
Introduction

When a man rises to pray, if he is situated outside the land of Israel he should face toward Israel and direct his thoughts toward Jerusalem, the Temple and the Holy of Holies. If he is situated in the land of Israel, he should face toward Jerusalem and fix his thoughts toward the Temple and the Holy of Holies. If he is situated in Jerusalem, he should face toward the Temple, and direct his thoughts toward the Holy of Holies.¹

At the entrance to the plaza of the Western Wall, the cry of “*Hinachta tefillin?*—Have you donned phylacteries today?” draws one’s focus toward a stall to the left. A young man in bermuda shorts and sunglasses stiffly twists the shiny black leather straps around his left forearm, his eyes intently meeting those of his instructor as he responsively enunciates the guttural intonations of the Hebrew blessing.

A few paces further into the plaza, another cry catches the ear: “*Minchah! Minchah!*” Waving his arm, a man in a business suit, playing the role of ritual traffic cop, steers the incoming flow of men to-

ward a velvet-covered lectern, where, in the tones and accents of Eastern Europe and of Yemen, of Brooklyn and of Birmingham, they will collectively recite the afternoon service. On the other side of the *mechitzah*—the partition dividing the men's section from the women's—the activity is quieter and more private. In a long dress and black stockings, her hair tucked under a simple kerchief, a woman sits swaying slowly over a large-print edition of the Psalms, her whispers broken only by the cries emanating from the baby carriage she gently rocks.

An older woman limps her way from person to person with both hands out; in the one, she bears a worn, laminated, Hebrew certificate from the chief rabbinarite attesting to her destitution, and in the other, coins jangle against one another, vocalizing her silent appeal.

Back on the men's side of the *mechitzah*, a tourist adjusts his public-issue, gray, cardboard skullcap and approaches the Wall. Taking up an open spot next to a soldier in olive drabs, he raises his finger and traces the contours of the massive, dressed stones. As the tourist carefully eyes a crevice stuffed with small notes of paper, an exuberant Jew in black garb rushes up; his lips and swaying ear locks brush the Wall simultaneously, and the gush of memorized prayers begins to flow from his lips.

Just as stones and shells of many shapes and colors from a vast sea are drawn inexorably to a common shoreline, the tide of history and culture draws Jews of all backgrounds to stand together before the Western Wall. They see in it an enduring symbolic strength, which derives from its identity as the last remnant of the second Temple complex, destroyed in 70 C.E.

The liturgy and the Bible—the classical sources that are accessible to every Jew—point to the centrality of the Temple in Jewish thought. The traditional prayers recited three times a day include petitions that the Temple service be restored. When a Jew recites the Grace after Meals, which is ostensibly a litany of thanks, he offers a digressive and lengthy appeal for the reconstruction of the Temple. Over one-third

Temple — Destruction — *Baron* *Finkelstein*
 — *Reconstruction* — *Reveries*

of the verses of the Torah and over half of the 613 biblical commandments relate directly to the Temple and the activities within it. From the conquest of Joshua until the return of Ezra, the Temple—in its road to construction, destruction, and reconstruction—emerges as a central theme of the entire Bible.

However, for all its centrality in classical sources and within the hearts of Jews everywhere, the Temple suffers in contemporary circles from a "bad" reputation. Critics from the more liberal branches of Judaism label it and its rites the vestiges of paganism. The concept of a "house" for an omnipresent and incorporeal creator is said to be theologically inconsistent with enlightened man's view of God.

The image of the Temple is problematic, not only for liberal Jews, but oftentimes for Orthodox Jews as well. Many traditionally minded Jews have little to say about the Temple other than that it is the place where God's presence dwells, and even less to say about its relevance to the present age. When the traditional Jew is summoned to think about the Temple, he is forced to abandon his own frame of experiential reference, for he lives in a Temple-less age. Often he will conjure two complementary images. In the one, he feels nostalgia for the days—which, in fact, were few in number—when valorous kings ruled the land, prophets spoke the word of God in absolute authority, miracles documented His existence and power, and sacrifices were offered in the Temple. In the other image he sighs in anticipation of a rarefied age in which the dead will be resurrected, all exiles will be gathered into the holy land, and the messiah will cause lion and lamb to dwell in harmony. It is within this apocalyptic frame that the Jew envisions the rebuilding of the Temple.

This sense of distance from the reality of the Temple is heightened in the language of halakhic discourse as well. The labels a person applies to great periods of time are a telling indicator of his prime values. In the life of a nation, time may be oriented around independence—its citizens will speak of the age of statehood and the era of preindependence that preceded it. Alternatively, a culture that has

endured armed conflict will speak of the prewar and postwar periods in its history. In the life of an individual, a chronological orientation often made is that between bachelorhood and married life.

How is history oriented for the individual whose worldview stems from halakhic writings? A primary distinction made by medieval rabbinic scholars was between commandments that are applicable *bizman ha-zeh* (the present age) and those that can only be fulfilled *bizman ha-bayit* (in an age when the Temple stands). For those whose convictions stem from talmudic writings, the distinction between the *zman ha-zeh* and the *zman ha-bayit* is a pillar of chronological orientation. There are no similar terms to describe the distinction between a period when the majority of the Jewish people observe the *Halakha* and a period when they do not.² The most significant qualitative distinction that this Jew makes with regard to history is between an age when the Temple stands and an age when it does not. This phenomenon has a subliminal effect on the time-consciousness of the halakhically sensitive Jew. Because he is infused with a consciousness of the radical distinction between the two, even the most devout cannot help but feel a sense of distance from the Temple and its significance, as he lives in what has been a very protracted *zman ha-zeh*—a present age in which the Temple plays no role in the life of the people.

Nowadays, when prophets no longer speak and the messiah is yet to come, the Temple is anticipated but rarely discussed or understood. Although the Temple takes a central place in our supplications, many would be hard-pressed to explain why. It lies dormant as a vestigial organ within the body of modern Jewish thought.

While the Temple is assailed by some on theological grounds, it suffers attacks from another realm as well. The Six-Day War in 1967 saw the recapture of Jerusalem and of the Temple Mount. Possession of, and access to, the Temple Mount and the very concept of a third Temple have emerged as politically explosive issues. Since the site is holy to both Judaism and Islam, it is the focal point for much religious and political tension. Occasionally these tensions spill over, as they

did in October 1990, resulting in rioting and bloodshed on and around the Temple Mount.

It is generally extreme religious right-wing political groups that raise the banner of the third Temple. Because the very concept of Temple has been commandeered by the religious political right, it has become tainted in the eyes of many with more moderate views. Associations are quickly made. It is not only that the concrete desire to rebuild the Temple has become taboo, but any positive value attached to the concept of Temple is seen as equally suspect. To be "pro-Temple" in any sense of the term is to be antipeace. To be pro-Temple is to be religiously intolerant, for the Temple could only be rebuilt if the Dome of the Rock were destroyed. To be pro-Temple is to be branded a fundamentalist in an age when fundamentalism is the anathema of the Western world.

It is the desire of the author to rebuild the Temple's image. One is hard-pressed to find a written overview in either English or Hebrew devoted to the theology of the Temple from a classical Jewish perspective. The talmudic passage cited at the outset calls upon us to concentrate on Israel, more narrowly on Jerusalem, and most fixedly on the Temple. The centrality of the Temple in the Bible, the liturgy, and the Talmud mandates a study that restores the Temple's meaning and significance to a modern, Temple-less world. The geopolitical climate likewise focuses our attention, and the world's, on Israel, more narrowly on Jerusalem, and most fixedly on the Temple Mount. If we are to make absolutist claims to Jerusalem and to the Western Wall, it behooves us to have an understanding of the role of the Temple within our tradition.

Sources relating to the Temple can be found in every genre of Jewish literature—biblical, talmudic, kabbalistic, and poetic. The present study incorporates sources from the entire spectrum of the rabbinic tradition. However, it is the Bible that gives the earliest and most comprehensive overview of the meaning of the Temple and its role in society. This work hopes to give insight into the Temple through an exploration of its biblical roots.

THE TEMPLE AS SYMBOL

Contrary to the popular misconception that the Temple is solely a sacrificial center, the Temple needs to be construed as part of an organic whole and cannot be studied in isolation. As the center of Israel's national and spiritual life, it relates integrally to many of the institutional pillars of the Jewish faith—the Sabbath, the land of Israel, kingship, and justice, to mention just a few.

In this study we will address the symbolism and iconography of the Temple. Symbols are a cornerstone of the collective consciousness of a culture, and it behooves us to mention a few notes about symbolism as a backdrop for this study. Many voices within the rabbinic tradition maintain that belief in God is meant to be practiced and manifested amid the symbolic actions embodied in the *mitzvoit*.³ But why are all these actions necessary? Why is faith alone insufficient? It is through concrete acts of religious observance that religious conviction emerges on the human plane. Symbols provide us a vocabulary with which to perceive metaphysical and divine reality.

Seen in this perspective, the need to understand the symbolism of the Temple is particularly acute. The Temple represents the presence of the infinite, omnipresent, and incorporeal—what the kabbalists called the *ein sof*—in a limited, physical space: "Make for Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:8). Man lacks the conceptual framework with which to comprehend God's true essence, let alone its limitation, in some way, to a house of stone. It is when man's analytic capacities fail him that symbols allow him to relate to such phenomena and integrate them into his *weltanschauung*.⁴ Our conception of God and relationship to Him stand to be sharpened through understanding the form and structure of the Temple and its rituals.

Beyond their significance as the embodiment of concepts, symbols also play an important role in the cohesion of a society. Individuals are bonded due to the influence of the symbols upheld by society. This was the opinion of Emile Durkheim, the father of modern sociology, in his 1912 *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. If every symbol

contributes to the collective identity of a culture, then within Judaism the symbolic social function of the Temple is of paramount importance, for the Temple is the symbol that lies at the very heart of the biblical conception of society. In an age of national renewal, an understanding of this symbolic focal point can only help inform our reemerging national identity.

A study of the symbolism of the Temple can shed light, not only on our conception of God and on our collective identity, but on other symbols as well. The structuralist school of sociology emphasizes the interconnection of symbols as threads of a tapestry. The synagogue and its appurtenances, such as the Ark, the city of Jerusalem, and the institution of collective prayer, are only a few of the symbols and rituals directly related to the Temple. To understand the Temple is to shed new light on them all.

It is worth noting at the outset, for the sake of precision, that when speaking of the Temple, we need to distinguish between three related, yet distinct, terms. *Tabernacle* will refer to the transient structure that was erected by the Israelites in the wilderness and remained their central site of worship upon entry into the land of Israel. *Temple* will refer to the structure erected in Jerusalem by Solomon, and later again by the returnees from Babylon. *Sanctuary* will be used as a generic term that refers to both, with reference to the elements that are constant between them.

HERMENEUTICS: A MODERN APPROACH TO TRADITIONAL EXEGESIS

This book is an exploration of the concept of Temple in Jewish thought, through its biblical roots. The Bible, however, is read in very different ways by different readers. It is necessary, therefore, at the outset, to delineate the approach to the biblical text that will be employed in this study.

My analysis will address the masoretic text from a conceptual framework that is in consonance with the rabbinic tradition. This book employs an exegetical strategy that has gained far wider exposure to a

Hebrew readership than it has in the pages of English Judaica. This strategy combines elements of medieval exegesis, on the one hand, and midrashic scope, on the other. The medieval exegetes, by and large, engaged in close readings of the biblical text. Their primary concern was to elucidate the local meaning of a word or verse. With the notable exception of R. Moses Nachmanides (1194–1270), the commentaries of these exegetes rarely demonstrate a concern for the evolution of broad themes, or motifs, across entire books. The genre of midrash, on the other hand, is often telescopic in its view, weaving together disparate figures and passages in sweeping thematic and conceptual statements. These *midrashim*, however, often seem to use the biblical verse as a springboard for broader discussions, rather than as a text to be closely read within its own context. In this book, I attempt to combine these two genres. On the one hand, we will read the biblical text with the precision and commitment to the meaning of the text itself of the medieval exegetes. At the same time, however, we will attempt to draw broad parallels between sections and develop themes and leitmotifs across passages, across entire books, and, indeed, across the entire Bible.

For those approaching the work from outside a traditional Jewish framework, this work is one of Orthodox biblical theology and does not relate to the historical development of the concept of Temple in ancient Israel. The exegetical approach is literary, and it has been inspired by the writings of the likes of Benno Jacob, Robert Alter, James Kugel, and Gustav Fokkelman. Through close readings, it offers a distinct emphasis on compositional structure, leitmotif, and language.

When a Jew prays, he is called upon to direct his thoughts toward the Temple and toward the Holy of Holies. It is my hope that this book will enable the reader to attain a deeper understanding of the Temple, and consequently, a greater place for it in his heart.

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I

What Is Kedushah?

In Hebrew, the term *beit ha-mikdash*, conventionally rendered as temple, literally means a house of *kedushah*—of holiness. At the outset, then, it is appropriate to ask, what is *kedushah*?

NOT “HOLY,” NOT “SACRED”

It is of little help to simply translate the term *kedushah* into English. Something *kadosh* is interchangeably said to be either sacred, or holy, or endowed with sanctity. However, because our culture is one in which religion plays only a peripheral role, our sensitivity to the distinctions of religious language has eroded. Seen in their original contexts, these three words are hardly synonymous. *Holy* comes from the German *heilig*, meaning “complete or whole.”¹ *Sanctity* stems from the Latin *sanctum*, meaning “walled off.” *Sacred*, also Latin in origin, comes from the word *sacrum*, which means “dedicated to the gods.”² In a predominantly secular society, the words *sanctity* and *sacred* are often

liturgy - public service (via sam)

used in a sense denuded of religious connotation and are taken to mean "involute." This is a usage that relates neither to their etymological origins, nor to their later religious connotations. It is in this vein that we speak of the sanctity of marriage. Likewise, when we refuse to deviate from a small detail of etiquette or object to the deletion of an item in an annual budget, we often do so on the grounds that each is sacred. The many translations of *kedushah*, therefore, allow only a distorted glimpse of the original meaning of the term.

MANY JEWISH MEANINGS

The temptation, then, is to try to define *kedushah* from within—to examine Jewish sources alone and deduce an understanding of *kedushah* that is independent of the terminology of other cultures. However, when the Jew examines the spectrum of his tradition, he can only conclude that *kedushah* has meant different things in different contexts throughout the ages. For the Italian poet and ethicist R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1746), in the last chapter of his *Mesilat Yesharim*, and for the late-sixteenth-century kabbalist R. Chaim Vital, in his *Sha'ar Kedushah*, *kedushah* referred to a person's character and his traits. Within this conception, a person achieves a state of *kedushah* when he reaches a degree of moral and spiritual perfection. Nachmanides, in his commentary to Leviticus 19:2, understood that the call to *kedushah* was a call to asceticism, to limit one's engagement with earthly pleasures, even when these are permitted within the literal letter of the *Halakhah*. For the kabbalists and their philosophical descendants, *kedushah* was a metaphysical property whose theurgic significance is discerned in the heavenly realms. For R. Joseph Soloveitchik, *kedushah* referred to the experience man feels as he encounters God through the *Halakhah*. Thus, even when examining Jewish sources alone, a single definition of the term *kedushah* seems unavailable.³ In this chapter we will examine the context in which the term *kedushah* originates—the biblical context.

Amos 4:2 Breasts by his he lives "let apart" - like sacredness

A BIBLICAL DEFINITION

The list of entities described as *kadosh* in the Bible is lengthy and varied. On the one hand, *kedushah* describes God's essence. "Who is like You, majestic in holiness" (Exodus 15:11), declared the Children of Israel at the crossing of the Red Sea. "My Lord God swears by His holiness" (Amos 4:2), proclaims the prophet Amos.⁴

However, the term *kedushah* has broad application with regard to mundane entities as well. It can describe groups of people, such as the priests and the nation of Israel; periods of time, such as the Sabbath and festivals; objects, such as first fruits, tithes, and sacrificial animals; places, like Jerusalem and the Temple—all are described as being *kadosh*.

For one familiar with the Bible, or with halakhic practice, the notion that God is *kadosh*, or that the Sabbath, the priests, the Temple, et. al. are *kadosh*, is commonplace, even if it is somewhat unclear exactly what is meant when it is said that these entities are *kadosh*.

However, the precise meaning of the term *kedushah* becomes elusive indeed when we note two ways in which it is strikingly absent from the biblical record. The first concerns the use of the term *kedushah* with reference to individuals. In our culture, we are apt to call a righteous person, one who is saintly and pious, a "holy" person. The Bible is replete with characters who would seem apt for the appellation *kadosh*. However, when we examine the nomenclature that the Bible uses to describe its heroes, we arrive at a surprising conclusion. Noah is termed *ish tzadik*—a righteous man (Genesis 6:9). Moses is called *ish Elokim*—a man of God (Deuteronomy 33:1). Caleb is described by God as *avdi*—My servant (Numbers 14:24). Samuel is described as *ne'eman*—faithful or loyal to God (1 Samuel 3:20). None, however, are called *kadosh*. The Book of Psalms may be seen as a record of the righteous individual's relationship with God. Its protagonists are called by many names—*tzadik* (righteous), *chasid* (pious), *yashar* (straight in the path of God), *ohav Torah* (a lover of the Torah)—to

Elo'ha = why person described

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mention several, but none are called *kadosh*. It would seem, then, that the term *kadosh* cannot be used to describe an individual's character, no matter how "holy" he may be.⁵ In fact, throughout the entire Bible there is but a single occasion where an individual is described as *kadosh*. The wealthy woman of Shunem says, in reference to the prophet Elisha, "I am sure that it is a holy man of God (*ish Elokim kadosh*) who comes this way regularly" (2 Kings 4:9). The fact that this term is used neither by God, nor by a prophet, nor even by the biblical narrator, but merely by a minor character within the story, serves only to highlight the exceptional nature of this usage. The general rule remains: the Bible does not characterize a righteous individual as *kadosh*.

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A second peculiar aspect of the biblical use of the term *kedushah* concerns its absence from the patriarchal record of Genesis. In light of our discussion concerning the use of the term *kadosh* to describe righteous individuals, it is no surprise that none of the patriarchs is called *kadosh*. If, as a rule, throughout the Bible, individuals are not described as *kadosh*, there is no reason why the heroes of Genesis should serve as an exception. What is astonishing, however, is that not a single entry is described as *kadosh* in the entire narrative covering the careers of the patriarchs. By contrast, when God appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5), Moses was told to hold his distance because he was treading on *admat kodesh*—holy ground. In like fashion, we find that as Joshua prepared for the capture of Jericho, the angel of God appeared to him and commanded him to bare his feet, "for the place where you stand is holy" (Joshua 5:15). If sites of revelation become holy, why are none of the sites of revelation in the Book of Genesis likewise declared holy? In light of the experiences of Moses and of Joshua, we might have expected the banks of the Jabbok River (Genesis 32:24) to become *kadosh* once the angel revealed himself to Jacob. The same could be said for Beth-El, where God appeared to Jacob in a dream, and which Jacob concluded was the very house of God and portal to the heavens (Genesis 28:17). Nowhere is this question more pertinent, however, than with regard to the site of the binding of Isaac. Mount Moriah emerges later in the Bible as the site

of the Temple itself (2 Chronicles 3:1)—the apex of *kedushah* in the spacial realm. Nonetheless, Abraham is not told that the spot is one of *kedushah*! Why did sites of revelation assume *kedushah* when God spoke to Moses and Joshua but not when He communicated with the patriarchs?

The omission of the term *kedushah* from the patriarchal annals becomes even more striking when we examine the promises to the patriarchs concerning the future of the Jewish people. The patriarchs were told that their descendants would become a great nation (Genesis 12:2)—a blessed people (Genesis 22:18)—that kings would emerge from their midst (Genesis 17:6, 35:11), and that they would enter a special relationship with God as His people (Genesis 17:8). Never were they told, however, that their descendants would become an *am kadosh*—a holy people. The Jewish people are called an *am kadosh* dozens of times throughout the Bible. Why, then, were the patriarchs unapprised of this destiny?

A review of the entire Book of Genesis reveals that *kedushah* is mentioned precisely once: "And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which He had done" (2:3). The Sabbath seems never to have been revealed to the patriarchs, and is only related to the Children of Israel following the spitting of the Red Sea (Exodus 16:23). What, then, does it mean when the Bible labels something *kadosh*? Why is the term nearly absent from the Book of Genesis, and why are righteous individuals never termed *kadosh*?

Our understanding of *kedushah* in the sense that we call holiness can be sharpened by examining how the root *k.d.sh.* is biblically applied in nonsacral contexts. A prostitute is sometimes referred to as a *kedeshah* (Genesis 38:21–22; Deuteronomy 23:18). When God threatens the king of Judah for fraudulent behavior, He says, "I will make *kadosh* (*ve-kidashu*) destroyers against you" (Jeremiah 22:7). Certainly, there is nothing holy about a prostitute or the destroyers of Judah! On the basis of these occurrences, which have absolutely no sacral overtones, many have noted that the root *k.d.sh.* means "set aside" or

"dedicated."⁶ A prostitute is a *kedeshah* because she dedicates herself not to one man but to the act of harlotry. The adversaries of the king of Judah are made *kadosh* in the sense that they are *set aside* for that purpose.

The meaning of the root *k.d.sh.* as "set aside" or "differentiated" is the key to understanding *kedushah* in its sacral sense as well. When the prophets declare God to be *kadosh*, it is a declaration that He is, in the most profound sense, *set apart from this world*. The statement that God is *kadosh* is a statement of His awe and transcendence above this world.

An examination of the mundane entities termed *kadosh* in the Bible also reveals that they are set aside, or designated, as well. They are all *set apart for the service of God by formal, legal restrictions and limitations*. The *kedushah* of periods of time such as the Sabbath and the festivals, is marked by limits on man's activities of work and construction. Tithes and sacrificial animals—*objects endowed with kedushah*—are prescribed from use in mundane purposes. The sets of people endowed with *kedushah*, such as the Priests, may not come into contact with a corpse and are restricted in their choice of spouse. *Kedushah*, then, implies separation and differentiation. When referring to God, it is a reference to his ultimate transcendency. When mundane entities are termed *kadosh*, it implies that they are separated for the service of God by formal legal restrictions and regulations.

The understanding of *kedushah* as set apart for the service of God through regulation is particularly salient for understanding the notion of *am kadosh*—a holy people. The Torah refers to the Jewish people as *kadosh* over a dozen times throughout the Torah alone.⁷ In every instance, it is in conjunction with a call for Israel to observe the commandments. Leviticus, chapter 19, is a telling example of the significance of the juxtaposition of the terms *kedushah* and *commandment*. Verse 2 proclaims that we must be *kadosh* because God is *kadosh*. The chapter then lists some two dozen commandments that stem from the status of being an *am kadosh*. As some have noted, these commandments are almost entirely prohibitions that limit the activity of the

am kadosh.⁸ Oftentimes, the appellation *am kadosh* introduces or concludes a set of commandments that distinguish the Jewish people from other nations, such as the section of the dietary laws (Leviticus 11:45, Deuteronomy 14:21) and the section outlining illicit relationships (Leviticus 20:26).⁹

As we noted before, the term *kedushah* is strangely absent from the patriarchal record of Genesis. However, this phenomenon is understandable when the term *kedushah* is seen in relationship to another term—*covenant*.

KEDUSHAH AND COVENANT

The first time that Israel is called an *am kadosh* is at the moment of the consecration of the covenant itself—the revelation at Sinai. In Exodus, chapter 19, the prelude to the giving of the Torah, the Torah says (Exodus 19:5-6): "Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed all the earth is mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."¹⁰ The implication of the passage is that the *kedushah* of Israel stems from the fact that it has entered into a collective national covenant with the Almighty. Why couldn't the Jewish people have been declared an *am kadosh* prior to the covenant of Sinai?

The patriarchs—even as forefathers of the Jewish people—stood in relationship with the Almighty only as *individuals*. Their affiliation and affinity with God constituted the basis of the election of Israel. However, the bond between God and the Jewish people reaches its pinnacle when the *nation* of Israel accedes to the norms of the Torah, thereby entering into a *collective covenantal bond* with God. This is the key to understanding the term *am kadosh*—a nation endowed with *kedushah*. When something is endowed with *kedushah*, it is segregated for the service of God through regulation and restriction. The Children of Israel become an *am kadosh*—a nation segregated for the ser-

vice of God through regulation by virtue of entering into a covenantal pact with God at Sinai. *Kedushah*, in all realms—time, space, and objects—is a function of the emergence of the *nation* of Israel, a state of affairs that only materializes in the Book of Exodus.¹¹

The notion that the *kedushah* of Israel stems from its covenant with God is reiterated in several other passages. Deuteronomy 7:6–9 states: “For you are a *kadosh* people to the Lord your God: of all the peoples on earth the Lord your God chose you to be His treasured people . . . know, therefore, that only the Lord your God is God, the steadfast God who keeps His gracious *covenant* to the thousandth generation of those who love him and keep His commandments.” The appellation *am kadosh* stems from the fact that we have entered into a collective covenantal bond with the Almighty. The content and form of that designation manifests itself through the commandments, which set us apart and differentiate us from the rest of the nations of the world.

The link between covenant and the *kedushah* of Israel is found again in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, one of the final stages of Moses’ valedictory address. He says in chapter 28, verse 9, “The Lord will establish you as His holy people, as he swore to you if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.” In chapter 28, verse 69, which follows the section on rebuke if the commandments are not heeded, it is summarized, “These are the terms of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.” Once again, we see that the Jewish People are an *am kadosh* because they have entered into a covenantal relationship with God.

This conception of *kedushah* is of enormous importance for understanding the first mention of *kedushah* in the affairs of men. This occurs during the episode of the burning bush. Moses wandered with his flock to Horeb—which is synonymous with Sinai—and was told there: “Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). Note that as Moses receives his charge to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, the site is set apart as *kadosh* through restrictions—Moses must remove his

sandals and keep his distance. This is precisely the site at which we would expect the introduction of the concept of *kedushah*, for at that very moment Moses was informed that the Children of Israel would come to Sinai to worship God (Exodus 3:12), and it is at Sinai, of course, that the Torah was given to the Jewish people and the covenant with God was consecrated. The midrash is sensitive to this point as well: “For the place on which you stand is holy ground!—The Holy One Blessed be He said to him, ‘Moses, Moses! hold your place, for at this site I will give the Torah to Israel,’ as it says, ‘do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.’”¹²

The understanding of *kedushah* as segregated by regulation for the service of God explains why pious individuals are rarely described as *kadosh*. A righteous individual may be close to God, but this does not make him *kadosh* in the biblical sense that we have here defined. To his spiritual stature inhere no further legal restrictions than to any other Jew. It is, of course, true that an individual may be termed *kadosh*; an individual priest may possess *kedushah*—but not as a comment on his character or personal qualities. His *kedushah*, rather, is a reflection on his genealogical status and manifests itself through the restrictions that apply to all priests. Likewise, the Torah refers to the individual nazirite as *kadosh*—“throughout his term as nazirite he is *kadosh* to the Lord” (Numbers 6:8)—as a comment on the status binding him in extra obligations, and not as a comment on his righteousness.¹³

Why is it that the entities dedicated to the service of God bear restriction and limitation? On *mikra’ei kodesh*—occasions of *kedushah*—such as the Sabbath and festivals, the range of our activities is highly proscribed. *Kadosh* objects, such as tithes, first fruits, and sacrifices, may be eaten only by certain people, in proscribed locations, and for limited periods of time. As a member of an *am kadosh*, the Jew is restricted in his diet and must abstain from a range of sexual relationships. What is the implicit message about dedicating an entity to God that mandates that it bear restrictions as well?

The identity between covenant and the establishment of limits may be interpreted homiletically. A covenant implies a partnership and a

bond. As partners in a covenant with God, we cannot function in the world as if we were its total masters. Partnership implies partial sacrifice, as well as subjugation to the other. In nearly every sphere of human existence—our experience of the passage of time and the expanse of space, or our encounter with the natural and social orders—we are called upon to recognize representative elements as *kedosh*—separated for the service of God. The time, space, and objects that are limited to us through the agency of *kedushah* are signs that as God's covenantal partners, we must relinquish some control in every sphere of our existence and reserve those elements for His service. ¹⁴

To summarize, the meaning of the word *kedushah* cannot be arrived at by simple translation. Upon inspection, we were able to arrive at a biblical definition: *kedushah* implies dedication to God, and it is expressed through regulation and restriction. It is a term that emerges only with the emergence of the Jewish people as a nation, and it only has meaning within the activities of its members.

COVENANTAL TIME AND SPACE

As we noted, time, space, objects, and persons all can be endowed with *kedushah*. However, within each of these realms, there are hierarchies of *kedushah*. The High Priest bears a higher level of *kedushah* than do the other priests, and Yom Kippur has a higher level of *kedushah* than do the other holidays.

When we examine the pinnacles of *kedushah* in time and space—the Sabbath and the Temple—an enlightening observation can be made. Like all entities endowed with *kedushah*, the Sabbath and the Temple are highly proscribed and are dedicated to the service of God. However, as the pinnacles of *kedushah* in their respective realms, they each stand as a sign and symbol of the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people.

While the status of the Sabbath as the first entity endowed with *kedushah* lies hidden until the time when the children of Israel cross the Red Sea, from that moment on it emerges in the Bible as the pre-

What Is Kedushah?

Ex 20 Dt 5 Ec 31

eminent symbol of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. This is most evident in Exodus 31:13-17:

You must keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout the generations, that you may know that I the Lord have consecrated you. . . . The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the generations as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and was refreshed.

The Sabbath is not only a commemoration of God's rest following creation. The Sabbath also constitutes a sign of the covenant "between Me and the people of Israel."

The notion that the Sabbath constitutes a memorial to the covenant is further buttressed by the subsequent passage. When two narratives or two sets of commandments appear in juxtaposition, a conceptual relationship should be discerned between them. The preceding passage is followed by the narrative of the giving of the tablets (Exodus 31:18): "When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the Pact, stone tablets inscribed with the finger of God." The final commandment Moses hears before receiving the tablets is the commandment of the Sabbath, and it is here that the Sabbath is first described as a sign of the covenant. The placement of this commandment immediately prior to the giving of the tablets of the covenant is no coincidence. At Mount Sinai, the Jewish people enter into a covenant with God. At the conclusion of his stay on Mount Sinai, Moses is given two vehicles to perpetuate the memory of that event. First, Moses is told that the Sabbath will become a temporal shrine bearing witness to the covenant; and second, he is given the tablets that record the Decalogue, the essential responsibilities entailed by the covenant.

Isaiah also highlights the status of the Sabbath as the preeminent sign of the covenant. Addressing the eunuchs and converts who fear that they will not be accepted by God as full members of the Jewish people, Isaiah declares (Isaiah 56:4-6):

from "remember to keep" comes "remember to keep"

Zeken

Shuman

✱

Carly

As regards the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
 Who have chosen what I desire
 And hold fast to My covenant—
 I will give them in My House
 and within My walls,
 A monument and a name . . .
 As for the foreigners . . .
 All who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it,
 And who hold fast to My covenant
 I will bring them to My sacred mount.

The Sabbath is the first entity to be declared *kadosh*, the first among the festivals (Leviticus 23:2-3), and it is the festival that receives more attention in the Torah than any other. As the apex of *kedushah* in the temporal sphere, it stands as a unique symbol, commemorating the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Use Key

The apex of *kedushah* in the spatial realm—the Sanctuary—also stands testimony to the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people. What lies at the center of the realm of spatial *kedushah*? At the spiritual center of the land of Israel lies the Sanctuary. Within the Sanctuary, the most sacred place is the Holy of Holies, and within the Holy of Holies—the site endowed with the greatest *kedushah*—rests the Ark of the Covenant, bearing the tablets of the covenant. The Sanctuary is the apex of *kedushah* in the spatial realm. At its center lies the preeminent symbol of the covenant between God and Israel.

The centrality of the notion of covenant to the concept of spatial *kedushah* is evident in the very structure of the Sanctuary. It is also verbally recognized by Solomon in the concluding note of his oratory to the entire nation of Israel at the dedication of the First Temple (1 Kings 8:20-21): "I have built the House for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel; and I have set a place there for the Ark, containing the covenant which the Lord made with our fathers when he brought them out from the land of Egypt." For Solomon, the Temple was not only a temple to God; it was a center that stood testimony to the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people.

LINKING SABBATH AND TEMPLE

Thus far we have examined how the Sabbath and Temple—the pinnacles of *kedushah* in the realms of time and space—serve as potent symbols of the covenant. As such, they are not independent institutions but are integrally related. To fully grasp the biblical significance of each, the Sabbath and the Temple need to be examined in light of one another and their interrelationship must be explored.

On a surface level, the link between the two is an explicit one as the Torah calls for their safeguarding in a single command: "You shall keep My Sabbaths and venerate My Sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:30, 26:2).

On a far wider scale, however, the relationship between Sabbath and Sanctuary can be seen as a preeminent theme in the section outlining the construction of the Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus.¹⁵ The account of the conclusion of the work of the Tabernacle bears a striking resemblance to the biblical description of the completion of the universe at the end of the sixth day of creation in Genesis:

Genesis 1-2

And God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good. (1:31)

Exodus 39-40

Moses saw all of the skilled work and behold they had done it; as God had commanded it they had done it. (39:43)

The heavens and earth and all of their array were completed. (2:1)

All the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent meeting was completed. (39:32)

And God completed all the work that He had done. (2:2)

And Moses completed the work. (40:33)

And God blessed . . . (2:3)

And Moses blessed . . . (39:43)

And sanctified it. (2:3)

And you shall sanctify it and all its vessels. (40:9)

Here we encounter a biblical passage that is laced with imagery and language from an earlier section. We will assume that the presence of those elements is meant to elucidate the meaning of the passage at hand. What is the significance of the parallel between the conclusion of the account of creation and the conclusion of the Tabernacle works?

On one level, creation ended on the Sabbath. On a second level, however, it only truly concluded once the Tabernacle work was completed. The composite parts of the physical world were completed on the sixth day of creation, but the ultimate purpose of these elements—to be dedicated to the service of God—is only realized once the Sanctuary is built, to serve as a universal focal point for the service of God. To be certain, the mere act of constructing the Sanctuary will accomplish nothing if the spiritual climate of the times is inappropriate for such activity. The conditions that create such a climate will be elucidated in chapter 4. When these conditions prevail, however, the presence of the Sanctuary represents the spiritual completion of the times and symbolizes the completion of the creation of the universe.

The integral relationship between Sabbath and Sanctuary implied by the closing chapters of Exodus sheds light on the Temple narrative of 1 Kings as well. Just as language from the Sabbath narrative of Genesis, chapter 2, is present in the Tabernacle sections of Exodus, chapters 39 and 40, Sabbath imagery is likewise present in the narrative of the completion of the Temple in 1 Kings. The biblical notion that the number seven represents wholeness and completion begins with the sanctification of the seventh day as the Sabbath following the completion of the universe in Genesis, chapter 2. The number seven figures prominently throughout the Temple narrative of 1 Kings. The Temple took seven years to complete (1 Kings 6:35) and was dedicated on the festival of Sukkot, a holiday of seven days that occurs during the seventh month of the year (1 Kings 8:2). Finally, Solomon's dedication address is composed of seven petitions (1 Kings 8:12-53).

The notion that the erection of the Sanctuary completes the process of creation is conveyed explicitly in the midrash concerning the completion of the First Temple:

"All the work [that King Solomon had done in the House of the Lord] was completed (1 Kings 7:51)"—scripture does not say the work, but all the work, which refers to the work of the six days of creation, as it says, "[And God] completed all the work that He had planned to do" (Genesis 2:2). Scripture does not say [that He] had done, but, [that He] had planned to do, implying that there was yet more work to do. When Solomon completed the Temple, God proclaimed: "Now the work of the heavens and the earth are complete (shelמה)." [When it says] "All the work was completed (va-tashlem)," it indicates why he was named Solomon (Shelomoh), for God completed (fishlim) the work of the six days of creation through him.¹⁶

When the Bible writes that Solomon completed "all the work," the context mandates that *work* here be understood as the work of the Temple's construction. The midrash seems to be abandoning any effort to relate to the biblical text itself, and rather claims that the work here is the work of the world's creation. Nonetheless, its reading is in consonance with the leitmotif of the Sabbath—Temple connection that is thread throughout the text of the Bible itself. This midrash relates, then, not to the local meaning of 1 Kings, chapter 8, but to a secondary level of meaning of the entire story, which can be derived from a close reading of the passages throughout the Bible relating to the Tabernacle and Temple.

A second interpretation of the presence of Sabbath and creation imagery within the Tabernacle and Temple may be offered. While the physical universe was created by God alone, the Tabernacle, the pinnacle of creation, must be built by man. When man establishes a perfected society, which culminates with the building of a Sanctuary for God, he becomes a partner in the process of creation.

The notion that man is a partner in the process of creation when he engages in the construction of the Tabernacle can be seen in the description of the capacities ascribed to Bezalel, chief artisan of the Tabernacle. Describing the creation of the universe, Proverbs 3:19-20 reads:

The Lord founded the earth by wisdom;
He established the heavens by understanding;
By His knowledge the depths burst apart.

When God tells Moses that Bezalel is to oversee the Tabernacle works, He says: "See, I have singled out Bezalel the son of Uri the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah. I have endowed him with a divine spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge in every kind of craft (*melakhah*)" (Exodus 31:2-3). As we assumed previously, the presence of terminology from one biblical section in another may be seen as intended to elucidate the meaning of that passage. When the author of Proverbs borrows terminology that, in another context, describes Bezalel's creative capacities and ascribes those same virtues to God as he created the universe, it may be read as a statement that Bezalel's creation of the Tabernacle is tantamount to God's creation of the universe.¹⁷ These parallels are reflected in the Talmud's statement that Bezalel knew how to create the heavens and the earth.¹⁸

Another concept that links Sabbath and Sanctuary, the pinnacles of *kedushah* in the temporal and spatial realms, is the concept of *menuchah*, which is loosely translated as "rest." R. Ovadiah-Seforno, the sixteenth-century Italian biblical exegete, wrote in his commentary to Exodus 20:11 that the word *menuchah* implies, not the cessation of rigorous activity, but a state of being that stems from completion. Thus, when the Bible states in that verse that God rested (*va-yantach*) on the seventh day, the anthropomorphism is not to be taken literally, but rather is to be understood as a statement that on the Sabbath, God had completed the creation.

This sense of *menuchah* as completion is exhibited with reference both to the Tabernacle and to the Temple. When David moves the Tabernacle to Jerusalem, and the Ark of the Covenant with it, he declares to God, "Advance, O Lord, to Your resting place (*le-menuchatekha*)" (Psalms 132:8), to which God replies, "This is My resting place (*menuchati*) for all time; here I will dwell for I desire it" (Psalms 132:14). When Solomon brings the Ark to the Holy of Holies, he similarly invokes the image

of rest: "Advance O Lord God, to Your resting place (*le-menuchekha*)" (2 Chronicles 6:41). From the time when the Children of Israel entered the land of Israel, the Ark had migrated from location to location. When it was brought to Jerusalem by David, and then installed in the Temple by Solomon, the process of God's migration finally reached completion. Its terminus, the Temple in Jerusalem, is thus called *menuchah*, a place that symbolizes completion.¹⁹

The final interrelationship between Sabbath and Sanctuary concerns the concept of *melakhah*.²⁰ In this chapter we have already encountered the term *melakhah* twice. When God concluded the act of creation, the activity from which He desisted on the Sabbath was termed *melakhah* (Genesis 2:2-3). We have also seen that the skilled craftsmanship executed by Bezalel and the artisans who assembled the Tabernacle and its vessels was likewise called *melakhah*.²¹ The *melakhah* of the Sabbath and the *melakhah* of the Sanctuary are linked in explicit terms in the Tabernacle section in the Book of Exodus. In chapters 25 through 30, Moses is issued directions concerning the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels. Chapter 31, which opens with the appointment of Bezalel to execute the *melakhah*, concludes with an admonition about the Sabbath: "Six days work (*melakhah*) may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does work (*melakhah*) on the Sabbath day shall be put to death" (Exodus 31:15). The command to execute the *melakhah* of the Tabernacle, then, concludes with a command to desist from *melakhah* on the Sabbath.²² The juxtaposition of the two concepts calls on us to interpret the connection between them. The implication that emerges from the juxtaposition is that one may not engage in Tabernacle building on the Sabbath.²³

This juxtaposition is the basis of the talmudic understanding that the definition of *melakhah*—work that is forbidden on the Sabbath—is based on the specific activities that were carried out in the construction of the Tabernacle.²⁴

In summary, we have seen the conceptual link between Sabbath and Sanctuary on a number of levels. The Sabbath caps God's comple-

Blunt
of
"virtues"
symbol in
Sabbath
"rest"
sign
best
in state
in
give

7 pillars - Mind, Focused
Power

WV

tion of the *melakhah* of the physical order. The Sanctuary, built by God's covenantal partner, Israel, is also a process of *melakhah* and represents the completion of the spiritual order.

We conclude with a homiletic observation about the *halakhot* that bind Sabbath and Sanctuary together. The Sanctuary, we saw, is in a sense bounded by the Sabbath—for work on the Sanctuary must cease on the Sabbath. However, the Sabbath is also conversely bounded by the Sanctuary—for the very definition of prohibited work is derived from the activities of the construction of the Sanctuary.

We have discussed the concept of covenantal partnership at some length and wish to conclude by contrasting two paradigms of partnership. The first involves, say, a couple that chooses to renovate their home. They agree to split the work, with each one taking a different room. When finished, their partnership will result in a renovated home. However, their partnership will be deemed even stronger if each partner is mindful of the tastes and work of the other, for then they will have not only split the work, each will have carried out the tasks in a way that recognizes the contribution of the other.

The covenant at Sinai established God and the Jewish people as partners in the process of creation. The Sabbath—covenantally commemorative time—recalls the creation of the universe through the *melakhah* of God. The Sanctuary—covenantally commemorative space—represents a completion of the process of creation through the *melakhah* of the Jewish people. On the surface it would seem that the partners operate in a thoroughly independent fashion. God created the world without the aid of man, and later, man is called on to finish creation by erecting the Sanctuary.

However, the halakic parameters guiding the realms of spacial and temporal *kedushah* demonstrate that, in fact, the partners are continually mindful of the contribution of the other. The *kedushah* of the Sabbath—which commemorates God's hand in creation—calls for the cessation of work. However, the very definition of prohibited work is derived from the activities of the Jewish people in their part in the process of creation, the construction of the Sanctuary. The form of

the Sabbath—prohibited work—is defined by the work of the Sanctuary. The temporal commemoration of God's creation, then, receives its form solely from the creation of the Jewish people. It is as if God says: "The Sabbath commemorates My act of creation. And how will My Sabbath be observed? By being mindful of the contribution toward the completion of creation made by the Jewish people."

This consideration is symbolically exhibited in the converse direction as well. The Jewish people are called on to complete the process of creation through the building of the Sanctuary—but they do not engage in this activity on the Sabbath. The establishment of spacial *kedushah* is proscribed by the demands of temporal *kedushah*. Even as they execute their contribution to the completion of creation, the Jewish people desist from this task on the Sabbath, as they stand in commemoration of the beginning of that process, the creation wrought by their covenantal partner, the Holy One Blessed Be He.

2

Temple as Garden of Eden

When one thinks of the Temple, the garden of Eden is not one of the first associations that comes to mind. Nonetheless, both language and imagery borrowed from the garden of Eden narratives of Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, permeate many of the Bible's references to the Tabernacle and Temple. A prominent example of this concerns the presence of *cherubim* in both the garden of Eden and in the Sanctuary. Following the expulsion of man from the garden, the Bible says (Genesis 3:24), "He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the *cherubim* and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life." The cherubim reappear in only one other context in the entire Pentateuch, and that is in the Holy of Holies in the Sanctuary (Exodus 25:20–21, 26:1, 26:31). The fact that the cherubim appear in only two places in the entire Torah implies an analogy between the two contexts. What is the relationship between Eden and Sanctuary?

MAN IN GOD'S DOMAIN

The position of the Eden narrative as the first story about man mandates that we interpret it as a seminal statement about his nature, perhaps even on several levels. The relationship between Eden and Sanctuary can be understood if we perceive the garden narrative as a postulate concerning the environment in which man can enter into communion with the divine.

The notion that man can relate to God only by entering His province stands in contrast to popular Western conceptions of the relationship between man and God. Many will claim that they believe in God and relate to him on their "own terms." Within this conception, one's relationship with God is analogous to one's relationship with a friend or relative. One generally construes such a relationship as something that exists independent of the particular setting or environment, which is powered solely by the dynamics of the two personalities in interaction. The Bible, however, posits that man can only truly relate to God through delicately orchestrated circumstances. Man cannot encounter God simply by willing the encounter to take place. Rather, man must fortify himself spiritually by entering into an environment conducive to communing with Him. Thus, when the psalmist tells of his yearnings to commune with God, he typically speaks of man entering the domain of God: "One thing I ask of the Lord, only that do I seek: to live in the *house of the Lord*" (Psalms 27:4); "The righteous bloom like a date-palm; they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon; planted in the *house of the Lord*, they flourish in the *courts of our God*" (Psalms 92:13-14). The garden of Eden narrative, which is seminally situated at the outset of the Bible, may be seen as a prototype of the conditions and environment in which man can intimately encounter God.¹ It is here that man first enters into a relationship with God. Thus, while the story of the garden and its characters is a brief one, it has ramifications for the entire biblical record and can be construed as a paradigm for subsequent discussions concerning the setting in which man encounters the divine presence. When the Bible depicts an environ-

ment in which man cultivates his relationship with God, we should expect to find the Eden prototype reemerging on both the thematic and linguistic planes.

What were the characteristics of the garden of Eden, in which Adam lived in God's presence? Several cornerstones emerge:

1. The garden was not meant to ensure a life of leisure that was devoid of responsibility. The substance of Adam's relationship with God was based on an obedience of commandments. Just as the Bible later delineates the responsibilities of the Jewish people through positive commandments and prohibitions, Adam was given two commandments, one positive and one a prohibition: "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, 'You are to eat from any of the trees of the garden; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it'" (Genesis 2:16-17).
2. The privilege of living in God's presence was something that Adam would have to continually merit. If he disobeyed, he would be punished with death (Genesis 2:17). Disobedience would also disrupt the balance and harmony of the natural order. The punishment issued to Adam and Eve for their transgression dictated that from then on, childbearing would be painful (Genesis 3:16) and fieldwork, arduous and taxing (Genesis 3:17-18).
3. Most significantly, defiance would result in banishment from the garden, which is to say, banishment from the privilege of living in immanent intimacy with God.

ISRAEL AS EDEN

In light of these characteristics of Eden, the land of Israel can be construed as a conceptual expansion of the garden of Eden. The account of Eden in Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, is a universal one. It heralds the capacity of all men to enter into communion with the Almighty, for all men are the descendants of Adam. However, following the Flood

Why not show him
Gen 12:1, 22
point to the question of world
power & justice

The Temple

(Genesis 6-7) and the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), God elects to limit his most intimate relationship with mankind to a single people, the descendants of Abraham. The Eden paradigm resurfaces in the account of the Covenant of Circumcision between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:7-8): "I will maintain My covenant between Me and you . . . to be God to you and to your offspring to come. I give the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession. I will be their God." Here God offers to sustain an intimate relationship with the descendants of Abraham. The milieu in which this bond will flourish is in a defined locale, the land of Israel. The land of Israel represents a conceptual expansion of the garden of Eden. The garden was the environment in which Adam related to God and lived by His dictates. The message of Genesis, chapter 17, is that the land of Israel is uniquely suited as an environment in which the descendants of Abraham can establish a relationship with the Almighty.

The conceptual parallel between Eden and the land of Israel is borne out in the language describing the conditions under which the Jewish people commune with God in the land of Israel that is used in Leviticus 26:3-12:

If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments (4) I will grant your rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit. (5) Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and your vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your fill of bread and dwell securely in your land. (6) I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone. . . . (9) I will look with favor upon you, and make you fertile and multiply you; and I will maintain My covenant with you. . . . (11) I will establish My abode in your midst, and I will not spurn you. (12) I will be ever present in your midst: I will be your God, and you shall be My people.

Here we find the ideal realization of the covenant between God and the Jewish People. In many respects it may be seen as a simulation of the garden of Eden. It is predicated first and foremost on the obser-

Temple as Garden of Eden

25

vance of commandments (verse 3), just as Adam's tenure in the garden was dependent on the fulfillment of commandments. In the garden of Eden account, the most manifest evidence of God's presence comes when we are told that God's voice was *mithalekh*—that it moved about—in the garden. Using the same language, God promises (verse 12) that His presence will be intimately felt within the land of Israel (*ve-hithadakhni be-tohkehchem*).² The narrative of Genesis, chapter 2, emphasizes God's activity for the sake of man; He planted the garden, made the rivers, and created man's mate. In Leviticus, chapter 26, God's involvement and concern are highlighted through twelve separate actions that He vows to perform for the sake of the Jewish people if they observe His commandments—I will grant rains, I will grant peace, I will look with favor upon you, etc. . . .³ The idyllic conception of Israel as Eden, where the Jewish people live faithfully under God's protection, is the driving force behind Isaiah's redemptive vision (Isaiah 51:3):

Truly the Lord has comforted Zion,
Comforted all her ruins;
He has made her wilderness like Eden,
Her desert like the Garden of the Lord.
Gladness and joy shall abide there,
Thanksgiving and the sound of music.

As we noted, Eden was not an unconditional haven for Adam, nor is the land of Israel a haven for the Jewish people. When Adam defied God's command concerning the tree of knowledge, he became destined to work the land laboriously and was told that his efforts would bring weeds and thorns. The continuation of Leviticus, chapter 26, reveals that the same conditions occur in the land of Israel after the Jewish people defy God's commandments: they are told that "you shall sow your seed to no purpose" (verse 16) and that "your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit" (verse 20). Finally, defiance results in the expulsion from God's presence. Just as disobedience led to the banishment of Adam from the garden

of Eden, disobedience leads to the exile of the Jewish people from the land of Israel (verse 33). The Eden-like environment of intimacy with God is available to the Jewish people when they establish a society in accordance with God's will in the land of Israel. However, just as Adam was banished from Eden, so, too, the Jewish people are banished from their land when they defy that will.⁴

TEMPLE AS THE IDEAL OF EDEN

If the laws concerning life in the land of Israel are designed to create an environment in which the children of Israel can encounter God, the Temple represents this environment at its apex. Within the land of Israel as a whole, the entire nation lives a collective, Eden-like existence in God's presence. The Temple, however, represents the spiritual center of the country. Here, at the site where God's presence is most immanent, the representatives of the Jewish people execute commandments and rites that symbolize the service of the nation as a whole. Here, too, the garden of Eden serves as a paradigm for the parameters of this encounter.

Throughout the Bible, the Sanctuary is described via language and terms that are borrowed from the Eden narrative of Genesis, chapters 2 and 3. In Eden, the voice of God was *mithalekh*—moving about (Genesis 3:8). The same term *mithalekh* is used to describe God's presence in the Sanctuary (Leviticus 26:11–12). In Eden, man's responsibilities are *le-ovedah u-le-shomerah*—to work the garden (*avodah*) and to preserve or guard the garden (*shemirah*). The activities of the Priests and Levites in the Sanctuary are likewise referred to as *avodah* and *shemirah*.⁵ Ezekiel 28:11–19 contains a rebuke to the King of Tyre that is laced with intertwined imagery from both the garden of Eden and the Temple. Specifically, Ezekiel 28:13 endows the garden of Eden with nine of the twelve stones that the High Priest wore on his breastplate to symbolize the twelve tribes, as depicted in Exodus 28:17–20. The waters of Eden appear in conjunction with the Temple in two

contexts. Psalms 36:9 reads, "They feast at the rich fare of Your Temple; you let them drink at Your refreshing stream." In the Hebrew, the phrase, "Your refreshing stream" reads, "the stream of *adamekha*"—"Your Edens"—implying that the bounty that flows forth from the Temple is reminiscent of the rivers of Eden. Second, the spring that supplied Jerusalem with water was named Gihon, (1 Kings 1:33, 38, 45; 2 Chronicles 32:30; 33:14), which was the name of one of the four rivers that flowed from Eden (Genesis 2:13).⁶ The aggregate of all these allusions heightens the notion that the Temple is reflective of the garden of Eden, the first environment in which man encountered God.

Eden serves as a paradigm for communion with God in the Sanctuary in terms of man's strict accountability for his misdeeds. When man enters into the domain of the divine, his accountability increases. Infractions are judged more severely, precisely because they are committed within the intimate presence of the Almighty. In the garden of Eden, Adam is told that if he eats of the tree of knowledge, death will follow (Genesis 2:17). According to R. Saadiah Gaon and Nachmanides, this was not to say that Adam would be smitten on the spot if he ate of the tree of knowledge; rather, his life would be shortened. Nachmanides points out that the divine sentence of having one's life shortened is later found with regard to Temple officiants who violated cultic prohibitions, such as officiating while intoxicated (Leviticus 10:9) or while not adorned with the priestly garments (Exodus 28:43).⁷ The meaning of this comparison is manifest. In the Temple, as in Eden, God's presence is immanent, and thus, the slightest infraction incurs capital punishment from God Himself.

All these are parallels that imply an identity between Eden and Sanctuary as environments wherein man enters the realm of the divine and resonate with a midrash that likewise equates the two: "So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden" (Genesis 3:23)—He revealed to him the destruction of the Temple.⁸

The biblical citations and midrashim cited thus far have implied a spiritual congruence between the environment of Eden and that of the

Sanctuary. In both, God's presence is imminently felt. Man serves God by observing positive commandments and prohibitions. In each, man is highly accountable for his actions and faces expulsion from God's presence if he transgresses His will.

TEMPLE AS EDEN AFTER THE SIN

Other biblical passages and rabbinic comments, however, imply a somewhat different correlation between Eden and Sanctuary. Accordingly, the Sanctuary resembles Eden because the Sanctuary *replaces* Eden after the fall of man as the venue through which man can aspire to commune with God. This point is explicitly expressed in the midrash: "*The Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was brought*" (Genesis 3:23)—"He took him from the garden of Eden and placed him on Mount Moriah to serve God until the day of his death."⁹ The midrashic statement that God placed man (*hinicho*) on Mount Moriah echoes Genesis 2:15, when God placed man (*va-yanchihu*) in the garden of Eden. Man cannot return to the garden of Eden, but by serving God on Mount Moriah—the site of the Temple—man can strive to relate intimately with God, recalling the environment of Eden where man first communed with Him.

Since the Sanctuary represents a de facto substitute for the spiritual climate of Eden following the fall of man, we should expect Eden iconography in the Sanctuary to reflect the portrayal of Eden after the sin, as depicted in Genesis 3. Perhaps the most significant difference between Adam's spiritual standing before the sin and his standing afterward concerns his capacity to attain eternal life. Prior to his defiance, he was free to eat of the tree of life, but afterward he is denied this opportunity (Genesis 3:22), for eternal life in the literal sense would be incommensurate with man's fallibility.¹⁰

In place of eternal physical life offered by the tree of life, in the post-Eden era, God offers spiritual life in the form of the Torah (Deuter-

onomy 30:15–18): "See, I set before you this day life and good, death and evil. For I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep His commandments, His laws, and His norms, that you may live and increase . . . but if your heart turns away . . . you shall certainly perish." The Torah is portrayed here as a source of life. Its depiction as the difference between good and evil and between life and death may be a deliberate reference to the tree of good and evil and the tree of life in the Eden narrative and an indication that the Torah supplants them in the aftermath of man's sin. The Book of Proverbs refers to the wisdom of God's ways as a tree of life: "She is a tree of life for those who grasp her" (Proverbs 3:18). The midrash employs this verse to demonstrate that the Torah is a substitute for the tree of life of Eden:

God hid the tree that granted eternal life to all who ate from it and in its place He gave us His Torah. This is the tree of life, for it says, "She is a tree of life for those who grasp her" (Proverbs 3:18). When a man beholds it, and sees in it God's wisdom, and His righteous and just laws and statutes, he is immediately induced to adopt a new mind, and observe them. In so doing he acquires for himself reward in this world and in the world to come, as it says, "the Lord commanded us to observe all these laws for our lasting good and to grant us life" (Deuteronomy 6:24).¹¹

The analogy of the Torah as the tree of life is particularly striking when we examine the respective focal points of the garden of Eden and the Temple. Just as the tree of life stood at the conceptual center of the garden of Eden, the tablets of testimony, symbolizing the Torah as a whole, rest at the focal point of the Temple in the Holy of Holies, or *Kodesh Kodshim* (Exodus 26:33). Thus, the motif of a life-giving source at the center of Eden is preserved in the form of the tablets of testimony in the Temple.

In this light, the synagogue practice of returning the Torah to the Ark after its public reading takes on new light. The synagogue represents a simulation of, or substitute for, the Temple, a notion that will be probed in the final chapter of this book. As the Torah scroll is re-

turned to the Ark, the congregation recites Proverbs 3:18, in which the Torah is characterized as a tree of life. The focal point of the garden of Eden was the tree of life. As an environment in which man encounters God, the synagogue is reflective of the garden of Eden. The Torah scroll emerges as the tree of life of the synagogue, and its repository, the Ark, the focal point of the modern day Eden, the synagogue.

The presence of a "tree of life" at the center of the Temple takes on remarkable significance in light of the fact that cherubim were molded on to the Ark of testimony that bore the tablets (Exodus 25:20-21) (see fig. 1). As we noted at the outset, cherubim appear in only one other context in the Torah, and that is with reference to the original tree of life (Genesis 3:24): "He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life." The cherubim of Eden act as sentries guarding the most important element of the garden—the tree of life. The presence of cherubim atop the Ark of testimony is a telling sign, then, that the tablets of testimony—representing the Torah as a whole—are the post-Eden tree of life.

The cherubim are also instructive of the nature of man's encounter with the divine presence in the wake of the sin. The cherubim guard the garden's entrance and prevent Adam from returning because immediate and full access to God's presence is no longer possible. The cherubim in the Sanctuary serve a similar function. Within the Tabernacle and later the Temple, Priests were allowed access to the outer chamber, the *Kodesh*, where they performed the rituals that involved the candelabra and the table of shewbread. The inner chamber, or *Kodesh Kodashim*, contained the Ark of testimony and was the holiest point in the Sanctuary. No one was permitted access to the *Kodesh Kodashim* except for the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Separating the *Kodesh Kodashim* from the *Kodesh* was a partition, a curtain with a design of cherubim worked into it (Exodus 26:31) (see fig. 2). Just as the cherubim outside the garden of Eden served as a notice that man could no longer achieve complete access to God's

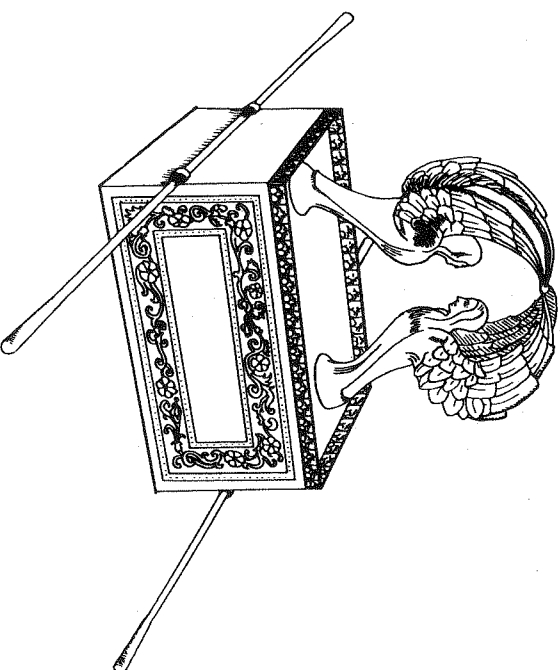


Figure 1. The Ark of the Covenant and its poles, covered by the cherubim with wings spread face-to-face. (From *The Holy Temple Revisited* by Rabbi L. Reznick, copyright © 1990 by Leibel Reznick; Jason Aronson Inc., publisher; artist, David Wilkes.)

presence, the cherubim embroidered on the curtain reminded the priests that access to the *Kodesh Kodashim*, the seat of God's presence, was forbidden to them.

On the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest entered the *Kodesh Kodashim*, he would encounter the cherubim stationed on the cover of the Ark, which bore the tablets of testimony. The wings of the cherubim were spread out, shielding the Ark (Exodus 25:20) which, if touched, caused death (2 Samuel 6:7). Thus, even the most intimate encounter between man and God, the visit of the High Priest

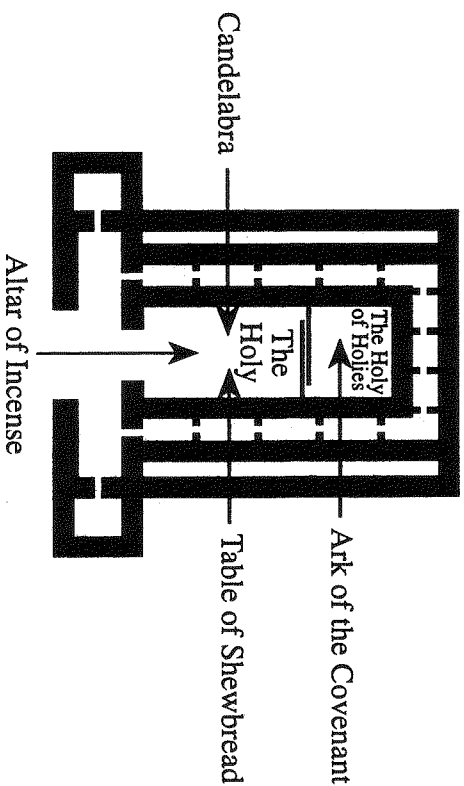


Figure 2. The division between the outer sanctum of the Sanctuary, the Holy, and the inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies.

to the *Kodesh Kodashim* on the Day of Atonement, was permeated with a sense of distance and inaccessibility. Cherubim symbolized the inaccessibility of man to the inside of the Ark of testimony,¹² just as cherubim prevented Adam from returning to God's immanent presence in the garden of Eden.¹³

The casting of the Torah in language suggestive of the tree of life implies a double message. While man may find the world around him devoid of spirituality, the Torah as a tree of life allows him to achieve an intimate encounter with the Almighty, much as Adam experienced in the garden of Eden. Conversely, however, the substitution of the Torah for the tree of life and the presence of cherubim guarding the *Kodesh Kodashim* remind man that the divine encounter of Eden can only be partially simulated and that man stands permanently outside the original garden in the wake of Adam's sin.

In the garden of Eden of chapter 2, Eden is given proscribed boundaries but there is no sense that it has an entrance or exit. Under the idyllic conditions of that chapter, there was no need to elaborate on Eden's gateway since man had no need to pass through it. When man is expelled, however, God places the cherubim to the east of Eden in order to prevent him from gaining access to the garden and the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Eastward, then, is the direction out of the garden. Just as the gateway to the garden of Eden was on the east, so, too, the entrance to the Tabernacle was on the east (Exodus 27:13-16, Numbers 3:38).

Invoking the talmudic dictum that the divine presence dwells in the west,¹⁴ Maimonides deduces that eastward represents the direction away from God. He cites Ezekiel 8:16, where Ezekiel is witness to idolaters in the Temple courtyard, who turn their backs on the Temple and prostrate themselves eastward toward the rising sun. Pagan worship, Maimonides concludes, was oriented eastward in service of the rising sun, and therefore, the Torah calls on the Jewish people to direct their service of God in the Temple westward, in symbolic rejection of foreign theological impulses.¹⁵

A similar aspect of the Eden encounter with God that influences our relationship with God in the Temple concerns the phenomenon of death. In the garden of Eden, death is portrayed as the consequence of disobedience of God's command: "As for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall be doomed to die" (Genesis 2:17). Likewise, when God decrees the punishments to be suffered in the wake of the sin, death is the crowning penalty and the ultimate sign of man's disobedience (Genesis 3:17-19): "To Adam he said, 'because you heeded your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, "You shall not eat of it," . . . by the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken: for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.'"

If the phenomenon of death is reflective of spiritual failure, then there can be no place for death within the precincts of the Temple.

Indeed, all forms of death, or even associations with death, are proscribed from the Temple complex. The Torah addresses these within the laws of ritual impurity, laws whose halakhic relevance is exclusively within the context of eligibility to enter the Temple complex. The things that render a person ritually impure and unfit to enter the Sanctuary nearly all involve things that have died or are associated with death, such as contact with a dead insect, carcass (Leviticus 11:24–31, 39–45), or corpse. A leper may not enter the Sanctuary; his skin is considered dead, as the Torah contrasts it to live skin (Leviticus 13:9–16), and he himself is considered partially dead, as reflected by the mandate that he observe the rites of mourning (Leviticus 13:45). Priests, the officiants of the Temple, may not come into contact with a dead body except for immediate relatives (Leviticus 21:1–4), while the high priest may not become impure, even to attend the funeral of his immediate relatives (Leviticus 21:11). Because death is the antithesis of the spiritual perfection that reigns in the Temple, priests are enjoined even from displaying public signs of mourning (Leviticus 10:6).

With the election of Israel, Eden—as a symbol of dwelling in God’s domain—is accessible only to the Jewish people in the land of Israel, and, at its apex, in the Temple. In the depiction of the end of days in Zechariah, however, the Temple is portrayed through Eden imagery, with reference to a universal audience (Zechariah 14:8–9): “In that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, part of it to the Eastern Sea and part to the Western Sea, throughout the summer and winter. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord with one name.” Just as rivers flowed in all directions from the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10–14), so too water shall flow from Jerusalem to the farthest reaches, eastward and westward. In that age, when there will be one Lord with one name, the entire world will constitute a domain in which all men encounter God, even as Adam did in the garden of Eden.

3

Sinai and Sanctuary

In chapter 1, we demonstrated the integral connection between the terms “*kedushah*” and “covenant.” The Ark of the Covenant, bearing the Tablets of the Covenant, was the focal point of the Sanctuary, the apex of *kedushah* in the spatial realm. The relationship between covenant and Sanctuary is a far-reaching one and has its roots in the final third of the Book of Exodus. Seminal for a discussion of the concept of covenant, of course, is the Sinai narrative of Exodus, chapters 19 and 24. The first chapters that explicitly address the Sanctuary are found in Exodus, chapters 25 through 40. In this chapter, we probe the Sinai narrative and its relationship to the Tabernacle chapters at the end of Exodus. The Sinai paradigm that will emerge provides a theological basis for understanding much of the minutiae of the Sanctuary vessels and their rites.

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