

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The parsha of Terumah follows those of Mishpatim and Yitro. In parshat Yitro we experienced the moment of the revelation at Mount Sinai and the granting of the Torah to the Jewish people. In parshat Mishpatim the Torah began to fill in the details of Jewish law and life, especially as they relate to human and societal behavior and the standards of such behavior that the Torah wishes us to uphold.

In this week's parsha of Terumah the Torah presents another challenge to human behavior—wealth, money, charity and the ability to give away what one may deem to be his or hers. The Torah demands from us the ability to donate to others, to give to great causes, to the public welfare and to be able to share with others our material possessions.

The rabbis of the Talmud stated that this is one of the major identity tests of life. Miserliness, a bad eye and an unwillingness to be able to contribute to others in need are held to be violations of Torah principles and morals. The Torah at Sinai instructed us not to steal, not to take from others what belongs to them without their explicit consent. Now the Torah raises the bar and asks us to be able to give away what we deem to be ours to others less fortunate than us or to national and religious causes that benefit us all.

All of this is implied in the request for donations to help build the holy Mishkan/Tabernacle. The Lord could have provided us with a ready built spanking new Mishkan/Tabernacle on His own. Instead He challenged us then and in every continuing generation of Jewish life to build a Mishkan/Tabernacle on our own and from our own resources. And that requires a proper view of our own wealth and what we do with it.

My beloved Talmud rebbe taught me over sixty years ago how to read the daily newspaper—how to filter out the golden nuggets of life and morality from the overwhelming amount of dross that fills the pages of all of our newspapers. There was an item in the newspaper last week about a baseball pitcher who gave up a guaranteed salary of twelve million dollars for 2011 and retired from the game because he felt in all honesty that he could no longer pitch effectively and did not wish to be paid for essentially doing nothing.

This naturally goes against the grain of the vast majority of professional athletes whose greed and

avarice is so well known. That is why it made news—it was a man bites dog story. But it indicated to me that the lesson of parshat Terumah still lives in the human heart.

To be able to walk away from money not honestly earned is a Torah value. And to share and give of our wealth to others and to the building of society, to Torah education and a national home for Jews, is also a supreme Torah value.

We have to build our own Mishkan/Tabernacle constantly in every generation. The Torah's attitude towards the sharing of our wealth is the key to such a form of Mishkan/Tabernacle building. © 2011 Rabbi Berel Wein— Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell in their midst” (Exodus 25:7). The portion of Terumah opens with G-d commanding the construction of what amounts to the first Temple (structure dedicated to the service of the divine) in Jewish history. Even in the desert, the Israelites apparently had the required materials: gold, silver, copper, acacia wood, precious stones, ram and tahash skins (Exodus 25:3-6).

So why was the tabernacle a tent with walls made from skins, rather than a portable building? Such a building could have been constructed in segments, like Lego, but would have looked more like a permanent structure.

The answer is found later in the Bible. After King David returns from his battles, he summons the prophet Nathan with a proposal to build the Temple: “See now, I am dwelling in a house of cedar-wood while the Ark dwells in the midst of hanging curtains!” (II Samuel 7:2).

Initially, the prophet tells the king to use whatever materials he wishes to house the Ark, but that night G-d appears to Nathan in a dream: “Go and say to My servant, to David.... Shall you then build for Me a house? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites from Egypt until this day. Instead, I have moved about [like a wanderer] in a tent. Wherever I moved among the children of Israel, did I

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ever say one word to any of the tribes asking 'Why did you not build for Me a house of cedar?' And now so shall you say to My servant, David: thus says the Lord G-d of Hosts: I shall be with you wherever you may go... I shall make a place for My nation Israel... and wicked people will not continue any more to afflict them, as they did before... And the Lord is telling you that He shall make for you a house... only the one who shall come forth from your loins and with whom I shall establish a permanent kingdom, only he shall build a house to My name, and I shall establish the throne of his kingship forever" (II Samuel 7:1-17).

G-d is telling David that He is not interested in a fancier dwelling dedicated to His Name unless it will be a house to also bring "the gentile from faraway lands... in order that all the nations of the earth shall know Your Name to revere you like Your nation Israel" (I Kings 8:41-43, 54-60). Until the final Redemption, G-d's presence cannot fully dwell in a building. He will, however, provide a house for a good sovereign like King David and He will shepherd his nation and provide the Israelites with shelter despite persecutions and pogroms. In other words, G-d's presence will not fully dwell in a luxurious Temple as long as Israel and the world are not yet redeemed.

I believe that G-d, through Nathan, was hinting at one more important message. When explaining to King David why G-d had never requested a cedar house, he adds that "wicked people will no longer continue to afflict them as they did before" (II Samuel 7:10). Clearly, this refers to oppressors like Pharaoh, who forced the Israelites to build stone houses. But, perhaps in a lesser way, it is referring to King Solomon, David's son and successor. For when King Solomon builds the Temple to G-d, he taxes the Israelites heavily, and even uses forced labor for the construction: "And King Solomon levied a tax from all of Israel; additionally he sent 30,000 men to work in Lebanon for one out of every three months, 70,000 carriers of burden [reminiscent of Egyptian enslavement, Exodus 2:11], 80,000 who dug deeply into the mountain and 3,300 taskmasters who were the overseers of the men doing the work" (I Kings 5:27-30). Moreover, the biblical text maintains that King Solomon built cities of storage houses reminiscent of Exodus 1:11.

Due to the building of an exquisite Temple to the Lord, Israel is pictured as a junior Egypt;

prosperous, but resorting to slave labor to produce its magnificent edifices.

No wonder G-d does not want such a House! And the folly goes from bad to worse when the next monarch in line from the Davidic dynasty, King Solomon's son Rehoboam, refuses to reduce the burdens, even adding to them. This sparks the rebellion of the Ten Tribes, divides the Kingdom of Israel, and ultimately leads to the destruction of the Temple.

Moses was indeed the wisest of men; he built a Sanctuary to G-d in the form of a modest tent, without compromising the freedom of human beings created in G-d's image. He didn't even levy a tax, but merely called on "every person with a generous heart to take up his offering" (Exodus 25:2). © 2011 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

As soon as we read the opening lines of Terumah we begin the massive shift from the intense drama of the exodus with its signs and wonders and epic events, to the long, detailed narrative of how the Israelites constructed the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary that they carried with them through the desert.

By any standards it is a part of the Torah that cries out for explanation. The first thing that strikes us is the sheer length of the account: one third of the book of Shemot, five parshiyot - Terumah, Tetsaveh, half of Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei, interrupted only by the story of the golden calf.

This becomes even more perplexing when we compare it with another act of creation, namely G-d's creation of the universe. That story is told with the utmost brevity: a mere thirty four verses. Why take some fifteen times as long to tell the story of the Sanctuary?

The question becomes harder still when we recall that the mishkan was not a permanent feature of the spiritual life of the children of Israel. It was specifically designed to be carried on their journey through the wilderness. Later, in the days of Solomon, it would be replaced by the Temple in Jerusalem. What enduring message are we supposed to learn from a construction that was not designed to endure?

Even more puzzling is that fact that the story is part of the book of Shemot. Shemot is about the birth of a nation. Hence Egypt, slavery, Pharaoh, the plagues, the exodus, the journey through the sea and the covenant at Mount Sinai. All these things would become part of the people's collective memory. But the Sanctuary, where sacrifices were offered, surely belongs to Vayikra, otherwise known as Torat Kohanim, Leviticus, the book of priestly things. It seems to have no connection with Exodus whatsoever.

The answer, I believe, is profound. The transition from Bereishit to Shemot, Genesis to Exodus, is about the change from family to nation. When the Israelites entered Egypt they were a single extended family. By the time they left they had become a sizeable people, divided into twelve tribes plus an amorphous collection of fellow travellers known as the *erev rav*, the "mixed multitude."

What united them was a fate. They were the people whom the Egyptians distrusted and enslaved. The Israelites had a common enemy. Beyond that they had a memory of the patriarchs and their G-d. They shared a past. What was to prove difficult, almost impossible, was to get them to share responsibility for the future.

Everything we read in Shemot tells us that, as is so often the case among people long deprived of freedom, they were passive and they were easily moved to complain. The two often go together. They expected someone else, Moses or G-d himself, to provide them with food and water, lead them to safety, and take them to the promised land.

At every setback, they complained. They complained when Moses' first intervention failed: "May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us." (Ex. 5: 21)

At the Red Sea they complained again: They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Ex. 14: 11-12)

After the division of the Red Sea, the Torah says: "When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and believed in him and in Moses his servant" (Ex. 14: 31). But after a mere three days they were complaining again. There was no water. Then there was water but it was bitter. Then there was no food.

The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." (Ex. 16: 3)

Soon Moses himself is saying: "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." (Ex. 17: 4)

By now G-d has performed signs and wonders on the people's behalf, taken them out of Egypt, divided the sea for them, given them water from a rock and manna from heaven, and still they do not cohere as a nation. They are a group of individuals, unwilling or unable to take responsibility, to act collectively rather than complain.

And now G-d does the single greatest act in history. He appears in a revelation at Mount Sinai, the

only time in history that G-d has appeared to an entire people, and the people tremble. There never was anything like it before; there never will be again.

How long does this last? A mere forty days. Then the people make a golden calf.

If miracles, the division of the sea and the revelation at Mount Sinai fail to transform the Israelites, what will? There are no greater miracles than these.

That is when G-d does the single most unexpected thing. He says to Moses: speak to the people and tell them to contribute, to give something of their own, be it gold or silver or bronze, be it wool or animal skin, be it oil or incense, or their skill or their time, and get them to build something together - a symbolic home for my presence, a Tabernacle. It doesn't need to be large or grand or permanent. Get them to make something, to become builders. Get them to give.

Moses does. And the people respond. They respond so generously that Moses is told, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done" (Ex. 36: 5), and Moses has to say, Stop.

During the whole time the Tabernacle was being constructed, there were no complaints, no rebellions, no dissension. What all the signs and wonders failed to do, the construction of the Tabernacle succeeded in doing. It transformed the people. It turned them into a cohesive group. It gave them a sense of responsibility and identity.

Seen in this context, the story of the Tabernacle was the essential element in the birth of a nation. No wonder it is told at length; no surprise that it belongs to the book of Exodus; and there is nothing ephemeral about it. The Tabernacle did not last forever, but the lesson it taught did.

It is not what G-d does for us that transforms us, but what we do for G-d. A free society is best symbolized by the Tabernacle. It is the home we build together. It is only by becoming builders that we turn from subjects to citizens. We have to earn our freedom by what we give. It cannot be given to us as an unearned gift. It is what we do, not what is done to us, that makes us free. That is a lesson as true today as it was then. © 2011 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftorah

This week's haftorah, read in conjunction with Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, reveals to us a secret dimension of this significant date. In fact, as we will discover, Rosh Chodesh possesses the potential of assuming a greater personality than ever seen before. Its heightened effect will be so powerful that it will be likened to the impact of one of our three Yomim Tovim.

The prophet opens the haftorah with a fiery message regarding the privilege of sacrifice in the Bais Hamikdash. Yeshaya declares in the name of Hashem, "The heavens are My throne and the earth is My foot stool. What home can you build for Me and what is an appropriate site for My Divine Presence?" The Radak explains that Hashem was rejecting the notion of His requiring an earthly abode wherein to reside. Even the span of the universe barely serves as a throne where upon Hashem rests, how much more so our small Bais Hamikdash. But the purpose of His earthly abode is in order for us to experience His Divine presence. And it is in this uplifting environment that we offer sacrifices to Hashem and commit ourselves to fulfilling His will.

Yeshaya continues and expresses Hashem's view of the Jewish people's sacrifices at that time. Hashem says, "One who slaughters the ox is likened to smiting a man; he who sacrifices the sheep is akin to slashing a dog's neck; a meal offering is like swine's blood....(66:3) The Radak explains Hashem's disturbance and informs us of the attitude of those times. The people would heavily engage in sin and then appear in the Bais Hamikdash to offer their sacrificial atonement. However, this uplifting experience was short-lived and they would return home and revert to their sinful ways. Hashem responded and rejected their sacrifices because the main facet of the sacrifice was missing, the resolve to elevate oneself. From Hashem's perspective, a sacrifice without an accompanying commitment was nothing more than an act of slashing a useful animal.

The prophet continues and notes the stark contrast between the above mentioned and the humble and low spirited people. Hashem says, "But to this I gaze, to the humble and low spirited and to the one who trembles over My word." (66:2) These humble people do not need the experience of the Bais Hamikdash. They sense the Divine Presence wherever they are and respond with proper reverence and humility. Unlike the first group who limits Hashem's presence to the walls of the Bais Hamikdash, the second views the earth as Hashem's footstool and reacts accordingly. In fact we are told earlier by Yeshaya that they are actually an abode for His presence as is stated, "So says Hashem, "I rest in the exalted and sanctified spheres and amongst the downtrodden and low spirited ones."(57: 15)

In a certain sense we resemble the first group when relating to our Rosh Chodesh experience. Rosh Chodesh is a unique holiday because its entire festivity consists of a special Rosh Chodesh sacrifice. There are nospecific acts of Mitzva related to Rosh Chodesh and there is no halachic restriction from productive activity. However, the first day of the month provides the opportunity for introspect. After our serious contemplation over the previous month's achievements we welcome the opportunity of a fresh start. We offer a sacrifice in atonement for the past and prepare

ourselves for the challenges of the new month. Unfortunately this new opportunity is met with trepidation and is always accompanied by mixed feelings of joy and remorse. Because each Rosh Chodesh we realize how far we have strayed during the previous month and we look towards the next month to be an improvement over the past.

This is the limited status of our present Rosh Chodesh. However, as we will soon learn, a greater dimension of Rosh Chodesh was intended to be and will eventually become a reality. The Tur in Orach Chaim (417) quotes the Pirkei D'R'Eliezer which reveals that Rosh Chodesh was actually intended to be a full scale Yom Tov. The Tur quotes his brother R' Yehuda who explains that the three Yomim Tovim correspond to our three patriarchs and that the twelve days of Rosh Chodesh were intended to correspond to the twelve tribes. This link reveals that each Rosh Chodesh truly has a unique aspect to itself and that one of the Biblical tribes' remarkable qualities is available to us each month. However, as the Tur explains, due to an unfortunate error of the Jewish people this opportunity has been, to a large degree, withheld from us.

But in the era of Mashiach this error will be rectified and the experience of Rosh Chodesh will actually reach its intended capacity. Yeshaya reflects upon this and says at the close of our haftorah, "And it will be that from month to month.... all will come and prostrate themselves before Hashem." (66:

23) The Psikta Rabbsi (1:3) explains that in the days of Mashiach we will have the privilege of uniting with Hashem every Rosh Chodesh. All Jewish people will come to the Bais Hamikdash each month and experience His Divine Presence. During the illustrious era of Mashiach sin will no longer exist and Rosh Chodesh will be viewed exclusively as an opportunity for elevation. Each month will provide us its respective quality and opportunity which we will celebrate through the Rosh Chodesh festivities. The sacrifice of Rosh Chodesh will reflect our great joy over being with Hashem and will no longer contain any aspect of remorse or sin. In those days, the experience of His Divine Presence in the Bais Hamikdash will be perpetuated throughout the month and the entire period will become one uplifting experience.

This, according to the Maharit Algazi is the meaning of our Mussaf section wherein we state, "When they would offer sacrifices of favor and goats as sin offerings.... May you establish a new altar in Zion.... and we will offer goats with favor." With these words we are acknowledging the fact that the goats which had previously served as sin offerings will now become expressions of elevation. Without the need to reflect upon our shortcomings of the previous month, Rosh Chodesh will be greeted with total happiness, and we will welcome with great joy the uplifting spiritual opportunity of each respective month. © 2011 Rabbi D. Siegel & Project Genesis, Inc.

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of blessed memory, points out that prayer and prophecy are two sides of the same coin. While both involve dialogue between the human being and G-d, there is one major difference: In prophecy G-d initiates the dialogue, while in prayer, the human being is the initiator.

But how can the limited and finite person interface with the unlimited, infinite G-d when the distance is so great? Furthermore, how can one initiate contact when the chasm is so vast?

The mishkan (tabernacle), constructed by the Jews at G-d's behest in the desert, plays a crucial role in addressing this very issue. Clearly G-d does not command that the tabernacle be built for Himself. G-d is everywhere and His Being fills the entire world, therefore a specific dwelling is no use for him. No wonder the text in our parsha states: "And they shall build for Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them (betokham)," (Exodus 25:8) rather than saying "that I may dwell in it (betokho)." Betokho would imply the mishkan can actually contain G-d.

The formulation of the text stresses that, through the mishkan, people would be able to more profoundly feel the presence of G-d. From this perspective the mishkan was not built for G-d but for am Yisrael. The mishkan offers us the potential to bridge the tremendous abyss between the human being, and G-d.

This makes the character of the mishkan very dependent. Rather than being intrinsically holy, its sanctity very much hinges upon how holy the people make it. A clear example of this is found in I Samuel (4:1-11). After suffering a harsh defeat at the hands of the Philistines, the Jews conclude that the absence of the Ark was what led to this tragic result. They therefore decided to bring the Ark from Shiloh for surely in its presence they would be saved and succeed. However, even with the Ark, the result was the same.

The thinking of the Jews was that the Ark was G-d and with G-d present they could not be defeated. Their mistake was that the Ark was not G-d, it was rather the symbol of G-d. The symbol is dependent on one thing, the devotion of the people to G-d.

This is also the case with the everyday contemporary mishkan-the synagogue itself. If void of spiritual meaning, the synagogue becomes an empty shell, bricks without soul. Our challenge is to lift our houses of worship to the full potential of their spiritual heights to become a place where everyone is embraced-a place of study and transcendence where we reach beyond ourselves to touch the Divine in the hope that G-d will dwell betokheinu, among all of us.

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the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Inner Sanctum

The Mishkan was one of the most detailed structures in the Torah. The minutia of the smallest parts is recorded for posterity and eternity. Indeed, Rashi expounds on a phrase in this portion: "According to all that I show you, the pattern of the Mishkan and the pattern of all its vessels; and so shall you do." Rashi notes the seemingly superfluous addition, "so shall you do" and explains, "So shall you do for eternity, if a vessel gets lost or destroyed, then you must replace it in the exact measure" (See Exodus 25:9). It really seems difficult to comprehend the reasons for all these instructions in a barren desert. What for?

One of the most expounded verses in the Torah, almost perfectly themed for homiletic analysis and pontification, appears in this week's portion. "And you shall make me a sanctuary and I shall dwell within them" (Exodus 25:8).

Many of the commentaries are quick to point out that the Almighty does not say, "And you shall make me a sanctuary and I shall dwell within it." He does not say that He shall dwell within the confines of a physical sanctuary, rather the Ribono Shel Olam, Master of the Universe, says that he will dwell within them. The commentators expound, saying within each and every one of us. And that is all fine. But why bother with the details of a Mishkan if He is not dwelling in the Mishkan, rather within each of us? Imagine. A king details the most intricate plans of a palace and then says, "I won't live in it, I'll just spend time with the builder strolling together in the forest." Verse after verse details myriad showpieces and utensils for this Tabernacle, specifying cubits, half cubits, exact types of material-gold, silver, copper, wool and linen-and then G-d tells us that he will dwell within us! Build it and I will dwell within you!

Though I am not a philosopher, nor do I use this weekly column to espouse philosophical thoughts, my good friend Alan Jay Gerber recently gifted me a small but powerful volume, *Crisis, Covenant and Creativity, Jewish Thoughts for a Complex World*, written by Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo. In it, he discusses the fallacy of so many of the detractors of Judaism as we know it, from Jewish heretic Boruch Spinoza to outside antagonists like St. Thomas. Their underlying critique of Judaism was that they considered the system of detailed halacha, codified actions for every single aspect of life, antithetical to the inner devotion and spirituality we all should strive to attain. Conformity to minutia, "The rule of right living," according to Spinoza, restricted devotion. But the story of the Mishkan tells us something else.

Rabbi Cardozo tells the story of his neighbor, a music teacher, who would teach his students a particular piece of Mozart night after night. Rabbi

Cardozo was so used to the piece, that he knew every nuance as well as every note.

So when he saw a poster announcing that famed violinist Yehudi Menuhin was going to play that particular piece, Rabbi Cardozo immediately bought tickets and went to the concert, thinking I know the piece so well that if Mr. Menuhin, makes a mistake, I'll be able to correct him.

He came back confused. The concert was superb, but it did not sound anything like the music he was hearing nightly from his neighbor's home. How could that be?

He mustered the courage to approach his neighbor, "I don't understand," he said. "I went to hear the same piece of Mozart that you play nightly. But when I heard Menuhin, it was totally different."

The teacher explained, "You heard a completely different piece of music."

"It can't be! I have the program. It's the same piece!"

"No," explained the teacher. "It was the same symphony but not the same music. You see, when I play Mozart, I take Mozart's notes and I play Mozart. When Menuhin plays Mozart, he may take the notes from Mozart, but he plays Menuhin."

There is a certain power that the master composer endowed within each and every one of us. He gave us rules and laws, a set of notes if I may say. The notes are indeed detailed instructions that we are to follow, if we are to live His spirit; however, once we grow to do his will, He wants to dwell within us! The rules may sound restrictive, but they are the channel to allow G-d to dwell within us. Adherence to His creative mind does not stifle the spirit, it opens it. The service of Hashem manifests itself through each one of us and our capabilities-each playing a different piece of music through the same notes! And thus the eternal subjugation to the details of His architectural instruction is the path for us to become the vessels of his glory, and there is no greater bond between the human being and the G-dly spirit than that! ©2011 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky & torah.org

RABBI NAFTALI REICH

Legacy

The Jewish people, traveling through the barren desert, were comforted by the knowledge that their forefather Jacob had worried about their situation. Hundreds of years earlier, he had known through prophecy that his descendants would be liberated from bondage in Egypt and journey through a trackless wasteland devoid of vegetation and water. Therefore, with the devoted love of a grandfather, he made provisions for them during his own lifetime. The Midrash tells us that he planted young acacia saplings in Egypt that would grow into mature trees by the time they were liberated. Before the exodus, they would cut these trees

down and hew them into huge planks. They would transport these planks with them into the desert and use them in the construction of the Mishkan, Hashem's earthly Abode.

The questions immediately come to mind. If Jacob was so worried about what his grandchildren would do in the barren desert, why didn't he prepare material necessities, such as food and drink, for them? Obviously, he was certain Hashem would provide all their material needs in the desert. He would send them food even where no vegetation grew, and he would send them drink even where no rivers flowed. But if so, it only stood to reason that He would also provide them with lumber where no trees grew. Why then did Jacob have to plant acacia trees in Egypt to take care of their future construction needs?

The commentators explain that the Mishkan was far more than a physical abode for the Divine Presence in this world. It was also meant to symbolize the spiritual abode each Jew constructed in his own heart and soul wherein Hashem would dwell. In the pagan world, the gods supposedly lived in the temples, and the people lived in their homes. The people would visit the temples to pay their respects to the gods and then return home to their own private lives. But this was not the Jewish concept at all. The Jewish people did not expect Hashem's presence to be restricted to the Tabernacle, a temple to be visited and left behind. The construction of the physical Tabernacle was a symbolic expression of the desire of the people to be forever bonded with the Creator, to build an indestructible temple for Him in their own hearts.

In this light, we can understand why they had to bring their own lumber. In order for the act of the construction of the Tabernacle to retain its full transcendent value, it needed to come entirely from the Jewish people, an unreserved invitation to Hashem to come among us. Therefore, it would have been inappropriate to ask Hashem to provide the lumber for the construction. He could send manna from heaven to feed the Jewish people and cause water to flow from a rock to slake their thirsts, but for Him to provide the lumber for the Tabernacle would have diminished its symbolic significance. The preparation of the lumber was in and of itself a declaration of the love of the people for Hashem.

A man was betrothed to a woman who owned a flower shop.

The evening of the engagement party arrived, and the excited bride awaited her groom with great anticipation. At last, he appeared, dressed in a new suit and striding purposefully toward her. His face was wreathed in a broad smile. His hands were empty.

"I don't understand," she stammered in bewilderment. "Where are the roses you brought me?"

"But I didn't bring you any roses," he replied.

"You didn't?" she cried as tears sprang to her eyes. "Why not? Don't I deserve flowers like any other bride."

"But you are not like any other bride," said the groom. "You own your own flower shop. Giving you flowers would be like bringing coals to Newcastle."

"I see you have a lot to learn about women," she replied. "Do you think grooms bring flowers to their brides because they need them? Flowers help grooms express their love for their brides. I too want that expression of love, even though I've got plenty of flowers of my own."

In our own lives, we sometimes find ourselves slipping into a mechanical and perfunctory observance of the Torah's commandments; we find ourselves acting more out of habit than out of inspiration. At such times, we would do well to look into our inner selves and inspect the temples in our hearts. Perhaps they have been neglected. The roof may have sprung a leak, and the walls may be in need of repair. But if we reaffirm our commitment to Hashem and our desire to have Him dwell within us, we can build our spiritual temples within our own hearts and recapture the joy and inspiration that are the natural characteristics of living with Hashem. © 2011 Rabbi N. Reich & torah.org

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

Parashas Terumah, through the end of Sefer Shemos, deals primarily with the Mishkan, the portable Temple constructed in the desert shortly after the exodus from Egypt. The Mishkan was the center of religious practice until it was replaced by the Bais Hamikdash (Holy Temple) built by King Solomon, and functioned in a very similar way. The Kohanim performed the religious services with the help of the Levi'im, and the moral, ethical and religious teachings of our religion emanated from it.

For the remainder of their journey through the desert (39 years), the Mishkan traveled with the Children of Israel, taken down before they left one location and then transported to (and set up at) the next location. When the nation entered the Promised Land, the Mishkan was set up in Gilgal, where it stayed for 14 years (Zevachim 118b). After the Land of Israel was conquered and apportioned, the Mishkan was moved to Shiloh, permanent walls were built (although everything else, including the "temporary" ceiling, stayed the same), and it remained the center of our religion for 369 years. After its destruction, it was rebuilt (with temporary walls, and without the Ark), in Nov (until Shaul destroyed that city) and then in Givon, until King Solomon built the Bais Hamikdash, 57 years after Shiloh was destroyed.

The Talmud (Megilla 16b), quoted by Rashi (Beraishis 45:14), tells us that when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, and he and Binyamin cried on

each other's neck, Yosef was crying about the destruction of the Holy Temples, which were in Binyamin's portion, while Binyamin cried about the destruction of Mishkan Shiloh, which was in Yosef's portion. Maharatz Chayos is quite puzzled by this Agada, as ultimately the Bais Hamikdash was going to be built in Yerushalayim, and the Mishkan would no longer be in use (see Sanhedrin 20b). Why would Binyamin cry over the destruction of Shiloh, if it was never intended to be the permanent spot for the Temple, and the Mishkan was only designed to be the temporary center of religious life? It was inevitable for the Mishkan in Shiloh to no longer be in use; how could the Temple service no longer being in Yosef's portion be considered a tragedy? This question bothered Maharatz Chayos so much that he not only left it unanswered, but he concluded with the words "tzaruch iyun gadol," literally "[this] needs great research [to resolve]," but a euphemism for "this is a really strong question." Nevertheless, I will attempt to suggest three possible answers to this question; please email me (RabbiDMK at yahoo.com) with further suggestions, or with reasons why these answers aren't valid.

Nov and Givon were both in Binyamin's portion (Zevachim 118b), meaning that after Shiloh was destroyed, the Mishkan resided in Binyamin's territory for 57 years before the Bais Hamikdash was built in Yerushalayim. Even if the Temple service would eventually be moved from Yosef's portion (in Shiloh) to Binyamin's (in Yerushalayim), it didn't have to happen until the Bais Hamikdash was built. Shiloh being destroyed prematurely, causing the Temple service to be moved out of Yosef's territory 57 years earlier than necessary, may have been what Binyamin was crying about.

Another possibility is based on the discussion in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 20b) regarding the three inter-related mitzvos that became applicable after the nation entered the Promised Land: appointing a king, wiping out Amalek, and building the Bais Hamikdash. The Talmud discusses the order in which these three commandments needed to be fulfilled; first a king must be appointed, who will lead the war against Amalek, and then, after our enemies are no longer bothering us, the Bais Hamikdash is to be built. Part of the discussion is about whether a king must be appointed, or if he is appointed only after the nation demands a king. Sh'muel did rebuke the nation very strongly for requesting a king (Sh'muel I 12:18-19), and the Talmud discusses whether they were wrong for asking for a king, or just wrong in the way they asked for it. If they had sinned by even asking for a king, we were commanded to appoint a king if (and only if) the nation sinks to a level low enough to need one. If appointing a king wasn't inevitable (as we may have never needed one), and the mitzvah to build the Bais Hamikdash was only applicable after we appointed a king, obviously the

fulfillment of the mitzvah (or obligation to fulfill it) cannot be inevitable either.

Sefornu (Shemos 25:9) says that had there been no golden calf, we wouldn't have needed a Mishkan for G-d's presence to dwell amongst us (as it were). Perhaps if we didn't sink to the level of needing a king we wouldn't have needed a Bais Hamikdash either; the Mishkan would have been enough, and it could have stayed in Shiloh. (This could be another reason why Yerushalayim is never mentioned explicitly in the Torah; had we been worthy, "the place [G-d] has chosen" didn't have to be Yerushalayim. This also brings a different perspective to the mitzvah of wiping out Amalek as well, as it would also be dependent on a king being appointed. Perhaps had we been on a high enough level we wouldn't have needed to wipe out Amalek in order to ensure our spiritual survival; it was only when we fell to the point of needing a king that we had to get rid of all those who were constantly plotting our spiritual downfall.) If we never needed to appoint a king, and therefore never needed to build a Bais Hamikdash in Yerushalayim, we can understand why Binyamin cried over the destruction of Shiloh, since its destruction was not inevitable.

Maharatz Chayos' question is based on the assumption that the Bais Hamikdash and the Mishkan served the same purposes, and since moving the Mishkan/Temple from Shiloh to Yerushalayim was necessary no matter what, there was no reason for Binyamin to be upset. However, there are some differences, albeit seemingly superficial ones. For example, the Mishkan was, by its very essence, a "temporary" structure, whereas the reason given by King David for wanting to build the Bais Hamikdash was because, "I dwell in a house [made] of cedar, and G-d's Ark dwells inside curtains" (Sh'muel II 7:2). The impetus for building the Bais Hamikdash wasn't a functional one, but one borne of perception/perspective; how could G-d's "house" be so flimsy if mine is so solid? Most of the "functions" of the Bais Hamikdash can be done even if there is no structure at all (as long as they were done on the right spot). In fact, after Zerubavel returned from Bavel, the Temple service was reinstated well before the second Temple was built (Ezra 3:1-3). [This may explain the so-called "lost years" between the destruction of the first Temple and the rebuilding of the second Temple: The 70-year exile ended as soon as Cyrus granted permission to rebuild the Temple-how could it still be considered an "exile" if we had the ability to return to the Promised Land and restore things to the way they were-but there were several "starts and stops" to the rebuilding of the Temple, with permission to rebuild granted then rescinded, including performing the Temple service within just "curtains" until the actual construction was done. Therefore, even though the second Temple stood for 420 years, those 420 years didn't start right after the exile officially ended, but after the structure was built.]

King David's reason for building a real structure, a "house" for G-d rather than (just) a sanctuary, didn't apply in the desert; everybody lived in tents, so there was no apparent disparity between "G-d's dwelling place" and everybody else's. (Besides, it would be impractical to build a real structure if it had to be transported from place to place.) This was true in Galgal as well, as no one could build homes until the land was conquered and then assigned to each family. What about after that? By the time the Mishkan was built in Shiloh, people knew which land was theirs, and could build very nice, strong, beautiful homes. Was there now a problem that G-d was "dwelling" in a residence that didn't compare to those the people were building?

Let's look at it from another perspective. Is having a magnificent home, a personal palace, so to speak, something worth aspiring for? If G-d's "house" was built to be magnificent, it would indicate that this might be something to strive for, another possible way of "emulating G-d." It was therefore preferable to keep the Mishkan formulation, thereby downplaying the significance of having large, built-up structures. However, this would only be true as long as the nation maintained its perspective on the insignificance of having magnificent homes. If it became widespread to want such structures, and those who had the ability to build magnificent homes did, not having an elaborate home indicated the inability to. Rather than the Mishkan being a guiding force downplaying physical excesses, it indicated (in the eyes of the people) a lack of significance, both of the structure itself and (ch"v) of the One who resides there. By the time David became king, the Mishkan model was no longer effective; it was counterproductive instead. How could G-d live in a temporary structure if everybody important had an elaborate home?

It could be suggested that this was why Binyamin cried over the destruction of Shiloh. Even if it were true that the Temple service would eventually move to Yerushalayim anyway, it didn't have to be under circumstances where people valued material excess over spirituality. Shiloh had to be destroyed when the Mishkan was no longer a workable model, and the change in priorities that brought this about was worth crying about. © 2011 Rabbi D. Kramer

