Parashat Tetzaveh, 5779, 2019:

Ashreinu!

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yechiel, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof and Pittsburgh, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Yakir Ephraim ben Rachel Devorah, Mordechai ben Miriam Tovah, and the safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

There are two well-known *pasukim (*verses) in *Sefer Shemot* that express the concept of Hashem's dwelling amongst the Jewish people. The first instance appears in last week's *parasha,* "And they shall make Me a sanctuary (*Mikdash*) and I will dwell (*v'shachanti*) in their midst," and the second in our Torah portion, "I will dwell (*v'shachanti*) in the midst of the children of Israel and I will be their G-d (*v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim*)." (25:8 and 29:45, translation, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*) The first *pasuk* presents the idea of Hashem's dwelling amongst us as a result of our constructing the *Mishkan* (Desert Sanctuary), and the second adds the notion that based upon His dwelling amongst us, He will be our G-d. Taken in tandem, the following formula emerges: Construction of the *Mishkan* eventuates in *v'shachanti* in our midst, which leads to *v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim*.

Although they initially appear to convey similar content, *v'shachanti*, and *v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim* are dissimilar concepts, as indicated by their differentiated phrasing in our *pasuk*. This exegetical approach was followed by both the Sforno (Rabbi Ovadiah ben Ya'akov,1475-1550) and the Ha'emek Davar (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, 1816-1893) in their respective Torah commentaries on *Sefer Shemot* 29:45. According to the Sforno, *v'shachanti* refers to Hashem's ready desire to accept our *tefilot* (prayers), and our *avodah* (*korbanot* ─ sacrificial offerings in the *Beit Hamikdash*). In contrast, *v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim*, does not refer to the content of what

Hashem will accept, but rather that He will do so *bikvodo u'atzmo* ─ without any go-between. This is similar to the manner in which He took us out from Egypt: "Not through the intermediary efforts of an angel (*malach*), not through the exertions of a ministering angel (*saraf*) and not as a result of a messenger ─ but, rather, solely by the Holy One blessed be He, in His honor and glory." (*Haggadah*, translation my own)

The Ha'emek Davar differs from the Sforno by suggesting that "*v'shachanti* in our midst" denotes an everlasting connection that obtains between the Almighty and the Jewish people ─ even in the absence of the *Mishkan*:

> Even in the absence of the *Mishkan*, wherein Hashem's glory, may He be blessed, was explicitly manifest, [Hashem] will continue to ever be in the midst of the Jewish people. This means that His *Schechinah* (Divine Presence) will never depart from the community of Israel…even though it will not appear manifestly evident to all. (Translation my own)

In addition, he takes a different tact from the Sforno in his explanation of the second phrase, "*v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim*," as signifying that Hashem is continually attuned to and "watchful of our needs and will fulfill them."

Whether we follow the Sforno or the Ha'emek Davar, both agree that *v'shachanti* and *v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim* refer to Hashem's commitment to an eternal personal relationship with the Jewish people. In my view, this is the counterpoint to our passionate song at the *Yam Suf* (the Sea of Reeds): "This is my G-d, and I will ever praise him (*zeh kali v'anvahu*), the G-d of my father, and I will exalt Him." (*Sefer Shemot* 15:2) We were G-d intoxicated at the *Yam Suf*, and could not hold ourselves from bursting out in a song of ever-lasting love to Him; now, so to speak, it was Hashem's turn to proclaim His never-ending love for the Jewish people.

At this juncture we are in a much better position to understand a celebrated phrase that we joyfully proclaim each morning in our *tefilot*: "*Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu u'mah nayim goraleinu u'mah yafah yerushateinu*!" ("We are overjoyed in the goodliness of our portion! And how pleasing is our fate! And how desirous is our inheritance!") In my estimation, the terms portion, fate and inheritance refer to our holy Torah and the dynamic relationship we share with Hashem, for truly, *zeh kali v'anvahu* and *v'shachanti v'hayiti lahem l'Elokim*! With Hashem's help, may we ever be able to appreciate the depth and beauty of this unique relationship. *V'chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: http://reparashathashavuah.org

They may also be found on http://www.yutorah.org/ using the search criteria of Etengoff and the parasha's name.

The email list, *b'chasdei Hashem,* has expanded to hundreds of people. I am always happy to add more members to the list. If you have family or friends you would like to have added, please do not hesitate to contact me via email mailto:rdbe718@gmail.com.

*** My audio *shiurim* for Women on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: **http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpyd**

******* I have posted 164 of **Rabbi Soloveitchik's** English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link.