



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS
RCA ISRAEL REGION

PARSHAT TERUMAH

Parshat Terumah contains the instructions to build the Mishkan. Moshe calls to bring materials. Then commands to 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. 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. And as radical as this sounds, G-d is commanding us to build Him a home in this world, a place to dwell in this world. How the Eternal, Infinite One dwells on earth is the stuff of philosophers. But dwell He (or

Shechina, She) does.

And this command to create a place for Him to dwell is the final step in the descent of G-d into our world. For the Torah is the story of G-d's reach for man.

When we view in a broad sweep the major pivotal stories in the Torah, it is the story of a step-by-step descent of G-d, moving closer and closer to man.

Beginning with creating the world. And creating man in His Image. That by itself is an expression of love. Why in the world would the Master of the Universe choose to create a being in His Image? It sounds like, not to be trite, but it sounds like He wants a friend, a partner, an engagement.

He initiates contact with Adam and Eve, blessing them, commanding them. And interacts with Cain and with Noah, even binding Himself following the flood to never again destroy the world, a statement of commitment to man despite our failings.

And in a further dramatic reach, He initiates contact with Avraham, promising the Land; a stretch of His Hand to Avraham to pull him closer.

In Egypt, the interaction changes. Up until now G-d has been at a distance, interacting, promising but letting man meander in this world. In Egypt, it all changes. He intervenes, manipulates nature to redeem the people from Egypt. Then He splits the Sea.

He has gone well beyond merely speaking to man. Now He is engaging in our world, putting His arm around our people.

Finally, Sinai: Descending on the mountain,

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speaking with the entire people.

This is all a process, step by step, of descent into this world.

A place to dwell consistently, not just sporadically on earth is the natural next step. Well, the natural next step in this radical process of the Master of the Universe's descent into our world. This descent is now not just sporadic. It is permanent.



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 Aron is the home of the tablets of the 10 Commandments. These tablets are a reminder, a depiction of the momentous descent of the Divine onto the mountain. The tablets are not so much a recording of the particular mitzvot, but a recording of the meaning of the moment. The Divine descent to speak to man. Now, etched in stone, as a reminder of the moment.

And to emphasize that it is the presence of G-d that is represented by the tablets in the Aron, the cover has two angels, wings outstretched. We know from later books of Tanach, of Isaiah and of the vision in the first chapter of Ezekiel, that the Divine is depicted surrounded by winged angels.

As such, the Aron with the winged angels on top is meant to represent G-d's Presence. This is the place where He dwells.

The Holy of Holies, where this Aron will be placed, is like His private inner Chamber.



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 tchelat, 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.

Both the table with the bread and the Menorah are placed outside the Holy of Holies. Though not mentioned here, they are joined by the incense altar.

One could view this as a minimalist home. The inner private quarters, the Holy of Holies. And the outer chamber, with a light and a table with food. These three items cover our senses: sight, taste and smell. Menorah for light, sight. The Table with bread, taste. The incense, smell.

The Mishkan consists of these two areas, the Holy of Holies and the outer area. These two areas are covered with 3 coverings. These coverings form the roof of the building.

The 1st set of coverings 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 create the private, sequestered 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).

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

These multiple angel designs reinforce the depiction of the Divine surrounded by angels.



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 finger tips. Which would be about a foot and a half, or a half meter. 5 amot would be 7 1/2 feet by 7 1/2 feet. This altar is quite a bit larger than any of the other objects in the Mishkan.

There are 2 sections to the Mishkan, one covered, one open. The inner covered section 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 aliyah. 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, open to the sky, 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 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 like at Sinai, the inner Holy of Holies is restricted to just one man; at Sinai it was Moshe on the mountain, in the Mishkan it is the kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur.

The outer area with the Menorah is restricted to kohanim. And the outside area is for the people. Like at Sinai, the people stand at a distance. And like Sinai, where the people withdrew from fear of the encounter with the Divine, so too here, the curtains divide the areas so the people stay at a healthy distance.

This structure communicates that 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 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." ■

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

והיו שמונה קרשיהם ואדניהם שש בשני אדנים תחת הקרש האחד ושני אדנים תחת הקרש האחד (כו:כה)

"And there were eight boards, and their silver sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board." (26:25)

Why, when describing the building of the Mishkan, is the language of "Adanim" used in describing the sockets or bases? The word "Adanim" seems to suggest "lordship" - "Adanoot"?

The Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim from Luntschitz 1550-1619) relates that the different units in building G-d's Tabernacle have Divine hints to our behavior in general. This unit called "Adanim" teaches us an important lesson in humility. The bases or sockets were the lowest parts of the structure and the beams leaned on them. Nevertheless, they were referred to as "Adanim" - "lords". This technical aspect can hint to us that an individual should be lowly in his own eyes and not internalize when stepped on by others. Acting with such humility even when bothered and not reacting when insulted will lead G-d to raise such a person and make him great. On the other hand, upon reaching a great stature in life, he must remain humble. He should always remember, all honor received is a gift from G-d. He needs always to remember his shortcomings and that he really is nothing more than a lowly base or socket in a Divine structure. Shabbat Shalom