

HAAMEK DAVAR

- Dr Jacob Solomon

Vayakhel-P'kudei

He made the two golden keruvim... one at each end [of the ark lid]... they had wings outspread and pointing upwards, screening the Kaporet with their wings. They faced each other, looking inwards over the Kaporet (37:7-9).

The commentators offer many different explanations about what the Keruvim and their position symbolized. Among them are that the two Keruvim are G-d and Israel connecting with each other, and together soaring to great heights: G-d through the joy of His people, and His people inspired by G-d's connection and teaching, whilst at the same time keeping in mind the source of that inspiration: the Luchot, contained in the ark below them.

However, in the Bayit Rishon the Keruvim are not described in the same way. They did not face each other, inwardly, but they were "facing the outer chamber" (Divrei HaYamim Bet 3:13), facing outwards towards the Temple structure.

The Ha'amek Davar (to 25:20) and the Harchev Davar (his extension commentary) explain this difference in

the following way. By the time Shlomo HaMelech built the Bayit Rishon, the people were enjoying a period of stability. Their attentions were on day-to-day living, which for most people in those days involved working on the land: growing crops, and cultivating vineyards and orchards. As long as they cooperated with G-d's teachings, He interacted with them by attending to their needs, with rain at the right times and suitable weather for their farms to bring their products to maturity, vital inputs beyond the people's control. The support they received from G-d was at the general level, comparable to a king or government that manages the economy well, so that those who work hard can and will prosper. They still have to put in much effort, such as grind corn to make bread. But the blessings were general, and the interactions were general, rather than personal and specifically directed to particular individuals.

In contrast, those who work in Torah-associated callings are eligible for G-d to interact with them on a personal rather than a general level. A king, however exalted, is more likely to interact with a humble soldier that fights for his realm than an agricultural worker. He directs the national economy so that the soldier

will not be producing food all day, but will be provided for from the national food supplies, ready to eat.

This was the situation at the time of the building of the Mishkan. At that stage the Torah was embryonic: complete, but taking time to become the people's way of life, especially after their having been generations among idolaters in Egypt. But during those 40 years in the desert it was in the center of their lives. Like the Keruvim in the Mishkan, G-d and the people were joined together, and their focus was on His teachings contained in the ark. Unlike the later period, they were not growing food. In the wilderness, G-d took care of their day-to-day needs: food, water, and clothing. Quail, manna, and clothing that did not wear out. Like the soldier fighting for the king's realm who receives his food and his clothing from the king's treasury as finished, ready products.

And, very broadly, similar principle appear to apply today. Those who give their life and calling in advancing the world according to G-d's principles - the MILCHAMTO SHEL TORAH even when facing opposition, frequently sense and report G-d's subtle interventions in their favor...✿