

TERUMAH



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks Director of RCA Israel Region

Parshat Terumah contains the instructions to build the Mishkan. Moshe calls: bring materials. Build the Mishkan. The Aron to house the 10 commandments. The Table for the breads. The Menorah. The coverings over the Mishkan. The structure of the Mishkan. The Altar for offerings. The structure of the courtyard surrounding the Mishkan.



1st aliya (25:1-16) Moshe is instructed to tell the people to bring donations of materials: gold, silver, copper, woven material, animal skins, oil, incense, and jewels. And make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them. Make an Aron: wood overlaid with gold, poles with which to carry. And place into the Aron the tablets that I will give you.

The word Mishkan means a place to dwell. From the word “shachen”, to dwell. The Shechina is G-d’s Dwelling in this world. A Shchuna is a neighborhood. A Shachen tov is a good neighbor. And a Mishkan is a place to dwell. How the Eternal, Infinite One dwells on earth is the stuff of philosophers. But dwell He (or Shechina, She) does.

This dwelling on earth, in His Abode fits seamlessly in the flow of the narrative of

the Torah. The Torah is the story of G-d’s reach for man. He begins distant, and step by step He moves closer and closer. He creates a world. That by itself is an expression of love. He initiates contact with Adam and Eve, with Cain and with Noah. He initiates contact with Avraham, promising the Land; a stretch of His Hand to Avraham to pull him closer. He intervenes in nature to redeem the people from Egypt. Splits the Sea. He has gone well beyond merely speaking to man, rather now putting His arm around the entire Jewish people. And then Sinai: Descending on the mountain, pulling the veil away in speaking with the entire people at Sinai. This is all a process, step by step, of descending into this world. A place to dwell consistently, not just sporadically on earth is the natural next step. It matches the love of a man and woman: initiate a conversation, make a promise and commitment, help and assist each other, close and intimate contact like Sinai and then a home.



2nd aliya (25:17-30) Cover the Aron with a gold cover, from which 2 angels, facing each other, with outstretched wings emerge. I will meet and speak with you there, from between the angels that are on the Aron. Make a **table** of wood overlaid with gold, with poles with which to carry. The Lechem Hapanim shall be placed there permanently.

The immanence of G-d that is inherent in the Mishkan is tempered with excessive coverings. The tablets of the 10 Commandments are to be sealed in the Aron, covered and hidden in the Holy of Holies. Never to be seen. That is striking: the very symbol of G-d’s communication with mankind, the

luchot, the tablets are never seen by anyone. They are placed in the Aron, with a heavy gold cover, never to be seen. I would have taken them, propped them up high on a pedestal, displaying them in the most public of places. Yet, the opposite of a public display is done. Place the tablets in the Aron. Cover it. Place the Aron in the Holy of Holies. Cover it with a curtain. No one sees the Aron in the Holy of Holies, certainly not the luchot themselves. Only the Kohen Gadol 1 time a year may enter the Holy of Holies. Only 1 person per year will ever see the Aron, though certainly not the luchot that are in it.

The immanence of G-d in the Mishkan is countered with the mystery of transcendence, the inability of man to grasp any understanding of Him: symbolized by covering the very thing that represents His intimacy, the tablets of the 10 Commandments. He is close, yet concealed. Dwelling in your midst, yet unattainable. Present, yet imperceptible.



3rd aliya (25:31-26:14) Fashion a **Menorah** from solid gold, decorated with cups, knobs and blossoms with 7 lights. Make it in the form

you saw at Sinai. Fashion **curtains** woven of tchelet, purple and red with cherubim. These long curtains are to overlay the entire Mishkan as both a roof and covering of the sides of the building. They are to be made in sections and then joined. On top of these, fashion curtains of goat hair. And on top of that a cover of red ram and tachash skins.

The Mishkan consists of a building that is covered with 3 coverings. Inside the building, in the innermost room of the Holy of Holies is the Aron, hidden by a curtain. Outside this curtain are the Table with

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the breads, the Menorah and an altar for incense. (Some of this will be described in the ensuing aliyot). This is all covered on top by 3 curtains. These curtains form the roof of the building. The 1st set of curtains is made of colored woven wool with a woven design of angels. These multiple curtains are draped all the way from the ground on one side of the building, up over the top and down on the other side, reaching almost all the way to the ground. The 2nd set of draped curtains is made of goat hair. These were placed on top of the first, completely covering them, reaching closer to the ground. The beautifully woven 1st set of curtains was not seen at all to those on the outside of the Mishkan. They would only be seen by the Kohanim who entered the Mishkan. The 3rd set of leather or fur curtains lay on top of the black goat hair curtains.

These curtains reinforce the private, sequestered, mysterious nature of the Mishkan.



4th aliya (26:15-37) Make **panels** of wood overlaid with gold. These will sit in silver sockets.

The series of gold overlaid panels will be 30

amot, in total, along the sides. One end will have 10 amot of these panels.

The Kohanim were permitted to enter this Mishkan. They would see gold walls and peering up would see the colored woven curtain with the angel design.



5th aliya (27:1-8) Make a **parochet**, a curtain of woven colored wool with the design of an

angel. This will divide the Holy of Holies from the outer area. The Aron will be in the Holy of Holies. The Table and Menorah will be outside of this curtain. The entrance at the opposite end of this building from the Holy of Holies shall have a woven curtain as its wall.

The Aron was not visible to the Kohanim; it is hidden behind a colored woven curtain with the angel design. They would see the Menorah and Table with breads as well as an incense altar (not yet described).

One could view this as a minimalist home: light, food, table. And the inner private place where He dwells.

This parochet, or curtain, is made of colored wool, woven with a pattern of Cherubim or angels. This same design of wool woven with cherubim or angels, is found 3 times. The parochet in front of the Holy of Holies. The curtain hanging at the entrance to the Mishkan. And the curtains or drapings that cover the entire Mishkan, visible from the inside. What did these cherubim in the design look like?

The cover over the entire Mishkan and the Parochet in front of the Holy of Holies had a different design on the 2 sides of the curtain. On one side was a winged angel that looked like an eagle. The other was a winged angel that looked like a lion. The curtain that hung

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at the entrance to the Mishkan had only a lion angel design on both sides.



6th aliya (27:9-19) Make an **altar** of 5 square amot with horns at its corners, overlaid with copper. All the utensils, the pots, shovels, pans, and forks shall be of copper. Poles of wood overlaid with copper are placed in rings to carry the altar.

An ama, or cubit, is the length from the elbow to your fingertips. Which would be about a foot and a half, or a half meter. 5 amot would be 7 ½ feet by 7 ½ feet. This altar is quite a bit larger than any of the other objects in the Mishkan.

There are 2 sections to the Mishkan. The inner chamber that is covered with the 3 coverings. It houses the Menorah, the Table, the Incense Altar and the Holy of Holies with the Aron. In front of this covered chamber or building is a large courtyard described in the next aliya. This is where the large altar is placed. While the Mishkan building was covered entirely, this altar and courtyard area is open to the sky.



7th aliya (27:9-19) Make **curtains** of fine white linen for

the Courtyard surrounding the Mishkan. The curtains shall hang from poles. The Courtyard shall be 100 amot long by 50 amot wide. The curtain at the entrance of the courtyard shall be of colorful woven wool.

The white linen curtains could give the feeling of clouds, of the heavens. The light of the Menorah and the smoke of the incense could evoke the fire and smoke



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of Mt. Sinai. And the 2-fold structure, of the inner section and the outside section could evoke the scene of Mt. Sinai; the people at a distance and Moshe closer in.

As such, the Mishkan is the home of the Shechina dwelling in our midst, like its descent at Sinai. And while we are elated at the notion of an earthly place of contact between man and G-d, we also recoil at His transcendence. This tension is conveyed through the coverings, a symbolic way to convey a message of the sublime, mysterious, hidden, ineffable experience of the Divine contact with the earthly.

HAFTORAH

1 MELACHIM 5:26 - 6:13.

This week's *haftorah* describes the building of the Holy Temple under the leadership of King Shlomo, echoing this week's Torah portion which describes the construction of

the Desert Mishkan.

The *haftorah* discusses the manpower that Shlomo recruited for the building of the Holy Temple. Also discussed are the transportation of the stone, the laying of the foundation, as well as the dimensions of the Holy Temple.

The *haftorah* concludes with G-d's word to King Shlomo: "This house which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, and execute My ordinances, and keep all My commandments to walk in them; then will I establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people, Israel." ■

רפואה שלמה
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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם (כה:ח)

"And let them make for Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." (25:8)

The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Mayer HaCohen 1838-1933) was intrigued how Moshe, as a human being, could deal with such a monumental task of building a sanctuary for G-d to dwell in.

The Psikta Rabati discusses Moshe trembling upon receiving this command and asking "How does mortal man construct a structure to house G-d? As King Solomon said in the Book of Kings (8:27) "The Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain You."

G-d, then clarified to Moshe that the Mishkan is not to be built on My scale, but only on a human scale. Twenty boards on the north, twenty on the south and eight on the west.

Similarly, Moshe was perturbed when given the mitzvah of the half-shekel. How is it possible for any human being to give enough to ransom himself to G-d? How can one fulfill the pasuk (Shemot 30:12) "Every man shall give a ransom of his soul"? G-d, once again, reassured Moshe that they only need to give a HALF shekel and not a whole one.

We see from the teachings of the Sages that G-d does not demand from us greater than our human capabilities. Everyone must do only that which is within his or her power to accomplish. Divine expectations are only according to man's ability. Shabbat Shalom

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STATS

19th of 54 sedras; 7th of 11 in Sh'mot
Written on 154.8 lines in a Torah (43rd)
9 Parshiyot; 4 open, 5 closed
96 p'sukim - ranks 38 (9th in Sh'mot)
1145 words - ranks 45 (10th in Sh'mot)
4692 letters - ranks 41 (9th in Sh'mot)
T'ruma is a short sedra with very short p'sukim

MITZVOT

3 mitzvot; 2 positive, 1 prohibition
One of the mitzvot aseil in the sedra is a super-mitzvah, in that it includes the many commands to make all the furnishings of the Mikdash. Further, the fulfillment of this mitzvah facilitates many others

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