

### Overview

**H**ashem commands Moshe to build a mishkan (sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. 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 Aharon. This contains the table of showbreads, the menorah, and the golden incense altar. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the kohen gadol, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the mishkan, are described in extraordinary detail

### Insights

#### A SWELL PARTY

**“Let them (the Children of Israel) take for Me a portion.” (25:1)**

“**W**hat a great wedding this is! The food! The flowers! The bridesmaids’ dresses! (Was that real silk?)”

“Ah, this is nothing. You should have come to the wedding I went to last week. This guy wanted to make some impression I’ll tell ya! He rented the Space Shuttle, and the ceremony was performed while the bride and groom were floating in space wearing spacesuits!”

“Wow! That must have been great.”

“Yeah, it was okay, but somehow there was no atmosphere...”

All the preparations for a wedding are for one purpose only: To bring joy to the *chassan* (groom) and *kallah* (bride). But there are those who focus on the trappings and miss the essence, those who come only to eat and drink, and ignore the essential point.

Similarly, this world is no more than a wedding-hall bedecked with food and flowers and streamers and

musicians. All for one purpose. To bring the *Chassan* and *Kallah* together. That the soul of Man be wedded to the Creator. But there are those who wander through life like guests at a wedding banquet, picking up a chicken drumstick here and an egg-roll there, and completely miss the point. “*Let them (the Children of Israel) take for Me a portion.*” Let them separate themselves from what is superficial and superfluous in life and connect themselves constantly to the essence. To wed themselves constantly to the Divine Presence.

#### GIVE AND TAKE

**“And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell within them.” (25:8)**

**A**n entity and its parts have a symbiotic relationship. They both must give and take from each other. Take the body of a man. Without limbs there can be no body. The limbs comprise the body. But when the limbs are all connected and the current of life flows within them, the body itself now takes on an existence which is greater than the sum of its parts. And then it gives back to the limbs the power of life.

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It's the same way with Torah and *mitzvos*. The Torah is the body which comprises the limbs, the *mitzvos*. Without the Torah, the *mitzvos* have no value, no point, for we would have no idea how to do even one *mitzvah* without the Torah to teach us. But, on the other hand, without *mitzvos*, the Torah itself loses its value, for without action, the grandeur of Torah study loses its greatness.

"And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell within them." Sometimes, the Torah mentions the construction of the *Mishkan* before its vessels and implements, and sometimes the reverse. This is to teach us that Torah and *mitzvos* are an indivisible team. The flow of influence is in both directions. One cannot function without the other.

#### 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 himself would go to America, for America was a country where there were solutions for people who didn't even know they had problems.

The sheik stayed in the Waldorf Astoria for under 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. Sure enough, the trunk caught the eye of a 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?"

When the lid of the trunk opened, the officer's eyes widened in disbelief. The entire trunk was filled with taps, faucets of all kinds and shapes, stainless steel, copper, modern, antique. Nothing but faucets. Faucets and faucets...and more faucets.

"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 tell Betzalel "make Me a *Mishkan* (Sanctuary), an ark, and *kelim* (the furnishings of the Sanctuary)." When Moshe told Betzalel, he reversed the order and told him to build an ark, *kelim* and a *Mishkan*.

Betzalel said to Moshe, "Moshe, our teacher, 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 the essence and purpose of the *Mishkan*.

The *aron* was the centerpiece of the *Mishkan*. The word *aron* comes from the Hebrew word for light, "*ohr*." The *aron* was the light of the *Mishkan* for it contained the Holy Torah, which is 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.

Sources:

*A Swell Party* - *Degel Machane Efraim*

*Give and Take* - *L'Torah U'Imoadim*

*The Furniture Was Divine* — *Talmud Berachos 55a, Rabbeinu Bachya, Rabbi Uziel Milevsky zt"l*

## Haftorah: Kings I 5:26-6:13

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 480 years after the Exodus.

Even though the physical statistics of Shlomo’s construction are staggering, what is important to Hashem is that the real construction should be built from the giving heart.

This is what Hashem is saying to Shlomo in the above verse : Don’t think that the construction of My

house is by mere material means; by the lavishing of silver and gold. All these are mere illusions — not the real *Beis Hamikdash*. Rather, “if you follow My decrees, and perform My statutes” — this is what the *Beis Hamikdash* is really built of.

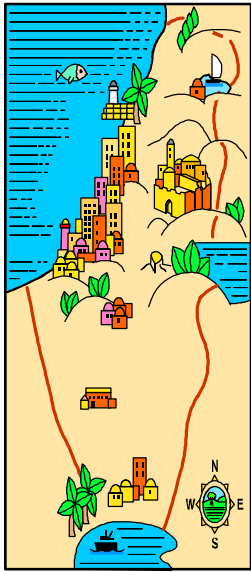
And since the “materials” of its construction are really spiritual, so the *Beis Hamikdash*, even after its physical destruction, even after its material components have disintegrated, continues to exist:

*“I will dwell within Bnei Yisrael, and I will not forsake My people Israel...”*

Kochav M’Yaakov

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



### EIN GEDI

Ancient Ein Gedi was the wilderness area where David and his men found refuge from the pursuing forces of King Saul. It was there that David waived the opportunity of slaying his royal adversary who had inadvertently entered alone into the cave where David was hiding. Rather than slay his pursuer, David contented himself with secretly snipping off the edge of King Saul’s coat in order to later prove that such a situation had existed.

Modern Ein Gedi is a small settlement established in 1949 as a stronghold near what was then the border with a hostile Jordan.

The natural beauty of the area finds expression in *Shir Hashirim (1:14)* where King Solomon describes the vineyards of Ein Gedi covering the surrounding mountainsides. Although the Roman historian Pliny later lamented that Ein Gedi was, like Jerusalem, “a heap of ashes,” the Prophet Yechezkel (*47:10*) foresaw an Ein Gedi blessed with an abundance of fish, symbolic of the eventual restoration of the Holy Land.

## Parshas Terumah

For the week ending 4 Adar 5759, 19 - 20 February 1999

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