



MIKAYLA DANIEL
MADRICA

HASHEM WITHIN US

In this week's parasha, Terumah, Hashem gives Am Yisrael specific instructions for constructing the Mishkan. Throughout the Torah, we see a recurring request to create a place for Hashem to dwell. However, we have to ask: how is it possible to create a worldly space for an otherworldly Being such as Hashem?

We find an answer in the parasha. Hashem says, "וְעַשׂו לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וּשְׁכָנֹתִי בְּתוֹכְם" (Shemot 25:8), which translates to, "Let them make Me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among them." The word *בְּתוֹכְם* ("among them") seems grammatically unusual when referring to a physical structure; it should say "in it," not "in them." Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ל"ג explains that the structure itself makes no difference; rather, Hashem dwells in the hearts of those who build it.

This teaches us that Hashem dwells within all of us—we just need to open our eyes and recognize His presence.



YOCEF BEGOUN
11TH GRADE, JERUSALEM

BEING AN AUTHENTIC JEW

Parashat Terumah teaches us that only those motivated to contribute to the Mishkan should donate. In most cases of communal responsibility, everyone is required to donate—for example, with the machatzit hashekel. Why, when it comes to giving terumah for the upkeep of the Mishkan, is it given only by those whose hearts motivate them?

Terumah means setting aside something of your own and giving it to Hashem. The pasuk tells us that the donation must be given with an attitude of *ידבנו ל'בו*. Rashi explains that the word *ידבנו* is an expression of voluntary contribution coming from within one's own heart. The idea is that when B'nei Yisrael see individuals giving generously of their own portion to Hashem, they will be inspired to do so themselves.

וְעַשׂו לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וּשְׁכָנֹתִי בְּתוֹךְם – "They shall make a sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them" (25:8). This shows that authentic Judaism is about making a place for Hashem within our hearts.

We should strive to serve Hashem in the most authentic way, avoid simply "going through the motions," and, by doing so, inspire others to grow in Torah and mitzvot. ■

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