



פרשת תרומה  
Parshat Terumah

Ashreinu | אשרינו

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

THIS WEEK'S ASHREINU IS SPONSORED BY MARK AND JOANNA DENNIS AND FAMILY IN MEMORY OF JOANNA'S FATHER, MR. BARRY GARFIELD, WHOSE YARTZHEIT WAS ON אדר ב'. MAY HIS NESHAMA HAVE AN ALIYAH.



A DWELLING FOR HASHEM'S ESSENCE  
DR. YOSEF WOLF

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ZACHY DENNIS ('23)

ABBY DENNIS ('20)

ADAM DENNIS ('21)

DAVID CYMBERKNOPF ('21)

This week's parsha describes in a detailed way how a sanctuary should be made and what materials the Jews in the desert were to use in order to construct the structure. Together with the mitzvah **וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ**

-- "And they shall make a Sanctuary for me", Hashem promises **וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכְכֶם** -- "I will dwell among them" (Shmot 25:8). This seems peculiar, as the grammar of the Hebrew word "among them" is in the plural rather than in the singular, even though the grammar of the Hebrew word "sanctuary" is in the singular.

In order to address this potential issue, we should first examine the mitzvah of building a sanctuary, which in itself may also seem bizarre. Since Hashem is not bound by physical location, the Lubavitcher Rebbe poses the question of why does Hashem want to reside within an edifice

of a specific size to be built in a particular region within this material world? (Sichos Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 5722)

While it is true that Hashem is everywhere, as the pasuk says, "I fill the heavens and the Earth" (Yirmiyahu 23:24), it is possible that His existence will not be felt within the world. Godliness can only be felt through *avodah* (Divine service), and this *avodah* need not be confined to a specific place. Seemingly then, the *avodah* performed in the sanctuary could be performed in other places, drawing down Hashem's presence anywhere. Thus, the question still stands: why did He command that a specific place be established for His presence to dwell?

To answer this, we reflect on the principle: "The attributes which are highest in potential descend to the lowest levels" (Shaarei Orach, Yaviu Lesvush Melachus, ch. 12). The very fact that Hashem's indwelling is associated with a specific material place indicates that its source is a level so lofty that it is revealed on a very low rung. Hashem is not bound by either the limits of finite space nor the limit of transcendence. Just as it is improper to say that Hashem can be confined in a specific location, so too is it improper

er to say that He transcends space. For transcendence is also a definition that implies a limit; it is above space, and not within space. Hashem, by contrast, is above all definitions and limits; He manifests Himself in all mediums. And when we see the merging of opposites, the power of Hashem's essence is revealed. For He is truly omnipotent and can fuse contrary modes of being. This fusion creates a setting in which the Divine Presence rests.

This development occurred within the sanctuary, which was limited by the confines of our material world given that the curtains, boards, sockets and all other material elements of the sanctuary had specific measurements. As with other mitzvot, even a slight deviation would disqualify them. Nonetheless, together with this emphasis on precise measurements, an element of Godliness which transcended limitation was overtly revealed in the sanctuary ("And fire emerged from before Hashem, and consumed the burnt offering" -- Vayikra 9:24), thus demonstrating a fusion of limitation and transcendence.

Another example of this, as quoted in Pirkei Avot 5:5, was one of ten ongoing miracles in the Beit HaMikdash: the space of the aron itself was not included in the measurement of the chamber's length. The aron was 2.5 cubits long, and there were 10 cubits from each wall to the Kodesh HaKodashim, and yet the entire chamber was 20 cubits long. The purpose of these spiritual endeavors was to establish a connection with the level of Godliness that is above all forms of description; even the term "unlimited" does not apply.

Returning back to the opening paragraph, Chassidut teaches that the plural grammar used in the phrase "dwell among them" indicates that Hashem dwells within each and every Jew (Torah Or, Parshas Terumah, pgs. 325-6). When a Jew makes his physical environment a sanctuary for Hashem by studying Torah, performing mitzvot, and infusing holiness into the mundane objects that he encounters in his daily life, he makes himself a resting place for Hashem's essence. By doing this, a Jew fulfills the ultimate intent for the creation of the world -- that Hashem should have a dwelling in this material plane (Midrash Tanchumah Naso 16). We are assured that this type of *avodah* will bring the coming of Mashiach and the building of the third and final Beit HaMikdash, speedily in our days.



## DOING OUR PART

ZACHY DENNIS ('23)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Terumah, Hashem instructs Moshe how to build the Beit Hamikdash and the different vessels inside it. When the Torah discusses the menorah, the pasuk (25:31) says:

וַעֲשִׂיתָ מְנֹרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר מִקְשָׁה תַעֲשֶׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה  
יִרְכָה וְקָנָה גְבִיעֶיהָ כַּפְתֹּרֶיהָ וּפְרֻחֶיהָ מִמָּנָה יְהִי

"And you shall make a menorah of pure gold. The menorah shall be made of hammered work; its base and its stem, its goblets, its knobs, and its flowers shall [all] be [one piece] with it" (Shmot 25:31).

Moshe is commanded to complete the entire menorah from one ingot of gold; nothing can be made separately and then later attached. The Midrash Tanchuma teaches that this task was so difficult that Moshe couldn't visualize how the menorah should appear, so Hashem showed him a menorah of fire. According to Rashi, Moshe still despaired of properly building the menorah, so Hashem commanded him to throw the gold into the fire, and it was miraculously completed. Gur Aryeh, however, explains that once Hashem showed Moshe how the menorah was supposed to be made, he actually began to make it himself, otherwise, what would be the point of the commandment and demonstration. Once Moshe got up to throwing the ingot in the fire as part of the normal process of crafting it, Hashem made a miracle and the work was completed.

This is how Hashem performs miracles. First man does his part, and once Hashem sees that man has put in all the effort that he can, only then does He perform miracles. We see from here a very important lesson. Even when the task at hand seems impossible, one should still try his hardest to complete the job, and Hashem will do the rest. Good Shabbos.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE ARON

ABBY DENNIS ('20)

This week's parsha, Parshat Terumah, discusses the Beit Hamikdash and goes into specifics about each of the holy vessels. It speaks about the details of the aron and its cover, teaching the distinct materials that must be used and the exact measurements to be taken. In Shmot 25:17-22, the Torah states:

וְעָשִׂיתָ כַּפֹּרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר אֲמָתִים וְחֹצֵי אַרְכָּהּ וְאֶמָּה  
וְחֹצֵי רֹחְבָּהּ... וְוָנֹעַדְתִּי לָךְ שָׁם וְדַבַּרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מֵעַל  
הַכַּפֹּרֶת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים אֲשֶׁר עַל אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת אֵת  
כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה אוֹתְךָ אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

“And you should make an aron cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits its length and a cubit and a half its width...I will arrange My meetings with you there, and I will speak with you from atop the aron cover from between the two keruvim that are upon the Aron of the Testimony, all that I will command you to Bnei Yisrael.”

The aron and its pieces were created and placed specifically to teach the Jews various life lessons to take into account in their daily lives. The Sforno gives us a deeper insight into the entire aron, while Rabbi Frand zones in on the lessons learned from the keruvim. According to the Sforno, the cover was made of gold to represent the human soul, which is the image of God. This was meant to show B’nei Yisrael that every person is valuable because they were made in the image of God and with a little piece of Him inside of their *neshama*. The cover was a separate piece from the aron, which taught B’nei Yisrael about the concept of having a separate physical body and a spiritual *neshama*.

The keruvim, however, placed on top of the aron, were a recurring image seen throughout the curtains of the Beit Hamikdash. They appeared woven in the curtains facing the Kodesh HaKodashim and in the curtains facing the ceiling. These curtains were connected to stress the importance to B’nei Yisrael of connecting themselves in their *avodat Hashem*. The wings of the keruvim were stretched upwards to teach man that he must raise himself upwards to understand God’s wisdom in order to constantly grow in Torah and mitzvot.

Rabbi Frand explains that the angels facing down at the ark and at each other symbolize that the only true source of wisdom comes from the Torah, which man must incorporate in his life and use to interact with others. He adds another lesson that we can all incorporate into our daily lives. Rabbi Frand says, the significance of the angels facing each other is to teach us that we can’t give up on each other and even when our friends go through hard times, we should always be there for them because they are our fellow Jew. Hopefully, we can all take this message to heart, and the next time a friend is hurt, we should comfort them as we are taught by the angels facing toward each other. Good Shabbos.



## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER

ADAM DENNIS ('21)

This week’s parsha, Parshat Terumah, begins with a description of the aron. Hashem says:

וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפֹּנֶנּוּ  
וְעָשִׂיתָ עָלָיו זָר זָהָב סָבִיב

“And you shall overlay it with pure gold; from inside and from outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make upon it a golden crown all around” (Shmot 25:11).

The gemara states (Yoma 72b) that the aron was actually made out of three arks: a golden layer on the inside, another golden one on the outside, and a wooden layer in the middle. It would appear that the middle layer of wood seems unnecessary, so many commentaries try to explain why Hashem did not make the aron out of one big block of gold.

The Daat Zekeinim answers that *l’maaseh*, if the whole thing would be made out of gold, it would be too big of a schlep to carry around.

Rav Moshe Kormornick says that this teaches us an amazing insight about Hashem’s attitude towards *kedusha*. He says that the aron, which is the holiest part of the Mishkan, contained both the broken and complete set of luchot and was made with wood in the middle in sensitivity towards those who had to carry it. Hashem knew that an aron made of pure gold would be too difficult for people to carry, so He made most of it out of wood and only plated it in gold. We learn from this that even when it comes to matters of *kedusha* and religious devotion, you must always think about how your actions will affect the people around you.

A story told about Rav Yisroel Salanter embodies this message as well. When he was older and too sick to supervise the matza baking of the city, Rav Salanter sent his students to watch the process in his place. Before leaving, they asked their rebbe what religious *chumrahs* (stringencies) they should be careful to fulfill. Rav Salanter replied, “the woman who cleans the floors in between each batch is a widow; be careful how you speak to her.” This reminds us and his students to always be wary of the effects of our actions. May we all work to increase our sensitivity towards Klal Yisroel. A *guten* Shabbos!

# SELFLESS LIGHT

DAVID CYMBERKNOPF ('21)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Terumah, Hashem commands Bnei Yisrael to take gold, silver, and other articles to construct a Mishkan. In addition to "And they shall make Me a sanctuary," Hashem promises: "I will dwell within them" (Shmot 25:8):

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם

This refers to the Mishkan, and even more so the Beit Hamikdash, which served not only as a central location where Bnei Yisrael could serve Hashem, but as a place where Hashem's presence was manifested. The Lubavitcher Rebbe asks a question on this matter: If Hashem isn't limited to a physical location, how can He promise to dwell within a building with a specific size and location?

Although Hashem is everywhere, Hashem's presence is not always felt in a revealed manner. Hashem permeates all existence, but not always in a revealed way. By contrast, in the Beit Hamikdash as well as the Mishkan, there was no concealment. Hashem's presence openly manifested within it (Devarim 12:11).

Nevertheless, the Hebrew word used for "within them" (בְּתוֹכָם) is plural. Rashi explains the plural form as meaning every individual man and woman. When Hashem chose the camp of Bnei Yisrael as His dwelling place, He also invested Himself within every individual. Along with this, the Mishkan accompanied the Jewish people in their journey through the desert. Wherever they camped, Hashem's presence accompanied them, both as a group and as individuals.

This still applies today with regard to every individual. Hashem's presence always accompanies us as we go throughout life.

Our Rabbis explain that the windows of the Beit Hamikdash were slanted in order to spread light outwards rather than let light in. In Hashem's dwelling place, it was not necessary for light from the outside to enter, the light came from the menorah. What was important is that the light from the Beit Hamikdash radiated outward, influencing the world outside.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the Godly light within every individual. This Godly light should not be self-contained. Hashem didn't grant an individual spiritual awareness for his own satisfaction. The intent in dwelling and investing Himself within every individual was not so they appreciate Hashem, but rather the individual should share his awareness with others, that he should shine light outwards, influence his environment, and transform the physical world into a home (Likutei Sichot: Terumah) (See also Sefer Hamaamarim Vol. 2, p. 567).

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