

MISHKAN AND MIKDASH (II)

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I

RECAP FROM PART I

In last week's segment, we challenged the conventional notion that equates the Mishkan with the Mikdash, identifying the former as the temporary version of the latter (or, alternatively, the latter as the permanent "Mishkan"). This challenge was founded upon three text-based issues:

- 1) The excessive delay (over four hundred years) from the conquest of Yerushalayim by Yehoshua and the construction of the Mikdash;
- 2) The relatively diminished role of the Aron haB'rit in the Beit haMikdash, and
- 3) The seemingly odd Divine response to David's desire to construct a house for G-d; at first, He seems to reject the need for such a house, then allows for the construction of same, but only allows for David's son to build the house.

In addition, we raised two other questions, ancillary to the Mishkan-Mikdash relationship but associated with the period during which the focal point of Divine worship moved from the אהל יסף to the שבט יהודה (cf. T'hilim 78:67-68):

- 4) Why do the Urim veTumim disappear as a vehicle for Divine guidance in political and military affairs?
- 5) Why does Sh'lomo omit what is apparently the central function of the Beit haMikdash - Korbanot - from his lengthy T'fillah at the dedication (I M'lakhim 8)?

The first three questions are premised, as mentioned, on the conventional understanding which identifies the Mishkan with the Mikdash. I would like to suggest that not only does that understanding raise serious historico-textual problems, as above, but that these two structures are, from a significant and critical perspective, diametrically opposite.

In order to support this suggestion, let's assay the purpose of each "Sanctuary" etiologically as well as teleologically.

II

THE ETIOLOGY OF THE MISHKAN

A: BACKGROUND

With the exception of the Egel-narrative, the second half of Sefer Sh'mot is devoted to the details of the Mishkan. Perhaps even more surprising than the many chapters given over to this holy tent is the unique place that these laws occupy within the chronology of events at Sinai, as follows:

Although the Rishonim are divided as to how to read the sequence of events at Sinai (Sh'mot 19-24), the straightforward read of the text (supported by, among others, Ramban), presents the following three stages of Mattan Torah at Sinai:

- 1) The "Decalogue" (Aseret haDibrot - Sh'mot 20:2-14) - heard by the people as they all stood - without exception - at the foot of the mountain;
- 2) The "Mishpatim" (a generic name for the material from 20:15-23:33) - heard by Mosheh inside of the cloud that covered Har Sinai - but still at the foot of the mountain.
- 3) The "Mishkan" - covering chapters 25-31, given to Mosheh atop the mountain. After a step-by-step directive as to how to build the Mishkan, its vessels and appurtenances, the clothes of the Kohanim and their sanctification ceremony, the twice-daily offering and the incense altar, Mosheh was given a renewed command relating to Shabbat (see next week's shiur for a detailed analysis of the relationship between Shabbat and the Mishkan). Aside from these six verses about Shabbat, the only topic of these seven chapters is the Mishkan.

As we explained in the recent two-part essay on *Aseret haDibrot*:

If we look at the verses immediately following the 'Aseret haDibrot, we see that the B'nei Yisra'el could not take the intense experience of direct Divine revelation and asked Mosheh to go up to G-d to get the rest of the Torah and relay it to them:

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Mosheh, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let G-d speak to us, or we will die." Mosheh said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for G-d has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin." Then the people stood at a distance, while Mosheh drew near to the thick darkness where G-d was. (20:15-18)

As a result of their fear, Mosheh was given the next series of Mitzvot (from the end of Chapter 20 [detailing the form, construction and proper respect due to the altar] through the middle of Chapter 23 [including the civil and criminal code, along with the ritual laws associated with the calendar] concluding with the Divine promise of protection and success in conquest of the Land [ending at 23:33]). These Mitzvot were given to Mosheh at the foot of the mountain:

Then the people stood at a distance, while Mosheh drew near to the thick darkness where G-d was.

After these Mitzvot and promises were given to Mosheh, G-d beckoned him to the top of the mountain:

And He said to Mosheh, Come up to Hashem, you, and Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Yisra'el; and worship from far away. And Mosheh alone shall come near Hashem; but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him. (24:1-2)

Mosheh, however, took a "detour" before ascending the mountain. He left the cloud and led the people in a covenant ceremony, including:

- * the oral recitation of the laws he had just received - to which the people indicated their acceptance (v.3)
- * the writing of all of these laws in "Sefer haB'rit", the construction of an altar at the foot of the mountain along with twelve steles (v.4)
- * the offering of Korbanot by Na'arei B'nei Yisra'el (the B'khorot?) (v. 5)
- * the sprinkling of the blood over the people (or their representative steles - see Abravanel ad loc.) (v. 6)
- * the reading of the "Sefer haB'rit", followed by the people's renewed acceptance (v. 7)
- * concluding with Mosheh's explicit affirmation of the covenant into which the people had just entered (v. 8).

At that point, he ascended the mountain - and remained there for forty days and nights (v. 18).

What was he given during that time atop the mountain? The text, if followed in its straightest manner, allows for only one subject of the "mountaintop revelation" - the Mishkan. Here is an outline of the chapters in question:

- 25) donations to the Mishkan, the Aron, Shulhan and Menorah;
- 26) the frame of the Mishkan, along with the curtain dividing the two sections within;
- 27) the outside altar and courtyard and the pure oil for lighting;
- 28) the garments of the Kohanim;
- 29) the consecration of the Kohanim and the daily offering;
- 30) the incense altar, half-shekel tax, washstand and laver, anointing oil and incense;
- 31) the "call" of Betzalel and a unique reminder of Shabbat (see next week's shiur)

At the conclusion of Chapter 31, before we even hear about the Egel-tragedy, we are told:

And He gave to Mosheh, when He finished talking with him upon Mount Sinai, two tablets of Testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of G-d. (31:18)

It is only after the giving of the Luchot that we learn of the nefarious and frightening events below:

And when the people saw that Mosheh delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together to Aharon, and said to him, Arise, make us G-ds, which shall go before us; and as for this Mosheh, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what became of him... (32:1-2)

Why is the Mishkan the sole focus of the revelation atop the mountain?

B: THE MISHKAN: THE DIVINE RESPONSE TO B'NEI YISRA'EL'S FEAR

Following the sequence of presentation of Revelation in Sefer Sh'mot, a surprisingly simple answer as to the purpose of the Mishkan becomes apparent: The Mishkan was G-d's response to the B'nei Yisra'el's reticence to engage in a direct interaction with HaKadosh Barukh Hu.

When the B'nei Yisra'el first arrived at Har Sinai, they were told that their ultimate goal was to be a ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש (kingdom of Kohanim and a holy nation - Sh'mot 19:6). In other words, the entire nation was to operate in direct dialogue with the Almighty, both worshipping Him and receiving His laws.

Although the people reacted with such fear and trembling to the experience of the Decalogue, G-d nonetheless desired to continue the interaction with the nation - but how can this be accomplished, if they are frightened "to death" (see BT Shabbat 88b) upon hearing His voice?

The solution was for the people to construct an intimate meeting place, where their representative (Mosheh) would be able to continue the process of receiving the Law:

And there I will meet with you, and I will talk with you from above the cover, from between the two K'ruvim which are upon the ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the B'nei Yisra'el. (Sh'mot 25:22)

Indeed, it seems that all of the details regarding the construction of the Mishkan itself, including the role of the Shulhan, Menorah and Mizbeach (incense altar) are intended to replicate the events at Sinai. Ramban points this out in his introduction to Parashat Terumah:

The Mishkan, Ramban explains, serves as a vehicle to perpetuate the Sinai experience. Once the B'nei Yisra'el had experienced the great encounter with G-d at the mountain, it was His desire that they be able to keep this experience - albeit in a more confined manner - with them as they travelled to Eretz Yisra'el.

The Ramban's approach explains numerous similarities between the Mishkan and מעמד הר סיני. Here are a few examples:

- 1) Just as G-d had spoken to the B'nei Yisra'el at Mount Sinai, so too does He continue to speak to them (via Mosheh) from the קדש הקדשים through the כרובים atop the ארון (25:22);
- 2) The לוחות העדות (Tablets of Testimony) which Mosheh will receive (24:12) on Mount Sinai, serve as a testimony to the giving of the Torah and thus, will be kept in the Aron, the focal point of the Mishkan (25:21);
- 3) The Cloud created by the Incense Altar (30:1-10) symbolizes the Cloud that covered Mount Sinai (19:9, 24:15-18);
- 4) The Fire on the Altar (Vayyikra 6:6) symbolizes the Fire that descended on Mount Sinai (Sh'mot 24:17). The laws of the Altar reflect the Covenant ceremony (24:4-5).

Ramban's explanation posits the Mishkan as a pure continuation of Ma'amad Har Sinai; our thesis is that it is a bit more than that. Had B'nei Yisra'el been willing to continue the process of direct revelation - and thereby been allowed to continue representing themselves at worship - there would not have been a need for a Mishkan. Since their reaction to G-d's Revelation did not allow for a continuation, there was a need to replicate Har Sinai in a "safe" manner.

There were, essentially, three options available to facilitate this:

- 1) Instruct Mosheh to ascend the mountain for a much lengthier duration, during which he would receive the remainder of the Law.
- 2) Instruct Mosheh to repeatedly ascend and descend, as he did when they first arrived at Sinai (Chapter 19).

3) Construct a location, within the camp, where Revelation could continue.

The difficulties inherent in either of the first two options are obvious:

- 1) If Mosheh ascends the mountain for a lengthy duration, the people are bereft of their leader (note what happened after only forty days); besides this, it doesn't allow for Mosheh to transmit the Law in "teachable segments" to the people.
- 2) Although Mosheh's physical stamina is attested to even forty years later (see D'varim 34:7), it would certainly be a great burden on both the people and their leader to constantly ascend the mountain only to descend in order to teach the people. This also would raise the increased possibility of the people sanctifying the mountain, something which was never intended (see 19:13).

The solution which remained was to construct a tent which would, to use Ramban's imagery, continue the audio-visual experience of Sinai in the midst of the camp.

There is one difficulty with this solution to the trepidation of the people: How will they participate in the Divine encounter if they only receive the Law through an intermediary?

The Torah provides two solutions which are, I believe, intrinsically tied:

- 1) *Hashem spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the B'nei Yisra'el, that they bring Me an offering; from every man that gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.* (Sh'mot 25:1-
- 2) The Zikkaron of the B'nei Yisra'el, as carried on the vestments of the Kohen Gadol inside the Kodesh:
 - a) The חֹשֶׁן (breastpiece) worn by Aharon. The Hoshen had four rows of three precious stones each. Each stone was engraved with the name of one of the tribes. (28:21):
So Aharon shall bear the names of the B'nei Yisra'el in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart when he goes into the holy place, for a continual remembrance before Hashem.
 - b) The shoulder-pieces of the אֶפֶרֶת (apron) worn by Aharon. Each piece had an onyx stone and between the two stones, all twelve names (Re'uven, Shim'on etc.) were engraved. (ibid. v. 9):
You shall set the two stones on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the B'nei Yisra'el; and Aharon shall bear their names before Hashem on his two shoulders for remembrance.

In other words, the people's voluntary donation *from every man that gives it willingly* assures that every member of the B'nei Yisra'el has the opportunity to contribute a permanent presence in the Mishkan - and each of their names will constantly be present "inside" even though the people remain in the "safety" of the camp.

C: KORBANOT

Our thesis serves to explain the many similarities between the Mishkan and Har Sinai (as per Ramban), as well as the contributory and commemorated role of the people within its walls. We also understand, again following Ramban, why the Revelation continues through the vehicle of the Mishkan. There is one major component of the Mishkan which remains unexplained. How do we account for the central role of the Korbanot in the daily functioning of the Mishkan?

When we reexamine the events at Sinai, we note that not only did the B'nei Yisra'el receive the Law at that spot, they also worshipped G-d. Indeed, that seems to have been the primary goal of the arrival at Sinai:

...and this shall be a sign to you, that I have sent you; When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d upon this mountain. (Sh'mot 3:12)

This is a part of the promise that *you will be unto me a kingdom of Kohanim* - worshipping G-d directly, without need of representatives at the altar. This was, indeed, the reality in Egypt when every family brought the Pesach offering - and it was also the worship experience at the foot of the mountain detailed above:

And he sent young men of the B'nei Yisra'el, who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to Hashem. (24:5)

We can now appreciate the central role of Korbanot in the Mishkan; they, too, serve to perpetuate the experience at Sinai. Just as the entire nation sealed the covenant with Korbanot at the foot of the mountain, so their representatives (the Kohanim) continue to bring offerings to G-d in the Mishkan. This also serves to explain the somewhat surprising elevation in status of Aharon's sons at Sinai:

And He said to Mosheh, Come up to Hashem, you, and Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Yisra'el; and worship from far away.

Since, following our presentation, the “distancing” of the B'nei Yisra'el had already occurred, necessitating the Mishkan, we understand why the future representatives of the people at worship - the second prong of the Sinai experience - were called to participate more intensely in the original Divine interaction on the mountain.

This also explains a curious turn of the phrase used in Bamidbar 28 in describing the Olat haTamid (the daily offering), the only offering outlined in the instructions of the Mishkan (Sh'mot 29:38-46):

It is a continual burnt offering, העשוייה בהר סיני (which was performed at Har Sinai) for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire to the Lord. (28:6)

D: SUMMARY

The Mishkan is the vehicle through which the entire Sinai experience can continue - continued Revelation to Mosheh, continued worship through the office of the Kohanim. The B'nei Yisra'el maintain their presence, as it were, by dint of their donations to the building and, in kind, the Kohen Gadol constantly adorns himself with their names as a commemoration before G-d.

The Sinai experience was, phenomenologically, substantially as well as teleologically, a national event. It established the unique bond between the B'nei Yisra'el and haKadosh Barukh Hu and, as such, served to separate us from the nations of the world (see BT Shabbat 89a on the parochial and exclusivist homiletics of Sinai and Horev). It stands to reason, then, that the Mishkan, as the “portable Sinai”, is an intimate and private structure, relating only to the unique and unparalleled bond between the B'nei Yisra'el and the Ribbono Shel Olam.

III THE MIKDASH: THE FOCUS OF BECHIRAH

As we mentioned at the outset, in order to respond to our questions, we have to establish the functional and teleological purpose of the permanent “House of G-d” as distinct from the Mishkan. Now that we have suggested that the purpose of the Mishkan was to provide an ongoing “Sinai”, allowing for the continuation of both Revelation and Divine worship, we must turn our attention to the Beit haMikdash in Yerushalayim.

A: THE AVRAHAMIC CHARTER

Before directly addressing the function and telos of the Beit haMikdash, we must remind ourselves of our mission - a mission so overwhelming and all-encompassing that the sheer magnitude of it often causes us to shy away from it, refocusing us on more limited and “accessible” objectives. That does not exempt us from the task, nor does it relieve us of our duty to keep our sights broad and our vision clear to the ultimate purpose for which we were chosen.

And Hashem said to Avram, Get out from your country, and from your family, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you; And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed. (B'resheet 12:1-3)

This charge - and cause of both Avraham's selection and his blessing - is repeated in anticipation of the great negotiations over the fate of S'dom:

And Hashem said, Shall I hide from Avraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Avraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him,

and they shall keep the way of Hashem, to do justice and judgment; that Hashem may bring upon Avraham that which he has spoken of him. (ibid. 18:17-19)

And is reconfirmed in the aftermath of Avraham's greatest moment - the Akedah:

That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice. (ibid. 22:17-18)

The task, begun by that lonely man of faith as he made Aliyah from Haran, was to become the source of blessing for the entire universe; to paraphrase the Midrash: To bring the world to G-d and G-d to the world. (see B'resheet Rabbah 39:3).

Our job, as his chosen descendants, is to continue that mission and, ultimately, to ensure that *all creatures will recognize and know, that to You will every knee bow and every tongue shall swear.*

This is, perhaps, best summed up by the responsibility assumed by the prophet:

I, Hashem, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light to the nations; (Yeshayah 42:3)

How can Am Yisra'el fulfill this mission? How can we inspire the world to realize that the One G-d, the G-d of the House of Ya'akov, is the source of all truth and righteousness and demands moral accountability from all of His creatures?

The answer seems painfully obvious - in order to teach the nations of the world, we need to be operating as a nation among nations, yet a nation distinct from all nations. We need to have the trappings of nationhood - economic infrastructure, military prowess, points of social conflict etc. - all of which are approached through the sanctity of Torah. To find righteous, diligently studious and even saintly individuals may inspire other individuals - but that will never motivate the nations. This - for two reasons:

1. The individual "Tzaddik" has limited impact, from an international perspective. As such, his renown is limited to those who have chosen to meet him and those who come into contact with his disciples.
2. The issues which an individual - qua individual - must grapple with in his life are inherently less impactful and wholly different than those decisions which must be undertaken by the leaders of state, operating in that capacity.

For Am Yisra'el to do our job, we need to be operating as a full-fledged nation, in our own land and with our own sovereignty. It is only at that point that we can even begin the job of drawing the nations near to G-d and bringing the Ribbono Shel Olam to the entire world. Thus was Avraham and his progeny consistently promised a nation which would carry on his mission - a nation which was first addressed by G-d as *ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש*.

B: THE BASICS OF NATIONHOOD

1. Unity

It stands to reason that no collection of individuals can properly be considered a nation if they do not, first see themselves as one unit, with a common interest and common destiny.

From the time that the B'nei Yisra'el entered the Land, successfully conquering most of it (see, inter alia, Yehoshua 13:1), they operated, by and large, as individual clans. The book which covers most of the pre-Mikdash period in Eretz Yisra'el is Sefer Shoftim - and if we were to only read that Sefer, we would have little idea of the notion of an "Am Yisra'el", much less of its actualization. The anthem of Sefer Shoftim is a phrase which appears three times

In those days there was no king in Yisra'el (17:6, 18:1, 21:25),

the implication (and context) being one of anarchy, lack of unity and, most assuredly, no sense of common purpose (in the first and last of these citations, the phrase is followed by the haunting: *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*).

As such, the first step that had to be taken was for Am Yisra'el to view themselves as a cohesive unit - something which only begins with the demand for a king posed to Sh'mu'el - a demand which led to the selection of Sha'ul.

2. Government

Now that the nation was finally operating (more or less) as a union, the next step was to establish the various components that make up the Toraic government. As outlined in Parashat Shof'tim, the ideal government which leads Am Yisra'el is composed of four branches:

- a) כהן
- b) מלך
- c) נביא
- d) בית-דין

These four separate and distinct branches must work together to lead the nation and their separation insures that political interests and agendas will not threaten the public weal.

Until and through the era of Sha'ul's monarchy, these branches were not yet established as separate. Before Sha'ul, the Shofet (if there was one at the time) operated both as quasi-Melekh, often as Navi and led the Beit-Din. Sh'mu'el's mentor was Eli, who was Kohen, (quasi) Melekh and Navi at once. Even Sha'ul was reckoned among the prophets (see I Sh'mu'el 10:11).

In addition, Sha'ul never established a court -

And Sha'ul remained on the far side of Geva under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron; and the people who were with him were about six hundred men; (ibid. 14:2)

It was only with the establishment of David's kingdom that all of these pieces began to fall into place:

- 1) There was a unified nation under one king: *Then came all the tribes of Yisra'el to David to Hevron, and spoke, saying, Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. (II Sh'mu'el 5:1)*
- 2) The house of the king was built, signifying the permanence of his monarchy: *And Hiram king of Tzor sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house. And David perceived that Hashem had established him king over Yisra'el, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Yisra'el's sake. (ibid. vv. 11-12)*
- 3) By dint of his Yehudean lineage, the Kehunah was now clearly a separate office, distinct from the monarch;
- 4) As the monarchy was established, court prophets (Natan and Gad) began to operate as separate messengers of G-d - who could (and did) chastise the monarch when necessary.

Before going any further, we now understand why both the Aron and the Urim veTumim were relegated to commemorative status at this point in David's career. Once the Mosaic revelation was complete, there would be no more instruction (in the sense of new Mitzvot) given, the Aron was no longer needed as the base for Divine communication - except insofar as the guidance of the people was concerned. National questions of war, settlement etc. were still posed to the Urim veTumim (see the examples listed in last week's essay). Once the proper government was finally set up (over four hundred years after the Land was conquered), there was no need for this type of Divine guidance - for G-d Himself had already instructed us that our Navi-Melekh-Kohein-BeitDin government should fulfill that role.

C: THE SELECTION OF DAVID

In last week's essay, I raised the possibility that the anthemic phrase in D'varim *the place that Hashem your G-d will choose to place His Name* is not a direct reference to Yerushalayim - rather, that all the interpretations that read it that way are retrospective.

There are a few individuals, groups and one location which are considered to be "selected" (root בחר) in T'nakh. Among them: Avraham (Nehemiah 9:7), the tribe of Levi (D'varim 18:5), the king (ibid. 17:15), the Kohanim (Bamidbar 17:23), David (I M'lakhim 8:16) and Yerushalayim (II Divrei haYamim 6:6). In each case, the בחירה is not a pre-ordained matter; rather it is the response to particular traits or behavior found in the one who is chosen.

How did the *place that I choose to place My Name* become Yerushalayim? The simplest answer is that that is where the chosen king, David, opted to build his palace and found his court. (although there is certainly room to argue that G-d Himself directed David to that place). When he had completed the Beit haMelekh, he turned his efforts to building a Beit Hashem - a place which could finally serve as the rallying point around which all of humanity would come to worship (see Yeshayah 2:1-4, 56:7)

We now understand G-d's enigmatic response to David. Even though He had never commanded that such a house be built - and had *wandered in tent and tabernacle* for these many years (reflective of his people's as-yet-unsettledness) he would accede to the request because, indeed, the conditions were finally ripe. Why, then, was the job given to his son? Why was David himself barred from building this greatest of all edifices?

The strongest sign of a stable government is its ability to outlive its personae. When the engineer of a junta dies, the ruling elite usually lose the reins of leadership quickly. The first person in whom the promise of full Yisra'eli government would be realized would be the next generation - this is why the stability of David's son's rule is promised concurrently with the promise that he will build the house for G-d.

IV

REVISITING OUR QUESTIONS

It is now clear why the Beit haMikdash was not built for those many generations - the House of G-d that would bring the nations of the world to His worship could not be constructed until His nation was firmly established, operating according to the Divine norms which make us truly a holy nation.

We also understand G-d's enigmatic response to David, as above.

We can also understand the limited role of the Aron and Urim veTumim - again, as explained above.

We also asked why Sh'lomo never mentioned Korbanot in his lengthy T'fillah, recited at the dedication of the Mikdash (I M'lakhim 8). It is now clear - although there are several "Mishkan-purposes" which continue to operate within the Mikdash, the essential accomplishment of the Mikdash was in its universality, in its ability to draw the nations of the world close to G-d.

Is it any wonder that the first event we read about in M'lakhim after the dedication of the Beit HaMikdash is the visit of Malkat Sh'va:

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon and what he had done in the name of the Lord, she came to test him with difficult questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that carried spices, and much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was in her heart. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king, which he did not tell her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, And the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their clothing, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. But I did not believe the words, until I came, and my eyes saw it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard. Happy are your men, happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you, and who hear your wisdom. Blessed be the Lord your G-d, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore he made you king, to do judgment and justice. (I M'lakhim 10:1-9)

Here, the goal of the Mikdash was realized. A foreign ruler, drawn to Yerushalayim by the report of this wonderful House of G-d, meets His nation and their leader and is so taken with them that she, in turn, blesses G-d and admits to the special relationship enjoyed by His people.

POSTSCRIPT

Although this essay began with the first mention of the Mishkan (Sh'mot 25), it is prudent to note that the Mikdash is actually mentioned earlier than the Mishkan - and in a context which is consistent with the thesis presented here:

The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of K'naa'n shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Your people pass over, Hashem, till the people pass over, whom You have made. You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, Hashem, which You have made for You to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, Adon-ai, which Your hands have established. (Sh'mot 15:14-17)

This first call to build a house for G-d in His inheritance was uttered at a time when the nation was unified - and celebrated the awareness of G-d manifest among the nations of the world.

וְהָיָה אַחֲרֵי־כֵן יִמְצָא נִסִּים וּמוֹפְתִים בְּעֵינֵי כָל־הַגּוֹיִם

וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לֵבָבוֹ וְנִעְלָה אֵל־הַר־ה' אֵל־בֵּית־אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב

וַיִּזְרַן מִדְּרַבְּיוֹ וְנִלְכָה בְּאַרְחֻזָּיו

כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תִצְרָה וְדַבַּר־ה' מִירוּשָׁלַם