

A Home with a Vision

The word "home" evokes within us many strong feelings. It's a place where as children we felt loved and protected. It's a place where we were accepted at all times for who we were and no matter how we behaved we could always come back home.

At the beginning of our narrative as a people we were instructed by G-d to build a home in which he could dwell amongst us. At the closing of the narrative, the Torah illustrates in great detail how the Jewish people enthusiastically embraced this task down to the last detail.

The verse concludes with what seems to be a most insightful comment about the purpose of this endeavour. The sanctuary in the dessert was the first home of G-d in the world, and our synagogues today are the present day version of this: They are mini dwellings in which every Jew irrespective of his background or performance can connect with G-d or with his fellow Jew, and also a place that G-d can call His home.

However, the building of a G-dly home comes with an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, we are obligated to create a space where G-d may dwell in this world, and on the other, we are instructed not to stay in one place but to keep moving, one step at a time towards the Promised Land. For the only way to ensure a healthy spiritual destiny in this world is to constantly strive and move beyond our comfort zones as spiritual beings and children of G-d.

Our own homes are no different. On the one hand we spend much time and effort creating a home environment where our children can be loved and protected from foreign or hostile elements and feel safe and shielded from the stresses and pressures of modern society. On the other hand, we are also obligated to instill in them a striving to become great and to reach their spiritual potential as Jews and contributing members of G-d's universe, which can at times feel less than comfortable.

It is this golden rule which filters through our Jewish teachings and history. Ultimately, in order to create a healthy and secure environment for our children - in addition to the protection we are obligated to provide for them, we must inspire in them a vision and a sense of purpose that challenges them to achieve their destiny.

This is then the ultimate challenge of creating a Jewish home in which our children will both be nurtured and loved for who they are, as well as encouraged to focus their ambition in a constructive way so that they can benefit others and the world at large.

May we all merit knowing nachas from our children and to build homes that are joyous, tranquil and also infused with a spiritual desire to achieve all that G-d intends for us to become in order to manifest our greatest version of self.

Warm Regards,

Yosef Vogel

21st February

Vayakhel

Shabbat Begins: 5:11pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:15pm