

These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's behest. (38:21)

Sforno cites various differences that distinguished the *Mishkan* from its two successors, the *Batei Mikdash*. He posits that these differences ensured the *Mishkan's* eternal viability, providing that it would never fall into the hands of enemies and be destroyed. First, the *Mishkan* contained the two *Luchos*: Second, it was initiated through Moshe *Rabbeinu*; Third, the *avodah*, service, was carried out through Isamar Hakohen and the *Leviim*. Fourth, the fact that Betzalel was the architect and builder of the *Mishkan* helped to guarantee its everlasting nature. Indeed, all those who occupied themselves with the building of the *Mishkan* were men of stature, integrity, and piety. In contrast, the *Batei Mikdash* were constructed by workmen of various nations. In many cases they did not possess the other attributes that gave the *Mishkan* its unique distinction.

We can learn a compelling lesson from *Sforno's* words. The two *Batei Mikdash* together functioned for a total of eight hundred and thirty years. During this time undoubtedly millions of *korbanos* were offered, and the *Kohanim* and *Leviim* served under the guidance of a righteous *Kohen Gadol*. They still, however, did not achieve the level of sanctity that was present in the *Mishkan*. The *Batei Mikdash* could not compete with some of the traits of the *Mishkan*. From the very onset the *Mishkan* was built with *kedushah* and *taharah*, holiness and purity, by individuals invested with these same virtues. **Horav Shmuel Truvitz, Shlita**, emphasizes that the *hachanah*, preparatory stages, were performed with incredible *kedushah* and *taharah*. This reality distinguishes the *Mishkan* from the *Batei Mikdash*.

Horav Truvitz supplements this idea by citing the fact that the doors to the *Bais Hamikdash* were not destroyed. Rather, they sunk into the ground, because they were the work of David *Ha'melech*. Regardless of *Klal Yisrael's* iniquities which caused the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*, the gates were not destroyed. They withstood the *churban*, because they were fashioned with holiness and purity. In the "end," it was the "beginning" that made the difference.

We can learn a more profound lesson. David *Hamelech* yearned to build the *Bais Hamikdash*. He was not destined, however, to be the one to build it. As a reason, *Divrei Hayamim 1:28* cites the fact that he was a man of war who had spilled blood. In his commentary to *Sefer Bamidbar 16:21*, the *Ramban* questions this. Did David do anything wrong? Did he kill anybody that was not deserving of death? All he did was to execute justice according to the laws of the *Torah*. He responds that the *Bais Hamikdash* is a place where *rachamim*, mercy, reigns. David, however acted in accordance with *din*, justice, which does not necessarily coincide with mercy. Although *Bnei Yisrael* actually built the *Bais Hamikdash*, David *Ha'Melech* provided the inspiration. Thus, the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* did not emanate the trait of *rachamim*.

We learn from here that the first inspiration sets the tone for the structure of an endeavor. Even if the actual construction has been performed in accordance with the appropriate ideals, if its original

incentive was not consistent with the lofty ideals inherent in such an edifice, it will not endure.

We may add one postscript. Raising children and educating them in the *Torah* way is no different than constructing a *Mishkan*. In both cases, one desires to permeate an edifice/person with holiness. Success or failure is determined by the purity of one's *kavanos*, intentions. All too often we try to recapture our youth through the lives of our children. We attempt to guide them along the correct path of our choosing. Our concern is not for our children--but for ourselves. We should set realistic goals that are in accordance with the laws of the *Torah*. Regrettably, our approach may have a more secular-orientation than its *Torah* counterpart. We should learn from the *Mishkan*, which merited everlasting existence as a result of the proper intentions behind it. With the right intentions and many *Tehillim*, we will merit to raise a generation that will remain true to the *Torah* way.