

# לדרוש בשבת

## Parashat Terumah 5781

February 19 - 20 2021

This week's Lidrosh B'Shabbat is based on *Building Sacred Spaces: The Mishkan* by Rabbi David Silber

**The building of the Mishkan stands out as purposeful work, uniquely motivating the Israelites. How was this hard work different from other examples found in the Torah?**

### Source: Bereishit 28:10-22

In the story of Jacob's dream, what is his vow? Pay special attention to verse 22.

The word המקום appears 6 times in this chapter. המקום appears in one other place in Bereishit, in the story of Akeidat Yitzchak.

### Source: Bereishit 22

In Akeidat Yitzchak, המקום appears 4 times. The story of Akeidat Yitzchak is about establishing Isaac as Abraham's heir to the covenant, whereas Jacob's dream establishes his own covenant with God. How do these two accounts differ?

Returning to Jacob's story, what does "God's House" (בית אלו-הים) mean?

The story of Bereishit is about choosing one covenantal heir. First, there is Abraham choosing Isaac over Ishmael, and then, there is Isaac choosing between Jacob and Esau. Jacob, the heir, says his mission is to build a house for God. At the end of Sefer Bereishit, Jacob blesses all of his sons. His vision of a house of God is one in which his entire family is included. He succeeds in that mission by establishing the covenant with all of his sons, as opposed to choosing a sole heir.

More specifically, however, where is the "House of God" that he refers to? The place ABOVE him is the house of God -- in heaven. Where he is located on earth is שער השמים -- the gateway to heaven (see verse 17). Jacob is saying that if you God protect me, then I will build a house down here. The point of the ladder is to connect the upper and the lower. Jacob is saying that he will build God's kingdom on earth.

### Source: Bereishit 11

Another story in Bereishit, the Tower of Babel, has a similar goal to Jacob's dream. The world gathers in one place and the people say,

הָבָה | נִבְנֶה-לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֵאשׁוּ בַשָּׁמַיִם

"Let us build a city and tower- the top of which is in heaven"

According to Cassuto, the word "Babel" is means "Bava" = Gate "El" = God. Bavel is literally the Gateway to Heaven. The problem, however, is that the people were trying to reach the heavens -- ראשו בשמים. God disapproves of this, which is why He disperses them. The correct way to build a gateway to heaven is how Jacob did it, by envisioning a model that connects heaven and earth (i.e. the ladder). Jacob understands that, "The heavens belong to God. but I will build a prototype of this space on earth."

Jacob's mission is to build the sacred space on earth that connects to the heavens but is rooted down below, unlike the Tower of Babel, which was focused on reaching up into heaven.

**שבת שלום!**