



### CHOOSING A HOME

#### Children's Rally – 4 Menachem-Av, 5740-1980

When we study in Torah about the Holy Temple, God declares that the study prepares the way for, and hastens the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

The Temple is often referred to in Torah as the "Beit HaBechirah" —His chosen home, "the place that I shall choose." Maimonides chooses to refer to his first chapters covering the basics of the Temple and the sacrifices he calls these "Laws of Beit HaBechira" —unlike the later chapters, which he calls "Laws of Mikdash,"

That choice of name serves as a ruling and clarification: When the Temple is called a place and house that God has chosen, it is understood that until He made the choice, the location was undetermined. In other words, it could have been somewhere else as well.

Yet Maimonides himself states, that the location of the Temple was unique, even before King David purchased it. It was the exact spot where Abraham had erected an altar; it was where he had bound Isaac. Even earlier, it was the exact location where Noah had offered a sacrifice on an altar so that the world be stable and there should never again be a great flood.

Earlier still, this was the spot where Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices. This was also where Adam brought his offering to God. In fact, it was from the earth on this site that his body was formed.

Nevertheless, the Temple is called the Beit HaBechira, a place made holy by a choice—it could have been elsewhere as well?

The answer is: Maimonides himself writes that there were many earlier altars in that place.

But only because Adam —and therefore also his children —and Noach, and Abraham, knew through prophecy that this would eventually be the place which God would choose for building the Temple and the altar. This moved them to build their altars —their personal temples— on that same spot.

Hence, their choice of this location was motivated by the "chosen-ness" of the site.

In fact, we are forced to reach this conclusion: The Tabernacle was at first situated in the desert, not on the Temple Mount. Yet, the Divine Presence dwelt in the Tabernacle, with all the manifestations of God's presence with all the miracles later evident in the Temple.

There is a lesson here for every Jew. He is given the ability to choose to make his portion of the world —all his actions— into a holy place for God, a space which God declares to be His dwelling place.



## פרשת דברים

Even though a person is in exile; or is in the Land of Israel but not in the Temple; or even for one who is on the Temple Mount, but during a time when the Temple Mount itself is in exile.

Nevertheless, God gives every person the ability to make of it a "Beit HaBechirah" —to choose each and every one of his actions, and make of them a Temple for God. This is accomplished by studying Torah and fulfilling Mitzvot, and ensuring that everything he does is for the sake of Heaven.

When a person does so, God chooses to dwell there for as long as we are still in exile.

It also serves to speed the awaited time when very soon we will take with us all the "minor temples," and bring them all to the Land of Israel, with the true and complete redemption by Moshiach, who will "rebuild the Temple in its place" in the very spot where the Temple of David and Solomon stood.

This will all happen speedily in our days, since Jews in general, and Jewish children in particular, and will fashion every one of their actions into a "minor temple."

All of us together will bring about the Beit HaBechira, and gather there, may it be speedily in our days.