

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

DESIGN OF ANCIENT TEMPLES: the Mishcan, Moses' Temple in the Sinai Wilderness, and the Mikdash, Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem--differed in structure. The Mishcan was a movable, assembled enclosure suited for nomadic life, encampment and movement in the desert. The Mikdash was a stable, permanent building in the midst of a people settled on their land. Both exhibit in design similar patterns of functionalism and symbolism which reflect the Jewish outlook: the Temple is not a house for God, who is infinite and omnipresent, but a place for man, who needs and seeks to worship Him. The Temple does not enshrine God, but serves as a means for God's presence among the people (Ex. 25:8): "They shall make Me a Temple and then I will dwell among them." The Kotel, the Western Wall, is a remnant of the last Temple's destruction (70 C.E.), and is a dramatic symbol of the Jews' genuine quest for, and vigorous reassurance of, full redemption.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

PREPARING FOR REDEMPTION: The portable Tabernacle of the Israelites in the Sinai desert was made of Shittim-wood (acacia or cedar). But where did they find this kind of wood in the desert? Legend has it that when Jacob descended from the Land of Israel into Egypt with his family of 70, he brought with him some Shittim seedlings and planted them in Egypt. He told his children that when they would be delivered from Egypt, they should carry with them beams and boards fashioned from the Shittim trees; this lumber would be used for the building of the Tabernacle. Even on their way to Egypt, the Israelites were already preparing for their Exodus from Egypt. While settling in Egypt they were imbued with hopes and visions of redemption. A remedy ought to be ready before calamity; a plan of rescue and deliverance ought to be devised before it is too late.

Candlelight time 5:30 Sabbath ends 6:25

Scriptural reading for Saturday, Feb. 7:

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE FOUR DIRECTIONS—east, west, south, north—have Hebrew names which reflect both natural human orientation and Israel's geography. To orient himself ancient man would face the light of sunrise in the morning, the Orient ("Or" in Hebrew). Thus the east is "mizrach" meaning sunrise, and also "kedem" meaning forward, this direction being "the front." West is "ma'arav" implying sunset and evening ("erev"), and also "ahor" indicating backward, this direction considered "the rear." It is also termed "yamah"—the direction of the Great Sea (known now as the Mediterranean). Facing east, the south is to the right and the north to the left; thus south is "yamin" (right) and north "semol" (left). Also, south is "darom" which akin to "zarom," means to flow: The prominent river—running down from the northern mountains within the heart of the land—the Yarden (Jordan) from the root-word "yarod" (go down)—as well as most other rivers in Israel, flows southward. North is "zafon" meaning the hidden site; unknown and threatening is what is concealed behind the high mountains. From the north horrible conquerors would suddenly pass through: "From the north disaster may open up!" warned Jeremiah (1:14). But bad omens are counter-acted in Judaism. The Shulhan, the Table in the ancient Temple, symbolizing sustenance and success, was placed to the north: From the north prosperity should open up!

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE MISHKAN, the portable, temporary sanctuary during Israel's wandering in the desert, is amply and minutely described in Torah (Ex. 26-29), with all architectural and structural detail. Why this specific blueprint for a sacred temple of a remote past? Torah is eternity; its scope is not antiquity but destiny. It is a source of living; a design for living, not merely a record. Its purpose is not just to preserve memories of bygone events, but to nourish the dynamic continuity of the people. Even when Torah describes, it prescribes. Like all Torah themes, the Mishkan too is depicted not as a dead issue of the past, a historic relic worth remembering, but as a pertinent, enduring concept of ultimate significance. On a factual-material level, the Mishkan indeed is past; however, on a theoretical-symbolic level, viewed as a source of edification and wisdom ("torah"), it is forever pertinent. The study of all the intriguing and complex details of the Mishkan, as explored and explicated by our sages throughout the ages, is a sure way for promoting sanctity and purity in the present. By studying the blueprint of the temple on a symbolic level, we learn to build it, in spirit, within ourselves.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Feb. 11:

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19; Deuteronomy 25:17-19

HAFTARAH: Kings I 5:26-6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE "KAPPORET" was the "cover" above the "aron"—both most central among the furnishings of the ancient Temple. The aron (chest, ark)—a wooden box, plated inside and outside with pure gold, measuring about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits wide, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits high (a cubit is about 21 inches)—contained for safekeeping the original Tablets and Scrolls of Torah. Comprised of a bottom and four walls, and fully open on top, the aron was covered on top with a rectangular piece of pure gold, $2\frac{1}{2}$ long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ wide in cubits, called kapporet. The kapporet's third dimension, (thickness) however, is strangely unmentioned in Torah's detail (Ex. 25:17); the Rabbis (Suka 5a) figured it was a "tefach" or handbreadth (sixth of a cubit) thick. Having such a dimensional ratio, the kapporet was quite substantive, sturdy and firm. In Scripture, nonetheless, the kapporet mysteriously appears as two-dimensional—as if it were a spaceless, surrealistic, "spiritual" item. More than a material object, the kapporet emerges as a metaphysical phenomenon, symbolizing the mystery of man's nearness and elevation to God. Its name (from "kofer and "kappara" in the sense of ransom and expiation) conveys, in addition to its basic meaning of "cover," the idea of propitiation, atonement and forgiveness: "shelter of reconciliation" or "mercy seat"). The biblical ritual of the most holy Day (Yom Kippur) (Lev. 16:14) dramatically underscores the mystic-linguistic relation between kippur, kappara, and kapporet.

Scriptural reading for Saturday, March 3:

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

“REMEMBER AMALEK” means that we must restrain our natural sentiments of mercy when we deal with a hideous enemy who aims to destroy us. King Saul, in his inborn nobility, displayed an admirable Jewish trait of “rahamanut” (compassion) in his reluctance to execute the captured king of Amalek, Agag (I Sam. 15:9): “Saul and his people had pity on Agag...” This was misplaced pity. Agag, as prophet Samuel pointed out (v. 33), was a voracious killer, a war criminal. To spare him is to make mockery of justice. To consider the bereavement of his mother is to ignore the pain of the many bereft mothers of his countless victims. To show pity for the guilty is to be harsh towards the innocent. Thus, Samuel, in his fierce and resolute manner, put Agag to death. Say the rabbis: “He who is merciful to the cruel ends up being cruel to the merciful.”

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Feb. 26:
TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19; Deuteronomy 25:17-
HAFTARAH: I Samuel 15:2-34

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

TEMPLE AND PLEDGE share similar names in Hebrew, "*mishkan*" (temple) and "*mashkon*" (pledge). Say the Sages (MR Bemidbar 14:14): All Temples of Israel -- the Tabernacle in the Sinai desert, the Sanctuary in Shiloh, and the Temple in Jerusalem -- were all built as the people's pledges to God: they existed as long as the people followed God's will. When the people failed to do His will, they forfeited their pledges and the Temples were destroyed.

Temples are not meant to be instruments for "forgiveness," for "covering-up" corruption, or for exonerating wrongdoers. Rather, they are sources of inspiration to discourage wrongdoings and to teach and promote righteousness. They are monumental pledges for the people's bid to obey God.

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE USE OF WEALTH: The Torah's economic policy for the building and maintenance of The Temple is based on two complementary guidelines: "Poverty is not befitting an abode of richness" and "Torah spares the people's money (Menahot 89a)." The first calls for generous expenditure; the second for moderation. The balance between these seemingly contradictory rules maintained splendor without extravagance and simplicity without deprivation. Exemplifying beneficent spending coupled with prudent saving, the Temple conveyed a lesson in the art of living: how to enjoy wealth and avoid waste. Wealth, "mammon," in Judaism, is neither worshiped nor despised but appreciated as a product of human effort and Divine blessing. It is to be used and shared constructively and gratefully.

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

.. THOUGHT OF THE WEEK *The Shabbat readings describe the design of the two Temples. The Mishcan, Moses' Temple in the Sinai Wilderness is the theme of the sidra, the Mikdash, Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, is the theme of the haftara. The Mishcan was a movable and assembled enclosure suited for nomadic life for encampment and movement in the desert. The Mikdash was a stable and permanent structure built in the midst of an agricultural land. Both, however, Mishcan and Mikdash, exhibit in their design similar patterns of functionalism and symbolism which reflect the Jewish outlook. The Temple is viewed in Judaism not as a house for God who is infinite and omnipresent, but as a place for man, who needs and seeks to worship Him. "They shall make Me a Temple and then I will dwell among them." (Es. 25:8). The Temple does not enshrine God but serves as a means for God's presence among the people. The Kotel, the remaining Western Wall of the last Temple (destroyed in 70 C.E.) serves today as a dramatic symbol of the Jews' genuine quest for and vigorous reassurance of full redemption.*

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

Thought of the Week
Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

TERUMA

February 13, 1997

THE BIBLICAL TEMPLE has two names, *Mikdash* and *Mishkan*. *Mikdash* means Place of Holiness and *Mishkan*, used particularly for the portable, wandering tabernacle in the Sinai desert, means Place of the Dwelling. The Hebrew name "Divine Presence" is *Shekhina* (literally, the Dwelling).

The two Hebrew words *Mishkan* (sanctuary, tabernacle) and *mashkon* (pledge, guarantee) are related. Both are etymologically connected with the idea of dwelling (*sh-k-n*). *Mishkan* means a dwelling place (whether mundane or sacred); *mashkon* is an object surrendered by the debtor to the creditor's possession to "dwell" there as security. Say the Sages (MR Bemidbar 12:14): All Temples of Israel, the Tabernacle in the Sinai desert, the Sanctuary in Shiloh, and of the Temple in Jerusalem, were all built as the people's pledges to God: They existed as long as the people followed God's will. When the people failed to do God's will, they forfeited their pledges.

Torah says (Exodus 25:8): "Let [the people] dedicate to Me a Place of Holiness [*Mikdash*] so that I may dwell among them." The Divine Presence is not confined to a Temple. The ultimate goal is that the *Shekhina* shall dwell among the people, infusing our ordinary, daily living with holiness. The purpose of the Temple in Judaism is to be a source of Divine moral inspiration for the people, not an abode for God. The pure and secret heart of each individual human person enshrines the Divine. The Temple, however, is a religious-educational instrument. Through earnest worship in the Temple, whether structured or spontaneous, a person may derive the insight, courage, and fortitude to face harsh realities with a sense of dignity and purpose. As a social institution, the Temple is part of our mundane reality. Its aim is not to become a "sanctuary" whereto one escapes from the world, but a home wherein, by devotion and study, one finds life's meaning.

The Temples are not meant to serve as instruments for blank forgiveness and protection, nor for covering-up corruption and exonerating wrongdoers. Rather, the Temples are supposed to function as source of inspiration, to discourage wrongdoing and to teach and promote righteousness. The Temples of Israel are monumental pledges for the people's bid to obey God.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

TERUMA (contribution, offering, donation), derived from "*rum*" (heights), literally means something which is uplifted or elevated to a higher status. The Hebrew term points to the Jewish attitude toward charity in general, and to the proper direction of giving: Upward not downward. The benefactor must not consider himself "up" looking "down" at his beneficiary -- as if "throwing" his gifts to him, *downward*. Rather, he must show full respect to him, giving in a dignified way, *upward*. By *teruma*, the donor too is elevated, coming closer to God, the Supreme Giver in Heaven (*Marom*).

Another term is *nedava*, implying voluntarism, motivation, heartfelt desire to help and give (Ex. 25:2): *Teruma* is to be taken "from every person whose heart so moves him."

Friday, February 15, 1991

OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

TERUMA (Exodus 25:2) means donation, contribution; the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the Temple. In the root of this term is the verb *rum* (to elevate), which suggests the idea of raising, uplifting to a higher status. By giving of our property to charity (tzedakah) or to the sanctuary (hekdesch), we bring up our gifts, both literally and figuratively. At the same time, we elevate ourselves.

“By benevolence one rises to a height where one meets God. Therefore, do a good deed, give charity, before you begin your prayers!” (Rav Ahai Gaon; 8th century, Babylon). Before the building of the Temple, the people were instructed to bring up their *teruma* – thus uplifting themselves.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

TERUMAH (Ex. 25:2), literally "uplifting," means donation, contribution; the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the Temple. In the root of this term is the verb *rum* (to elevate), which suggests the idea of raising to a higher status. By giving of his property to charity (*tzedakah*) or to the sanctuary (*hekdesh*), the donor brings up his gift, both literally and figuratively. At the same time he elevates himself.

So says Rav Ahai Gaon (8th century, Babylon): "By benevolence a person rises to a height where he meets God. Therefore do a good deed, give charity, before you begin your prayers." Before the building of the Temple, the people were instructed to bring up their *terumah* -- thus uplifting themselves.

IS Friday, February 26, 1993

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TERUMA (Exodus 25:2) means donation, contribution; the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the Temple. In the root of this term is the verb *rum* (to elevate), which suggests the idea of raising, uplifting to a higher status. By giving of our property to charity (*tzedakah*) or to the sanctuary (*hekdesh*), we bring up our gifts, both literally and figuratively. At the same time, we elevate ourselves.

Before building the Temple, the people were instructed to bring up their *teruma* – thus uplifting themselves. “By benevolence one rises to a height where one meets God. Therefore, do a good deed, give charity, before you begin your prayers!” (Rav Ahai Gaon; 8th century, Babylon).

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

TERUMAH means donation, contribution—the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the temple (Ex. 25:2). The root letters of the term (“rum”) suggest the idea of uplifting or elevating to a higher status. The donor raises, brings up, his gift. But he also elevates himself. Rav Ahai Gaon (8th Century, Babylon): “By benevolence a person rises to a height where he meets God. Therefore do a good deed, give charity, before you begin your prayers.” Before the building of the Temple, the people were instructed to bring up their *Terumah*.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

TEMPLES SERVE HUMAN NEEDS, NOT GOD'S (ISAIAH 66:1):

The heavens, My throne;

The earth, My footstool.

Where is the house you can build for Me?

Where, the place for My rest?

So in Solomon's Prayer at the Temple's dedication (I Kings 8:27):

Will God truly reside on earth? Behold, the heavens and the heavens above heavens will not contain You; how much less this house which I have built?

These ideas on divine supremacy and human inadequacy, so poetically articulated in Scripture, have been surpassed by the human urge to erect monumental edifices to God. We feel a need to build temples as an expression of our adoration of God and as a place for worshipping Him. Temples thus serve our own needs, not God's.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE PURPOSE OF A TEMPLE is not to enshrine God but to refine the people (Ex. 25:8): "They shall make a sanctuary in My Name, that I may dwell among them." The original text uses the preposition *li* which commonly means "for Me," but rabbinic tradition insists that in the context of this verse it means "in My Name" (*lishmi*). The Temple is not "for" God, but in His Name. The final Hebrew word in this verse is *betokham* (in the plural, "among them"), and not *betokho* (in the singular, "inside it"). The lesson: The Temple is not for God, that He shall dwell inside *it* (the Temple), but for the refinement and elevation of the entire people, that He may dwell among *them* (the people).

Candlelight time 5:55 Sabbath ends 6:49

Scriptural reading for Saturday, Feb. 27:

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1, 27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26, 6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE HOLY TEMPLE in Judaism is not meant to be an abode for God but a source of moral inspiration for the people. In his pure and secret heart each human being enshrines the Divine. The Temple, however, is a religious instrument. From there, through structured or spontaneous worship, a person may derive the insight, the courage, the fortitude, to face harsh realities with a sense of dignity and purpose. Thus, a human-social institution, the Temple is part of our mundane reality. It is not meant to become a "sanctuary" where one escapes from the world, but a home wherein one finds, by devotion and study, life's true meaning. Divinity is not confined to a Temple. The ultimate goal is that the *Shekhina* (Divine Presence) shall dwell among the people, infusing our ordinary, daily living with holiness.

Friday, February 7, 1992

E WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE HOLY TEMPLE is perceived in Judaism not as an abode for God, but as a source of religious and moral inspiration for the people. The true shrine for the Divine is disclosed throughout the vast universe and enclosed within a person's pure heart. The Temple is a functional instrument, serving human, not Divine, needs. By means of established modes of ritual and devotion performed in the Temple, whether structured or spontaneous, a worshipper may derive insight, courage and fortitude to face harsh realities with faith and dignity.

As a human-social institution, the Temple in Judaism is part of mundane reality. It does not serve as a sanctuary, nor propose to freely grant forgiveness or protection for transgressors. It is not allowed to become a vehicle for covering up corruption or exonerating the corrupt, nor does it offer shelter and refuge for those who seek or need to escape the world, its laws or troubles. The Temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence, discouraging wrongdoings and promoting righteousness.

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1-27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26-6:13

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE HOLY TEMPLE spoken of in the Bible is meant not to be an abode for the Divine, but a source of moral inspiration for the people. Man in his pure heart enshrines the Divine. From the Temple, through true worship of God, man derives the insight, the courage, the fortitude, to face harsh realities with a sense of holiness and Godliness. The Temple is not a place whereto one escapes from the world, but wherein one finds its true religious meaning; the ultimate goal being the presence of God (shekhina) in man's mundane, daily living.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

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Judaism is part of mundane reality. The Jewish temple does not serve as a sanctuary, nor propose to freely grant forgiveness or protection from transgressors. It is not allowed to become a vehicle for covering up corruption or exonerating the corrupt, nor does it offer shelter and refuge for those who seek to escape the world, its laws or troubles. The temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence, discouraging wrongdoing and promoting righteousness.

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As a human-social institution, the Temple does not serve as a sanctuary, nor propose to freely grant forgive-

ness or protection for transgressors. It should not be a vehicle for covering up corruption or exonerating the corrupt, nor should it offer refuge for those who seek to escape the world. The Temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence, discouraging wrong-doing and promoting righteousness.

And so in Solomon's prayer at the Temple's dedication (I Kings 8:27):

"Will God truly reside on earth? Behold, the heavens and the heavens above heavens, will not contain You; how much less this house which I have built?"

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS / MARCH 2, 2001 1

By **RABBI ZVI YEHUDA**

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exonerating the corrupt. Nor does it offer refuge for those who seek or need to escape the world, its laws or troubles. The Temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence, discouraging wrong doing and promoting righteousness.

TERUMA (Exodus 25:2) means donation, contribution; the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the Temple. In the root of this term is the verb *rum* (to elevate), which suggests the idea of lifting up to a higher status. By giving of our property to charity (*tsedakah*) or to the sanctuary (*hekdesh*), we bring up our gifts, both literally and figuratively. At the same time, we elevate ourselves.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS / FEBRUARY 19, 1999

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

MIKDASH (temple) means a sanctuary, a home of Divine sanctity (*kedusha*). Similarly, *mishkan*, or tabernacle, referring mostly to a portable, foldable structure, means "Tent of Divine Indwelling" (of *Shekhina*). Both names are interchangeable. Using the noun for the former (sanctuary) and the verb for the latter (to dwell), God conveyed to Moses the precept of temple (Exodus 25:9). "Let them (the Israelites) make a sanctuary (mikdash) for Me (in My honor) so that I may dwell within them." God will "dwell" within the people. He will manifest Divine Presence (*Shekhina*) outside the sanctuary, among the community and inside the heart of each individual who will enshrine God's *Shekhina*.

The poetic words of kabbalist sage of Safed, Rabbi Eleazar Azikri (or Azkari: 1533-1600) in his *Sefer Haredim* (Venice, 1601) are: "Within my

heart I shall build a sanctuary enshrining God's glory." This idea is rooted in Hebrew Scriptures.

In his prayer at the Temple's dedication (I Kings 8:27), Solomon says: "Will God truly reside on earth? Behold, the heavens and the heavens' heavens will not contain You; how much less this house which I have built?"

According to rabbinic commentary, Torah's precept to build a temple emerged only after the people's tragic worship of the Golden Calf. It became clear that, due to their ingrained fallibility, the people needed a tangible symbol to accommodate Divine worship. Ideally there should be no need for a materially structured temple. The temple of the future will be wholly spiritual. Composed of heavenly fire, it will descend complete from heaven, and even its prescribed sacrificial ritual will be metaphysical – symbolically offering on its altar "lambs" of fire (Rashi Sukah 41/a; Tosafot Menahot 110/a).

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE BIBLICAL TEMPLE has two names, *mikdash* and *mishkan*. Mikdash means "place of holiness" and mishkan, used particularly for the portable tabernacle in the Sinai desert, means "place of the dwelling."

The two Hebrew words – *mishkan* (sanctuary, tabernacle) and *mashkon* (pledge, guarantee) – are related. Both are etymologically connected with the idea of dwelling (*sh-k-n*). Mishkan means a dwelling place; mashkon is an object surrendered by the debtor to the creditor's possession to "dwell" there as security. Say the sages (MR Bemidbar 12:14): All temples of Israel, the tabernacle in the Sinai desert, the sanctuary in Shiloh, and of the Temple in Jerusalem, were all built as the people's pledges to God: They existed as long as the people followed God's will. When the people failed to do God's will, they forfeited their pledges.

Torah says (Exodus 25:8): "Let (the people) dedicate to Me a place of holiness (mikdash) so that I may dwell among them." The Divine Presence is not confined to a temple. The ultimate goal is that the *Shechina* or Divine Presence (literally, the dwelling) shall dwell among the people, infusing our ordinary, daily living with holiness. The purpose of the temple in Judaism is to be a source of Divine moral inspiration for the people, not an abode for God. The temple's aim is not to become a "sanctuary" where one escapes from the world, but a home wherein, by devotion and study, one finds life's meaning.

Temples are supposed to function as a source of inspiration, to discourage wrong-doing and to teach and promote righteousness. The temples of Israel are monumental pledges for the people's bid to obey God.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE HOLY TEMPLE is perceived in Judaism not as an abode for God, but as a source of religious and moral inspiration. The true shrine for the Divine is disclosed throughout the vast universe and enclosed within a person's pure heart. The Temple is a functional instrument, serving human, not Divine, needs. By means of established modes of ritual and devotion performed in the Temple, whether structured or spontaneous, a worshipper may derive insight, courage, and fortitude to face harsh realities.

As a social institution, the Temple in Judaism is part of mundane reality. The Jewish Temple does not serve as a sanctuary or propose to freely grant forgiveness or protection for transgressors. It is not allowed to become a vehicle for covering up corruption or exonerating the corrupt; neither does it offer shelter and refuge for those who seek to escape the world, its laws or troubles. The Temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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SH NEWS / FEBRUARY 23, 1996

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

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Candlelight time 5:55 Sabbath ends 6:49

Scriptural reading for Saturday, Feb. 27:

TERUMAH: Exodus 25:1, 27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:26, 6:13

Thought of the Week

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

TERUMA – SHABBAT ZAKHOR

March 1, 2001

THE HOLY TEMPLE is perceived in Judaism not as an abode for God, but as a source of religious and moral inspiration for the people. The true shrine for the Divine is disclosed throughout the vast universe and enclosed within a person's pure heart. The Temple is a functional instrument, serving human, not divine, needs. By means of established modes of ritual and devotion performed in the Temple, whether structured or spontaneous, a worshipper may derive insight, courage, and fortitude to face harsh realities with faith, dignity, and a sense of purpose.

As a human-social institution, the Temple in Judaism is part of mundane reality. The Jewish Temple does not serve as a sanctuary, nor propose to freely grant forgiveness or protection for transgressors. It is not allowed to become a vehicle for covering-up corruption or exonerating the corrupt, nor does it offer shelter and refuge for those who seek or need to escape the world, its laws or troubles. The Temple is designed to be a source of inspiration and guidance for moral excellence, discouraging wrongdoings and promoting righteousness.

TERUMA (Exodus 25:2) means donation, contribution; the offering of a gift for a worthy purpose, to support the needy or to build and maintain the Temple. In the root of this term is the verb *rum* (to elevate), which suggests the idea of lifting up to a higher status. By giving of our property to charity (*zedakah*) or to the sanctuary (*hekdesh*), we bring up our gifts, both literally and figuratively. At the same time, we elevate ourselves.

"By benevolence one rises to a height where one meets God. Therefore do a good deed, give charity, before you begin your prayers!" (Rav Ahai Gaon; 8th century, Babylon). Before the building of the Temple, the people were instructed to bring up their *teruma* -- thus uplifting themselves.