of the mitzvah of building the Temple nowadays, through the study of the laws and the design of the Temple, must resemble the actual building {of the Temple} by the Jewish people in the future. Meaning, the mitzvah and obligation of learning about the Temple refers to the dimensions and designs, etc., known to people, because this is the part of its construction belonging to people.

On the other hand, just as the wholeness of the future Temple will be achieved specifically by what is revealed and comes from Heaven, as discussed, the same holds true for the mitzvah of studying every concrete detail and segment of the Temple’s construction. Here, too, we depend on Hashem declaring, “I will consider it.” Through this divine declaration, we achieve the ultimate wholeness (nowadays) in the mitzvah of constructing the Temple by concentrating on learning its Torah laws.

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<sup>60</sup> *Tehillim* 127:1.

## 9.

### BUILDING IT WHILE WE'RE STILL IN EXILE

From all the above, there is a lesson for every Jew: First, we should appreciate how appropriate it is to study the laws and design of the Temple — its entrances and exits, etc. — particularly during the Three Weeks. By doing so, we fulfill the mitzvah of building the Temple, even while still in exile. This itself automatically weakens the effects of the Temple's destruction (and exile overall), and weakens {the negative element of} the Three Weeks.

In turn, {by weakening the effects of exile} this itself brings about us moving from “**as if** you are building it,” to having the actual building of the Temple, **literally**, in tangible form, through our righteous Moshiach. And within the physical Temple below, the Heavenly Temple is immediately revealed. Speedily in our days, in actuality.

— From the talk delivered on *Motzei Shabbos*, *parshas Matos-Massei*, 5739 (1979)