Overview

Hashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Bnei Yisrael are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan’s outer courtyard is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the Kohanim, the descendants of Aaron. This contains the Table of showbreads, the Menorah, and the Golden Altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the Kohanim. This was the place where Hashem's glory appeared. This is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed in precious metals and stones, the Tablets of Stone, the Tablets of the ceremony of the Later Years, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. This was the Ark of the Covenant. Here the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mt. Sinai. The Ark was a symbol of the presence of Hashem in the Mishkan. The Beam of the Law and the Ark were an inseparable pair. Moshe was speaking conceptually, stressing what was the essence and purpose of the Mishkan. The Ark held the Tablets of the Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mt. Sinai. The Ark was a symbol of the presence of Hashem in the Mishkan. Moshe was speaking conceptually, stressing what was the essence and purpose of the Mishkan.

Insights

The Furniture Was Divine

“They shall make an Ark...” (25:10)

In the desert kingdom of Mukhtar, things changed a lot after they discovered the oil. The sheik, eager to benefit his people and to add to his own prestige, built roads and hotels, palaces and airports. They had everything. Everything, that is, except water. The only liquid that was abundant in Mukhtar was black and viscous. It may have been black gold, but you still couldn’t drink it.

Short of towing an iceberg from the Antarctic (a idea which was under consideration), no one had yet found a solution.

The sheik decided that he would go to America, for America was a country where there were solutions for people who didn’t even know they had problems. So how much more must there be a solution for someone with a problem that he could easily identify! The sheik stayed in the Waldorf Astoria for less than a week. When it was time to leave, he summoned the bell-hop to take down his luggage.

The bell-hop’s jaw dropped when he opened the door to the sheik’s suite. There, sitting in the middle of the state-room, was an enormous sea-trunk. It was so improbably large that it looked almost like a stage prop. Realizing that he was easily out-manned by such an object, he retreated and returned with reinforcements.

It finally took six able-bodied porters and a truck to move the trunk out to Kennedy airport.

In an era of roll-on luggage, the sheik’s cabin trunk looked like a total anachronism. And sure enough, it caught the eye of watchful customs officer.

“Good morning, sir! May I ask you what you have in this trunk.”

“Oh it’s nothing officer, just a few presents for my people back home.”

“Yes sir. Would you mind opening it up, please?”

“Well, really officer, this is most unnecessary. I will take this up at the highest levels.”

“That’s your privilege, sir, but I’m afraid you’ll still have to open this trunk.”

When the lid of the trunk opened, the officer’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“There you see officer, in my country, we have no water. On my first day in this country, I went into the kitchen and turned one of these things, and miracle of miracles, water just started to pour out of it! So, now, I am taking home to my people this brilliant invention. You westerners know a thing or two, I have to admit!”

Hashem told Moshe to go and tell Betzalel “Make Me a Mishkan (a Sanctuary), an Aron (holy ark) and kelim (the other furnishings of the Sanctuary).” When Moshe told Betzalel, he reversed the order and told him to build an Aron, kelim and a Mishkan.

Betzalel said to Moshe, “Moshe Rabbeinu, the way of the world is that a person builds a house, and then afterwards furnishes it. You’re telling me to build the furnishings first. Where am I supposed to put them?”

Why did Moshe change the order?

Moshe wasn’t giving Betzalel building instructions. He wasn’t talking to him like an architect to a building contractor. Moshe was speaking conceptually, stressing what was the essence and purpose of the Mishkan.

Continued on the other side
The excitement of his arrival will not get in the way of our preparations for Shabbos. Once Shabbos has ended and the way is clear comes from the word in Hebrew for light 'Ohr.' The light of the world. Without the Aron, the Mishkan would have been merely a shell, merely a ‘dry faucet’ without the living waters of the Holy Torah.

**Rolling Hills**

“The staves shall remain in the rings of the ark; they may not be removed from it.” (25:15)

The Torah is the portable homeland of the Jewish People. For most of their history, the Jews have been in exile. But whether that exile was Babylon or Italy, Turkey or Maine, the Jew has always been able to roll up his homeland — the Torah — and take it with him.

It’s not so much that the Jews have kept the Torah, than the Torah has able to roll up his homeland — the Torah — and take it with him. Wherever the Jews go, willingly or perforce, they roll up their portable homeland and take it with them.

**Built to Last**

“This Temple that you build; if you follow My decrees, perform My statutes, and observe all My commandments…” (6:12)

Just as in this week’s Parsha the Torah speaks of the construction of the Mishkan, the Divine ‘residence’ in the desert, so too the Haftorah describes the first Beis Hamikdash which was built by Shlomo Hamelech (King Solomon) 480 years after the Exodus.

Even though the physical statistics of Shlomo Hamelech’s construction are staggering, what is important to Hashem is that the real construction should be built from the giving heart. This week’s Parsha tells us how this is done.

Haftorah: I Melachim 5:26 - 6:13

**Sources:**

"The Furniture Was Divine" - Talmud-Berachos 55a; Rabbeinu Bachya; Rabbi Uziel Milevsky zt"l

"Rolling Hills" - Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

"Soul Food" - Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz

"Built To Last" - Kochav MiYaakov

**Soul Food**

“… From every man whose heart will give, you shall take My portion.” (25:2)

He looked just like the other pauper. His eyes were dull from lack of food; his garments sullied. He knocked on Rabbi Chiyah’s door. “Give me bread!”

Rabbi Chiyah gave him some bread. “My master gave bread to that other fellow. My master had mercy on him. Will not my master then have mercy on me? I am also poor. I am the angel of death.”

The angel of death showed Rabbi Chiyah a rod of fire. Then Rabbi Chiyah gave him his soul.

This event, which the Talmud records (Mo’ed Katan 28a) is very difficult to understand. After all, there’s an enormous difference between giving someone a piece of bread and giving up your life?

How could the angel of death make such a comparison in the first place? The angel of death knew Rabbi Chiyah well. He saw through to the depths of his heart. When Rabbi Chiyah gave bread to a pauper, he gave with such generosity of heart that he was really giving a piece of himself.

The angel of death was really saying to Rabbi Chiyah, “You didn’t really give that pauper bread. That was just the way you gave to him. What you gave was your soul wrapped up in a piece of bread.”

“So just like you gave him from your soul, give to me too your soul.”

Similarly, the whole essence of the Mishkan that the Jewish People built in the desert had to be with a giving heart and soul. For only in this way could metal and wood be transformed into a spiritual space. And only in this way would it be fit for Hashem to dwell in it.

**Eliyahu Hanavi - t hc bv w hkt**

"Eliyah The Prophet..."