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Tabernacle and Temple

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm z"l (Originally delivered February 6, 1975)

Our Sidra and Haftorah of this morning deal essentially with the same theme: the building of a central place of worship for the people of Israel. The Sidra tells us of the commandment to construct the Tabernacle or Mishkan. The Haftorah relates the building of the Mikdash, the Temple. Yet, despite the similarity of subject matter, there are remarkable differences between the Mishkan of Moses described in the Sidra and the Mikdash of Solomon described in the Haftorah. It seems as if the arrangement of this Haftorah to follow this Sidra was intended to teach us a study in contrast; there is a clear message in the juxtaposition of these two different stories of the sanctuaries of Israel.

The Mishkan, as our Sidra describes its construction by Israel under Moses, was a highly popular project, although it was a relatively plain structure, for it had to be portable in order to accompany the Israelites during their long travels in the wilderness. Its construction was a cooperative venture by all strata of society. The men worked, the women weaved, the laborers labored, in a folk project, a community undertaking. The Mikdash, however, despite its architectural grandeur, was not something built by the entire community. It was not the people who erected the Mikdash; it was foreign skilled labor. Professional artisans were imported from Tyre, whose King was Hiram, a friend of Solomon. The contract was sub-let; it was not a do-it-yourself project.

The Mishkan and its construction was something which captured the fancy of the people. It fired their imagination. They gladly volunteered to serve as the builders of the Tabernacle, and they contributed its furnishings. There was an overflow of enthusiasm, an unparalleled and unsurpassed outpouring of love for this sacred project. Such was the plan at the very inception of the project: *מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי*, “of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take My offering.” So

successful was this element of *נדיבות הלב*, of willingness and open-heartedness and love, in the building of the Tabernacle of Moses, that *מרבית העם להביא מדי העבודה*, the people brought more than was required, so that Moses later had to issue a special request to his people that they cease bringing their heartfelt offerings.

The Haftorah, describing the building of the Mikdash or Temple by Solomon, presents us with an entirely different picture. No outpouring of love here, no popular enthusiasm, *נדיבות הלב* no. Instead: *ועל המלך שלמה מס מכל ישראל*, “and King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel.” The building of the Mikdash is a tax, imposed upon the people from without. They are pressed into forced labor, and there is no heart or love in evidence.

Even the Halakhah reflects this difference in mood and temperament between the Mishkan of Moses and the Mikdash of Solomon. Based upon an analysis of the relevant Talmudic texts, that great authority of the last generation, Rabbi Joseph Rosen זצ"ל, known as the “Gaon of Rogatchov,” informs us that the building of the Mishkan and the Mikdash were fundamentally dissimilar. To have a Mikdash was a great mitzvah. However, its builders or construction was not regarded as a mitzvah in itself. It was considered only a *מצוה הכשר* -- a physical act, in itself of no special religious significance, which is only preparatory for that which is religiously important. That is why the building of the Mikdash did not take precedence over the study of Torah: even children studying Torah in their schools may not be disturbed for the purpose of building the Temple. The Mishkan, however, was different. Even the very building of the Mishkan is, religiously speaking, regarded as precious. It is not only a *מצוה הכשר* it is a mitzvah itself; not only the preparation for a sacred act, but in itself a sacred deed, a holy action. Therefore, the building of the Mishkan takes precedence even over the

study of Torah, which may be postponed for the sake of the construction of the Tabernacle. Therefore, too, the dedication (חנוכת הבית) of the Mishkan was permitted even in violation of the Sabbath. Thus the Halakhah reacts to the differences between the Mishkan and the Mikdash: the significance of building the Mikdash is more limited: the mitzvah of the Tabernacle extends to all aspects of this sanctuary. (צפנת פעמח הל' ת"פ"ג ה"ג)

How are we to explain these differences? Why was the Tabernacle a popular project, achieved with love and enthusiasm, whose very building was a very precious commandment; while the Temple was erected by a selected few, even foreigners, without much evidence of enthusiasm, whose building was not in itself considered a mitzvah?

I suggest that the contrast between the two sanctuaries derives from the fundamental difference in conception and approach by their builders, Moses and Solomon, each of whom brought a different quality to his task.

Solomon possessed one outstanding virtue above all others: Hokhmah, wisdom. Thus does our Haftarah begin: and the Lord gave Solomon wisdom. Moses, however, brought a different concept to the building of the Mishkan. Immediately prior to the commandment by God to Moses to build the Tabernacle, we read (at the end of the last week's Sidra): *וַיִּשְׁכֵּן כְּבוֹד ה' עַל יְסוּדֵי הַר סִינַי*; *and the Kavod of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai*; *וּמֵרָאָה כְּבוֹד ה' כַּאֲשֶׁר אוֹכֵלֶת עַל רֹאשׁ הָהָר*; *and the appearance of the Kavod of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the Mount*; *וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֶנָן*; *and Moses entered into the midst of the cloud.*

What is kavod? Perhaps it might be defined as honor, or glory. It is no simple matter to translate the word. Generally one would say that it is a sense of divine grandeur from which all norms of human moral conduct and ethical behavior as well as religious ecstasy and mystic communion. The Kavod of God is His ineffable dignity, and the consciousness of that divine Kavod is what gives man his own feeling of worthiness and self-respect.

Of course, I do not mean--Heaven forbid!--to disparage Solomon or his Hokhmah or his Mikdash. Solomon was, after all, the wisest of all men. Wisdom is a great virtue, especially in Judaism, in which intellect is so highly prized. Even for the building of the Mishkan itself Hokhmah or wisdom was necessary; for we are told that the builders of the Tabernacle had to be each of them *חכם לב*, wise of heart. The Mikdash itself had a precious place of honor in the life of our people. It was our beloved sanctuary, for

whose reconstruction we regularly pray. On the holiest day of the year we speak of the Mikdash and we proclaim: *אשרי עין ראתה זאת* "happy are the eyes that have seen it."

Nevertheless, Kavod is a higher attainment than Hokhmah. Moses is a greater man than Solomon. The Mishkan is a more sublime institution than the Mikdash.

Let us compare these two qualities which were embodied as the fundamental principles in these sanctuaries.

Hokhmah, as an intellectual exercise, requires no special moral background. Kavod, however, is a kind of dignity that has profound moral dimensions.

Hokhmah may come to a man as he sits, meditating, cogitating, thinking. But no man can achieve Kavod by sitting. It requires, as it did of Moses, *ויעל אל ההר* --to climb life's previous moral heights unto the peaks of human endurance in order to be enveloped by the cloud of divine dignity.

Hokhmah, it is true, is a great virtue. But it can easily degenerate into *ערמומיות* --craftiness, cleverness, slyness, shrewdness. It can become the deadly instrument of the opportunist. Kavod, however, is uncorruptible. An old Jewish proverb teaches that *כל הרודף אחרי הכבוד הכבוד בורח*, whoever pursues Kavod with dishonorable intentions, finds that Kavod elusively flees from him. True divine dignity cannot be soiled by the greedy fingers of crass ambitiousness.

Hokhmah resides in a man. It is but one aspect of his personality. It is a function of a specific organ- the brain. Kavod, however, envelops man. He must enter into it as *בתוך הענן*, as one enters into a great cloud. Hokhmah is within a man; he, the man, must enter into Kavod. It is a spirit and an atmosphere and a mood that must overwhelm him as it envelops him all about.

Thus it is that one entered the Mikdash as one enters the House of God. Of Solomon's Temple we read in the Psalms: *מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד*, "a psalm, a song for the dedication of the House by David." Solomon, inspired by the vision of David, built a House of God. Whereas the Mishkan was more than a house; it was the Home of God, even as the very name *משכן* indicated. Indeed, upon the entering into the Mishkan the Jew learned not only that he had come to the Home of God but that God Himself had become the home of man's spirit: *תפלה משה, איש האלקים*; a prayer of Moses, the man of God: *המעון אתה היית לנו בדור*; *O Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place, our home from generation to generation.*

The differences between these two principles were reflected in the two sanctuaries. The Mikdash was built by Solomon upon the pattern envisioned by his father David. Solomon's wisdom dictated to him the necessity for remaining loyal to his father's charge, it inspired him to fulfil his sentimental filial duty to past generations and therefore to build a Temple. Moses, however, built a Mishkan because it was a life-and-death necessity for the moral survival of his people. The Midrash tells us that the Mishkan, residence of the divine Kavod, was built as a *כפרה* an atonement, for the sin of Israel in worshipping the Golden Calf. The Mishkan was filled with the Kavod of the Lord because it was built upon the recognition by Israel of its moral failure and inadequacy, and hence upon its deeply felt aspirations for the moral, the sublime, the pure. In the days of Solomon Jews felt they ought to have a Mikdash. In the days of Moses Jews felt they must have a Mishkan.

These distinctions between Mikdash and Mishkan, between wisdom and Kavod, are not confined to the two ancient sanctuaries of Israel. They are most meaningful for contemporary Jewish life and for the general human predicament of our times.

One of the most terrible blights upon the scene of American Jewry today is the disparity between the intellectual attainments of American Jews in all the secular disciplines, and their woeful lack of Jewish dignity and appreciation of Jewish glory. It is agonizing to read time and again of Jewish "intellectuals"--writers, painters, sociologists, biophysicists--who wield Hokhmah but yield no Kavod, no Jewish self-worth or self-respect.

The synagogue is called *מקדש מעט*, a miniature Temple; would that all our synagogues attained such heights. Yet our aspirations must be even higher: we must try to make of them *משכן מעט*, miniature Tabernacles. We must strive to fashion, out of our synagogues, not only a House of God but a Home of God, an institution which will embody not only the Hokhmah of the Jew but also his transcendent Kavod. The synagogue must be more than a holy real estate; it must express for us the real state of holiness.

All Jews must become involved in Jewish life. All Jews must study Torah, not only the professional class known as Rabbis and a few curious legal minds. All Jews must participate in the leadership of the synagogue, not only a few dedicated souls. All Jews must participate in prayer, and not, like in so many modern "Temples," leave the prayer to a professional known as a Cantor and a machine known as an organ. Our services, our observance, must not

be done as if it were a spiritual tax, forced service. We must act Jewishly not merely out of a sense of duty to departed parents and sentimental loyalty to a cherished past, but out of *נדיבות לב*, as it was in the Mishkan: with a sense of religious experience and religious commitment.

Certainly we must never relinquish our old aspirations for Hokhmah or wisdom. We must however combine both great qualities--and that can be done in the study of Torah. For the study of Torah requires both Hokhmah and Kavod which presents the infinite moral dimensions of a life lived in accordance with Torah.

And not only as Jews but as members of modern society must we keep this same principle in mind. In the last fifty years we have amassed more Hokhmah, more science and technology and general knowledge, than in all the years before us. "Wisdom" has proliferated at an unparalleled rate. What has this Hokhmah done for us? It has brought us many blessings; but so many of these negative features that, together, comprise the greatest threat ever to the life and future of man. I refer not only to the terrors of the bomb, but also the kind of human or inhuman future we may have as a result of leaving the determination of that future to scientists and technologists. May I recommend to you Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society*, where a perceptive observer warns us against leaving our destiny in the hands of people who are technologically brilliant but otherwise mediocre and ignorant--idiots-savants! As a result of the world-view inspired by Hokhmah without Kavod, by an ethically neutral, amoral pursuit of knowledge only for the sake of knowledge, man has become devalued, his spirit denatured, his uniqueness denied.

What has become of modern man, who has been so successful in the pursuit of wisdom and so regressive in the attainment of Kavod? Perhaps the best way to express it is symbolically. Isaac Bashevis Singer, in one of his recent collections of short stories, begins a story called "The Last Demon" with the following words:

I, a demon, bear witness that there are no demons left. Why demons, when man himself is a demon? Why persuade to evil someone already convinced?

Is that not so? Those of us who have chosen not to forget the history of the past twenty or twenty-five years will recognize full well that nations that were distinguished by Hokhmah, by art and literature and science and technology, created a war machine that ruthlessly destroyed a third of our people and took a total of eighteen million lives.

Those of us who have open eyes will realize that a country that is today one of the most prosperous in the whole world, West Germany, a country that boasts the Hokhmah of Universities and libraries, and that is supposedly democratic and “deNazified,” today laughs at the world. The old demons have risen again. The same country that has caused so much terror and anguish for mankind today purposes a “cut-off date,” after which even the most vicious and sadistic and blood-thirsty monsters will go completely free. In this same country, so filled with all the branches of wisdom, a court of law tried two people who were accused of complicity in the sadistic murder of three-hundred thousand Hungarian Jews: one of them was sentenced to but five years in prison and the other was let free completely--as if they had been prosecuted for something no more serious than drunken driving!

No, there is no need for demons. Demons are now unemployed, for man has taken over--man who has misused his Hokhmah for devilish ends.

Wisdom cannot and should not be abolished. We cannot and do not want to turn the clock back. The pursuit of knowledge and the accretion of wisdom is a fundamental human drive. But we desperately need Kavod to tell us how to use that Hokhmah, how to restrain us from its misuse. We must proclaim with Isaiah that מלא כל הארץ כבודו, the whole world is filled with His Kavod; for if we continue to ignore that Kavod, then we shall not be able to refrain from soiling or even blowing up כל הארץ, the whole world.

Let us conclude with one last observation. Just as the Mishkan emphasized Kavod, but also embodied Hokhmah, so the Mikdash of Solomon, while emphasizing the primacy of Hokhmah, did not forget the element of Kavod. Had there been no divine Kavod in the Mikdash, it could never have attained the holiness and sanctity accorded to it in Jewish life.

Legalized Idolatry?

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Perhaps the least likely aspect of the Mishkan is the sculpture in the Holy of Holies: on top of the case containing the luchot (tablets) were statues of keruvim (cherubs). (Shemot 25:18-22) The same images adorned the giant curtains hanging in the Mishkan. (ibid. 26:1) The Talmud (Chagigah 13b) contends that they were winged human youths, and so we must ask: Why would G-d

Indeed, Solomon later came to realize the need for Kavod above all else. The Rabbis tell us, in a beautiful Aggadah, that after Solomon built the Temple he sought to enter it, but he found the doors barred to him. Standing outside the Temple, Solomon addressed the Temple gates in the words of his father David: שאו שערים ראשיכם והנשאו פתחי עולם, “lift up your heads, ye gates, and open for me, ye doors to eternity.” Solomon realized that Hokhmah was not enough; man needs Kavod too. Hokhmah can sometimes be exclusive, and bar other humans from its tight, closed circle. Only Kavod can break out of its narrow confines to cover the whole universe like a giant, benevolent cloud of glory. Hokhmah can sometimes lead a man to imagine that wisdom is self-begotten. A man may think that his Hokhmah is his own. But no man can be deluded into thinking that Kavod comes from himself; all Kavod, all true dignity and worth, derives from God.

Thus did Solomon as the Temple gates to open, for Hokhmah is not enough: instead, he pleads with them, open up, ויבא מלך הכבוד, and let the kind of Kavod come in. And מלך הכבוד מי הוא זה who is the “king of Kavod?”--is it King Solomon, that royal personage, the wisest of all human beings?

No, it is not. For there is only one “King of Kavod.” ה צב-אות הוא מלך הכבוד, “*The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Kavod.*”

May we Jews, who have always aspired to the gift of Hokhmah, continue to cherish wisdom but aspire to the greater virtue of Kavod, and may we teach this new scale of values to an unredeemed world.

May we grow from wisdom to dignity; from the understanding of Solomon to the glory of Moses; from the world of the Mikdash to the world of Mishkan.

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want statues of human beings in holiest part of the world’s holiest location?

A midrash asks this question, pointing out that Hashem specifically forbids us from creating such statues! This midrash answers that this must be accepted as Hashem’s will, much as G-d orders us not to light fires on Shabbat, but also orders us to bring korbanot on Shabbat. (Pesikta Zutrita

Terumah 25:18, and see Avodah Zarah 43b) But this only explains our acceptance of the mitzvah; what benefit does G-d see in their presence in the Mishkan?

1: Divine Presence

Ramban writes that G-d orders us to create the keruvim as “a Throne of Honour for Me, for I will meet with you there, and I will place My Shechinah upon you.” (Commentary to Shemot 25:21) This fits Yechezkel’s description of keruvim as part of the Divine throne, as well as the presence of keruvim at the entrance of the Garden of Eden. (Yechezkel 1:10, Bereishit 3:24) Indeed, Tehillim 99:1 describes G-d as “dwelling with the keruvim.”

2: Education

Rambam contends that the keruvim are educational, teaching belief in a celestial realm, as well as the existence of G-d, communication from G-d via prophecy, and the presentation of Torah to humanity. (Moreh Nevuchim 3:45) This is challenging, though, since the keruvim in the Holy of Holies were hidden from sight! The Talmud (Yoma 54a) does state that they were revealed to those who came to the Beit haMikdash for holidays, but why wouldn’t the keruvim on the giant curtains have sufficed?

3: Inspiration

Don Isaac Abarbanel offers a third idea: the keruvim provide inspiration. Specifically, “they were in the form of youths to hint to youth’s natural powers of insight and purity from all sin.” (Commentary to Yechezkel 10:13) By symbolizing our abilities and righteousness, the keruvim inspire us. However, as with Rambam’s approach, we must ask: why not suffice with the very visible keruvim on the curtains?

4: Barometer

The Talmud describes the keruvim as a barometer of our

relationship with G-d: “When the Jews would ascend for the holiday, they would open the curtain and show the Jews the keruvim embracing, and say, ‘See how beloved you are before G-d, like the love of a man and woman!’” (Yoma 54a) Rabbi Meir Simchah haKohen explained, “The Creator made signs and markers to inform whether Israel is performing Hashem’s will.” (Commentary to Shemot 32:19) But why hide this barometer?

5: Our Representatives

We might suggest one more idea, highlighting the human features of the keruvim. Perhaps, rather than represent G-d to us, the keruvim represent us, to G-d. Specifically, the pair represent two human beings: Adam and Chavah. [Indeed, Rabbi Yaakov Mecklenburg wrote, “The name keruv is a description of Adam the First.” (HaKtav v’haKabbalah to Bereishit 3:24)]

In general, we may observe that the Mishkan recreates the Garden of Eden at the moment we were exiled. In Eden, Adam and Chavah were told “to work it and protect it,” jobs which then fell to the tribe of Levi. [Compare Bereishit 2:15 and Bamidbar 3:7-8, for example.] Adam and Chavah are exiled wearing clothing designed for them by G-d; the kohanim wore special clothing designed for them by G-d. Adam and Chavah are barred from the “Tree of Life” when they are exiled; our luchot, representing G-d’s Torah, are also off-limits.

If so, then we understand why the keruvim are not for us to see; we craft them for G-d to “see”. They represent that hope which has been humanity’s greatest dream since the week of Creation – to walk the path to the Tree of Life, and return to the Garden of Eden. May G-d see our longing to return - even in a time when we lack keruvim - and restore that original bond.

Trust Me

Rabbi Joshua (The Hoffer) Hoffman

The Torah, in parshas Terumah, records God’s command to build a mikdash, or sanctuary - also known as mishkan, or tabernacle - where His divine presence will reside: “And you shall make Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them” (Shemos 25:7). There is a dispute between Rashi and Ramban, based in part on different midrashic sources, regarding when this command was given. According to Rashi, the command is actually out of sequence, and was given after the sin

of the golden calf, while according to the Ramban it was given before that sin, and is recorded in the Torah in chronological order. There is a midrash in Tanna deVei Eliyohu (17:21), that seems to support Ramban’s approach. The midrash there says that when God heard the Jews proclaim, at Sinai, ‘na’aseh venishma’ (Shemos 24:7), meaning, we will do and we will listen, he understood that they had accepted the yoke of the kingdom of heaven with ‘simcha,’ or joy, and, in response, said, “And you shall

make me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them.” This midrash seems somewhat enigmatic. What connection is there between the people’s acceptance of the mitzvos and the divine response of commanding them, specifically, to build the mishkan?

Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried, in his Torah commentary *Aperion*, cites the *Tanna deVei Eliyohu* somewhat differently, as saying that God’s response to the nation saying ‘na’aseh venishma’ was to command them to donate money for the building of the mishkan, as we find in the beginning of parshas Terumah. He also explains God’s satisfaction with their acceptance of His yoke as being based on the fact that they said ‘na’aseh venishma,’ - ‘we will do and we will listen’ - thus displaying a willingness to do the mitzvos even though they had not yet heard their entire contents. He explains the midrash based on the peculiar wording of that command: “Speak to the children of Israel and they shall take to me a portion...” (Shemos 25:1). In reality, he points out that they should have been commanded ‘they shall give’ rather than “they shall take,” since they were being commanded to contribute. The reason they were told to take, he explains, is that by giving to the construction of the mishkan, they were really taking, because they would gain tremendously, in a spiritual sense, from the existence of the mishkan. However, the people could only appreciate that point if they trusted in God. By accepting the mitzvos at Sinai without first being told what they were, they demonstrated that trust, and, therefore, God responded by telling them to ‘take’ a portion to Him for the construction of the mishkan.

While Rabbi Ganzfried’s explanation of the midrash teaches us the high degree of faith and trust that the nation had in God, it does not address the actual wording of the midrash. The midrash, as we have seen, records that God’s response to the nation’s acceptance of the yoke of the mitzvos was to command them to build the mishkan. Moreover, the midrash notes that this acceptance was done with joy, and Rabbi Ganzfried’s explanation does not address this factor at all. I believe, however, that the joyous nature of the nation’s acceptance of the mitzvos is the major point of the midrash, and the key to understanding the connection between that acceptance and God’s response of commanding them to build the mishkan.

Rabbi Yosef Albo, in his *Sefer HaIkkarim* - Book of Principles - (3:33), explains the nature of *simcha*. The upshot of his explanation is that a person attains joy when he acts according to the nature of his soul. Following this

explanation, when the Jews accepted the yoke of mitzvos with joy, they came to a recognition that God’s laws are imprinted upon their souls, and constitute their essence, as individuals and as a nation. The *Midrash Rabbah* in the beginning of Bereishis tells us that God gazed into the Torah and created the world. Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch, who was the *mashgiach ruchani*, or spiritual guide, of the yeshiva in Telshe before World War Two, explained that human nature - specifically the inner nature of the Jew - is fashioned in conformity with the laws of the Torah. When the nation accepted these laws with joy, they demonstrated that they understood that the Torah would help them actualize their inner essence. It was this recognition, I believe, that led them to say ‘na’aseh venishma,’ expressing their willingness to perform the mitzvos even though they did not yet know what they were precisely. By connecting with their inner essence, they would, in truth, strengthen their connection to God, as we will explain further on. When God heard that they accepted His laws and His kingship in this manner, and saw that they appreciated the relationship that they were meant to have with Him, He then commanded them to build a structure for Him, so that he could dwell among them, establishing a relationship with them on a permanent basis.

Rabbi Aharon Dovid Goldberg, in his *Shiras Dovid*, cites our *Tanna deVei Eliyohu*, and notes that it is consistent not only with Ramban’s opinion that the command to build the mishkan preceded the sin of the golden calf, but, in addition, to Ramban’s comments in his introduction to the book of Shemos, that the process of redemption was not completed until God’s divine presence dwelled above the mishkan. Rabbi Goldberg does not mention this, but Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Kook explains that true freedom is the ability to be oneself, to act in accordance with one’s nature. God, he writes (see *Oros HaKodesh*, volume 3), created the world out of His freedom to act according to His will. Man, by connecting to his inner self, thereby attaches himself to this divine freedom, and actualizes the divine element within himself. Following this definition of freedom, then, when the Jewish nation accepted God’s laws with joy, and demonstrated that they understood that these laws were imprinted on their souls and constituted their inner essence, they were demonstrating that they had attained freedom. God then responded, as the *Tanna deVei Eliyohu* tells us, by commanding them to build the mishkan as a place where the relationship they had with God would

attain a sense of permanence. The building of the mishkan, then, constituted the culmination of the process of redemption, bringing God's presence into the lives of each

individual, and, in effect, in touch with the essence of their souls.

The Inner Child

Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh (Transcribed and adapted from a shiur given in the Gruss Kollel on February 7, 2019)

The Gemorah darshens (explains) that the *keruvim* (cherubs)—which Hashem commanded in this week's Parsha to make on the *Kaporet* (lid) of the Aron (ark)—are *k'ravya* (like little children). The *meforshim* (the commentators) offer many different suggestions as to why specifically, the keruvim in the Mishkan (Tabernacle [or in the Beis Hamikdash (Temple)]) have such a childlike shape.

The Torah Temima gives a very *pshat* (simple meaning) based interpretation. He says that Chazal (our Sages) explain that the relationship of these keruvim represents the special *chiba* (affection) relationship between Hashem and Klal Yisroel. And everyone (well, almost everyone) loves children! They are so cute and lovable! Who doesn't feel extra love for a baby they see when walking down the street? —Much more than for an adult. So, to show that Hashem loves us—after all, Hashem is our Father—*Avinu Malkeinu; Banim atem la'Hashem Elokeichem*. They are made in childlike *tzura* (form) to show the extent of Hashem's love for us. However, many of the *darshanim* (expounders) understand that this 'form of children' has to do specifically with their location on the lid of the Aron. And we know that various aspects of the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash represent different aspects of life and *Yahadut* (Judaism). The Aron, which has in it the *Luchot HaBrit* (Tablets of the Covenant)—and in the end, Moshe placed a Sefer Torah (Torah Scroll) there as well—represents Talmud Torah (Torah study).

The Siftei Kohen on Chumash (Pentateuch)—who should not be confused with commentary of the Shach on the Shulchan Aruch—says that when it comes to Talmud Torah, we make forms of children on top of the lid of the Aron because of the importance of the Talmud Torah of the Tinokot Beit Rabban. It shows that more important than the Torah learning of the most advanced Kollel students is little kids learning Chumash. Besides the fact that it's *hevel pi she'ein bo chet* (breath untainted by sin), they learn with a sense of innocence that makes their learning that much holier. But, in Talmud Torah, in the very beginning, when the children are growing, you have to

teach them to get them on the right derech (path) and not wait until they are older.

However, the Alter of Kelm (Elder of Kelm), Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv, understands this differently. He says, Yes—the form of little children on top of the Aron refers to Talmud Torah. But it is not referring to the Torah learning of the little kids, per se. We are all in favor of the Talmud Torah of the little kids and understand the sublime importance of starting from a very young age to *mechanech* (prepare) kids for Talmud Torah. However, the Alter of Kelm says that the Torah is hinting here at Torah learning of the adults. Torah learning is not like Trix; it's not only for kids. The holiest Talmud Torah might be, in some sense, done by kids. The most advanced levels of Talmud Torah are attained, of course, by adults who possess intellectual sophistication and a proper grasp of the conceptual nature of the Torah. However, we put the tzurah of the little kids on top of the Aron to teach us that even when you are very educated and sophisticated, you have to learn like a little kid. Ultimately, to learn Torah, you have to understand that you don't know everything. Just like a child who is starting out in learning knows that he has a lot left to learn. He knows that he is neither the teacher nor is he the expert. Likewise, to succeed in Torah, you need to approach it with a childlike attitude of the excitement of learning new things and understanding that there is so much more to learn. And ultimately, to succeed in Torah, you need to comprehend that you will never master *kol haTorah kulah* (the entirety of the Torah). No matter how much you learn, there is 100 times more than that that you haven't discovered yet. That's why, he explains, in *divrei Chazal*, they talk about *Talmidei Chachamim* (students of the wise) and sometimes about *Chachamim* (the Wise). But generally, when we talk about the Torah scholars, we call them *Talmidei Chachamim*. Why don't we call them *Chachamim*? Why do we refer to them as *Talmidei Chachamim*? The answer is that if you are a *Chacham* and have finished learning and you know everything, you are the expert, you got your Ph.D., then you are not much of an expert, in reality. Anyone who

thinks they know everything is extraordinarily ignorant. They think that they know all that there is to know, and they don't realize how much more *amkut* (depth of knowledge) there truly is. To be a real Torah scholar, you have to be a *Talmid Chacham*—someone who is always learning and has more to learn. Their *semichah* (Rabbinical ordination) is only the beginning (and actually very, very far from the end). No one really knows the entire Torah. We always have more to learn. Accordingly, Rav Simcha Zisel, the Alter of Kelm, says that we put the form of the

Knowing Nothing

Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Schiffman

The only thing I know, is that I know nothing.” This idea, known as the Socratic Paradox, lays the groundwork for the perspective that knowledge is not something to be attained. In the modern psychology and educational literature this is expressed in the distinction between achievement and mastery orientations. People who have an achievement orientation want to demonstrate that they have accomplished and learned, while those with a mastery orientation want to develop their abilities, irrespective of actual attainment of a goal or an understanding of a particular piece of knowledge. Those that display a mastery orientation tend to do better academically, put in more effort, persist through challenges, and tend to love learning more than those with an achievement orientation.

In a striking passage, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv (*Chochma U'Mussar*, p. 344) quotes this idea from Socrates as a springboard to discuss the view of the Sages, which he suggests is identical to that of Socrates. Featured most prominently in his argument is the fact that the term used to describe a person engaged in Torah study is “*talmid chacham*.” Even the greatest sage, who has amassed encyclopedic knowledge and can plumb the depths of Talmudic analysis, is still called a student.

To bolster his idea, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv quotes the Baal HaTurim (Shemot 25:18), who suggests, based on the Gemara (Sukkah 5b), that the Keruvim that sat above the ark were fashioned in the image of children. This understanding is based on the fact that the word Keruv is usually spelled *kaf-reish-vov-vet*, but in this instance, it is spelled without the vov (*kaf-reish-vet*). Rabbi Abbahu connects this to the Aramaic word *ravya*, which means child. The Keruv, is *ke-ravya* – like a child. The image of

little kids there to teach you that when kids show up, they are excited to learn all the new things, to gain this new knowledge that they don't yet have. And they recognize how much of the path they still have ahead of them. Likewise, no matter what *madreiga* (level) of Torah we are on, we can only be “*Talmidei Chachamim*” if we recognize that whatever we know is a “drop in the bucket.” And we should always be excited to learn more and more and continue to grow in our Talmud Torah.

the child represents a never-ending curiosity, thirst, and quest to learn and discover.

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz (Keli Yakar) finds the same idea embedded within the dimensions of the ark. He first observes that the dimensions of the Altar were five, by five, by three (5x5x3); the dimensions of the Table were two, by one, by one and a half (2x1x1.5); and the dimensions of the Ark were two and a half, by one and a half, by one and half (2.5x1.5x1.5). The Altar was comprised of whole numbers, the Table of a mixture of whole and half numbers, and the Ark of completely half numbers. While he also explains the symbolism of this pattern for the Altar and the Table, for our purposes, his explanation of the Ark's half numbers is pertinent. The reason, he argues, is because the Ark represents Torah and half measurements represent incompleteness. Every learner should take the perspective that they are not a finished product. There is always more to learn. There is always room to grow.

This message is countercultural. We are a society obsessed with certificates, grades, accolades, and accomplishments. Our systems, institutions, and classrooms tend to foster achievement orientations. Yet, we can never become complete and whole in our learning – there is no graduation. To the extent that we can cultivate a mastery orientation for ourselves, for our children and for our students, the better learners we will become. We are all students, we are all keruvim, we are all children, we are all incomplete. The only thing we really know, is that we know nothing.

The Big Picture is Not the Whole Picture

Rabbi Josh Blass

One of the overriding messages of the Torah is the obligation to be sensitive to language. While perhaps subtle, we understand that the usage of one word versus another, or even a different conjugation of the same word changes the complete underlying meaning of the concept at hand. A case in point from contemporary parlance. Someone who only tells their spouse and children 'Love you' versus 'I love you' has taken a very personal and meaningful statement and in a way depersonalized it and shows a discomfort with deep and genuine feelings. It is only a small little 'I', but it is a single letter that fundamentally reflects on the character of the person in the relationship and changes the dynamic of the relationship itself.

One of the most prominent examples of a change in language that helps paint a far deeper and richer tapestry appears at the beginning of Parshas Terumah. After commanding Moshe to collect the materials with which to build the mishkan, HKB'H instructs:

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם:

And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

Many of the meforshim note that perhaps the word בתוכו -in it - I.e that I will reside in the mishkan - would have been more appropriate. Instead בתוכם conveys a far richer image. Namely that the mishkan would be the vehicle that would allow G-d's presence to reside in the midst of the Jewish people in a way that had not been true up until this point. The existence of the mishkan, the beis hamikdash and to some extent a shul serves as a conduit for the intensified presence of HKB'H in the world and provides an opportunity to experience that presence.

But beyond the beautiful but generalized statement of 'b'socham' - in their midst - many of the Kabbalistic and early Hasidic figures deepen the statement. Namely that what is being conveyed is בתוך כל אחד ואחד - G-d's presence will be manifest in the midst of each and every person. The Alshich and Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye in the Toldos Yaakov Yosef see in this instruction the mandate that each person should perceive themselves as a miniature sanctuary and they proceed to correlate all of the various facets of the mishkan with man's attributes and makeup.

Without overstating it, the switch from בתוכו to בתוכם with the additional כל אחד ואחד stands as one of the

single most significant formulations as to who man is and what he is aspiring to be in this world.

The following thought struck me this week. Why at the very onset of the hundreds of pesukim that mandate and describe the building of the mishkan is HKB'H bringing attention to this component of *בתוך כל אחד ואחד*? Why not first detail what needs to be built and then upon the conclusion of either the instruction or of the actual building HKB'H can inform Moshe and the Jewish people that the mishkan will be the opportunity for residence among the nation as a whole and within the hearts and souls of each member of the nation. Why now?

The simple answer is that at the beginning of any enterprise you clearly lay out and formulate the exact purpose and goals of the task at hand. At the beginning of the building of the mishkan, Moshe, and by extension Am Yisroel needed to understand what they were contributing towards and what the presence of the mishkan sought to accomplish.

There is in my mind another element at work as well. Anytime there has been a shift from the individual to the institution there is a fundamental danger that somehow the broad aims of the institution can eradicate the recognition of the individual with all of his/ her specific needs and beauty. The birth of a nation, the building of a country, the establishment of a shul/ community, the transition from a few people learning to a Yeshiva or a higher place of learning, and yes, the transition from personal avodah to the centralized mishkan, all require some degree of broad institutionalization and the transition from the focus on the individual to the focus on the structure.

Inherent in that shift of course is a grave danger and exist the seeds for the type of organizational and communal breakdowns that we have seen from that time and forward. As such at the very beginning of this incredibly meaningful and necessary venture of building the mishkan, HKB'H clearly and unequivocally states - בתוכם/ בתוך כל אחד ואחד - It is a way of saying 'do not forget what this is about, do not forget that every structure and institution is about individualistic man establishing a deep relationship with Me as a personal G-d'.

Moshe's desire to personally adjudicate each case that came to him until his father-in-law intervened as well as his insistence on counting each person himself all speak of

the same theme. It speaks of the fundamentally democratic essence of yahadus in which each person should be made to feel as significant as any other person, no matter their lineage or their socio-economic status. While the statement of the heads of the tribes during the building of the mishkan that encouraged everyone to bring their goods for the building of the sanctuary and then they will contribute whatever still needs to be brought sounds noble in theory, it served as a violation of this principle. It placed the nesi'im separate and away from the people. Organizations and institutions can easily create and emphasize those hierarchy's, and as such the Torah from the very onset tried to fight against the perceived class system that comes with institutionalization. The focus always needs to be on the yachid and the abundantly clear statement of the absolute significance of the yachid, any yachid and every yachid, in the structure of the organization.

Perhaps it is this that the Mishna emphasizes in meseches Sanhedrin. In the structure of the Sanhedrin or Beis Din one might become more broadly focused on the judiciary as an institution and on the law as the code by which the community functions. In this context the da'yanim are reminded and in turn remind and emphasize to the witnesses that each man is considered to be his or her own world and the saving or destruction of the individual is comparable to the saving or destruction of the entire universe. Never allow any element of Yahadus (shuls, schools, courts etc.), even with Judaism's communal focus, on becoming a movement that places principles and the institution over the dogma of *בתוך כל אחד ואחד*.

Undoubtedly this is not always easy to do. To be honest, early on in my tenure in a previous position, someone took me aside at the kiddush (where all the really juicy stuff tends to take place) and told me that 'Rabbi, you need to know who the people are that you really need to cater to and make sure that their needs are being met'. I understood what he was saying. A shul or institution can only function because of the largesse of specific individuals and it

behooves the head of the institution to make sure that those people feel attended to. I understand the sentiments, but also feel uncomfortable with them. Each person is their own *שר התורה* (prince of Torah). Every person stood equidistant from Har Sinai. Almost the very first words in the instruction of the mishkan serves as a reminder of exactly that. Do not allow the institutionalization of Judaism to obfuscate or erode the essence of Judaism.

While there is much more to be said on this topic I do want to end with a point of emphasis. This week we will be witnessing the 500,000th casualty in this country alone due to Covid. In a way even a pandemic can become politicized and institutionalized. Who gets the vaccine, should one take the vaccine, debates over government shutdowns, fights over masks, I should I get tested or not etc. Both the enormity of the actual numbers as well as the political issues around the pandemic eventually take center stage. The institution and pandemic as an entity dominates our relationship to it.

Of course, that is beyond chaval. There are actual people in the millions who are suffering from either disease, death, loneliness, depression, impoverishment, family tensions and the like. Can we hold them in our consciousness? Can we feel deeply, empathetically, and fully for the enormity of loss that exists not in headlines but *בתוך כל אחד ואחד*? In a way it is the mark of a certain personal greatness and nobility of spirit. To be people who live on two planes simultaneously. *Ishei klal*- broad, communal, dedicated to the 'mishkan' and committed to the structures that the world and the community require. While very much being able to exist as *ishei prat* - living with deep feeling for the joys and the losses of each individual who themselves represent an entire mikdash and an entire universe. This dual life and focus is far from simple but I believe that the duality encapsulates HKB'H's desire for having a sanctuary for his presence in the world in the first place. Thousands of years later we should continue to be inspired and informed by the beauty and responsibility of these simple words - *ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם*.

Whose Torah is it Anyway?

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

Every element of the Mishkan was iconic- symbolizing an important aspect of religious experience. The holiest and, arguably most iconic, article was the Ark or Aron which housed the *luchot* as

well as a *Sefer Torah*; the housing for the Torah highlighted by ornate gold and decorations symbolizes the majesty of the experience of Torah study.

On the one hand this golden Ark was recessed deep

within the inaccessible inner sanctum-out of reach from the general public. It is too sacred to be regularly patted or even gawked at by commoners. Once a year the High Priest gazed at this Torah case. The embedded location preserves the Aron's sanctity and establishes a tone of "exclusivity" to Torah study.

Ironically the construction of the Aron transmits a very different message. When describing the manufacture of the various components of the Mishkan, the Torah employs a singular tense: for example the construction of the Menorah is prefaced by the term *V'asita*- connoting manufacture by one person. In reality, the components were constructed by a team of artisans but ascribing the construction to a single person reflects management of this project by Bezalel- the chief project manager.

By contrast, the crafting of the Aron is prefaced with the plural verb of "*V'asu*"- which implies construction by multiple people. The midrash views this term as symbolic- as the Aron symbolizes Torah study, which is vital to all, everyone is urged to participate in the project. Of course, the same craftsmen fashioned the Aron under the "same" personal leadership of Bezalel. However, by framing the construction of the Aron with a plural term, the Torah invites, and, in fact desires, mass participation in the experience of Torah study.

This contrast showcases a fundamental question regarding Torah study. Should it be reserved for select individuals whose piety and scholarship will reflect the splendor and gravitas of Torah study? Or should it be extended as broadly as possible offering it to the masses? Of course, this question drove the opposing policies of Raban Gamliel and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah. When the former served as Rosh Yeshiva, he strictly limited access to the Beit Midrash; only those with integrity and without deceit were admitted. Rabbi Elazar Ben Azarya temporarily replaced Raban Gamliel and invited a broader population into the Torah halls. The ensuing stampede to study Torah required the addition of hundreds of benches. Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya's decision to extend Torah to the masses appears to be validated by this dramatic uptick in interest and attendance.

In truth, this question regarding Torah study, arose three generations earlier within an interesting debate between Hillel and Shammai. The latter applied four conditions to the teaching of Torah: the student must be wise, wealthy,

humble and pedigreed. Obviously, unintelligent people will distort Torah, arrogant people will self-aggrandize through it, poor people will pervert it for profit, and non-pedigreed will ignore its generational flow. Arguing with Shammai, Hillel claimed that Torah should be spread broadly since many sinners have been revitalized by the rehabilitative powers of Torah.

This perennial question regarding a more exclusive or more inclusive Torah experience has ebbed throughout the generations. This age-old dichotomy is already latent within the positioning of the Aron as opposed to the democratic tone of its construction. These two sentiments capture the different and sometimes opposing themes of Torah. Torah is cosmic and the source of all reality and the thought of life for a Jew without Torah is unimaginable. I remember Rav Lichtenstein tz"l's reply to a student who questioned "Why should we study Torah...". Rav Lichtenstein, normally very patient and restrained, immediately cut him off with the response "Why study Torah? Why breathe!?" If Torah is as basic to life as oxygen, it is unthinkable that it be reserved only for a select few.

Alternatively, Torah contains the coded word of G-d and unlike a straightforward book, it must be carefully deciphered and cautiously applied to a changing world. Entrusting this process with novices can severely compromise the timeless wisdom of Torah. Even if Torah is accurately interpreted, the sanctity of the Divine word must be upheld. Delivering this experience to immoral, dishonest or impious people compromises the presence of God in our world. It is the unique quality of Torah that is both basic to life and surpassing of life. It must be democratized but also preserved. It is the province of all and the protectorate of a select group. All this being said, admittedly, our masorah has ruled in favor of a more shared Torah experience – offering it to larger groups rather than more selected audiences.

Ove the past 70 years the Ashkenazic Orthodox world has witnessed a bit of a shift in this delicate balance. The unprecedented growth of the post-WWII yeshiva world has led to an incredible surge in Torah study. The resurgence of Torah study is especially remarkable so soon after the devastation of the Holocaust and especially within a modern world which strains religious passion.

It appears that this process has been fueled, in large part, by an internalization or insulation of Torah rather

than a broad process of expansive. Two fateful but very similar decisions were taken by two different people in the aftermath of WWII. Rav Avraham Kahanamen and Rav Aharon Kotler - the architects of Ponivesh and Lakewood respectively- positioned their yeshivot far from the cultural centers of Yerushalayim and New York. They each sensed that, for Torah to flower, it should be protected from the rampant cultural influences of the “big city”. This decision wasn’t just geographic but shaped the evolution of the Yeshiva world for the past 70 years. On a theoretical level the phrase “Torah world” or “Torah velt” implies a separation of Torah and its students from the rest of the population. On a practical level, establishing a separate

dress code or even a separate language (known to many as “yeshivesh”), reinforces the sense of separatism which has underwritten this phenomenon. Moreover, this separatism has created a rugged landscape in which those who don’t subscribe to the dictated cultural norms have a difficult time fitting in. The merits and deficiencies of this system can be debated, but it is clear that the phenomenal growth of Torah was advanced by positioning the “Aron” far from cultural access. Is it time to relocate the Aron and create a more integrated world of Torah study? Is this already occurring, and many are just ‘living behind the times’? Are different approaches suitable for Charedim in Israel as opposed to Yeshivesh people in Chutz La’aretz?

Sanctifying the Home

Rabbi Noah Whittenburg

And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them” (Shemot 25:8). The clear question about this verse is that “sanctuary” is in the singular, so shouldn’t the verse conclude, “that I may dwell in it?” Additionally, surely Hashem is everywhere, so why do we even need to build Him a place to dwell? To quote the famous words of Uncle Moishy, “Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere.” This verse is a gateway to one of the most profound discussions in Jewish thought. Perhaps we can suggest that the presence of Hashem can be felt anywhere we make a sanctuary. Not only in our synagogues and study halls, but in our homes as well. Any place we use to pursue Torah and mitzvot can be a place where we feel the presence of Hashem.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch makes a very powerful insight about the Kiddush we recite on Friday night that highlights this idea. He asks why do we recite the exact

same words during kiddush on Friday night that we already recited in our Friday night Shemona Esrei? He answers that it is easy to act in a pious manner when we are in shul because there is a social pressure that exists there. But the home is where true observance and celebration takes place. That is where we demonstrate our seriousness. Therefore, we say the same prayer as we did in shul—the one that was easy for us to recite with the pressure of others weighing down on us—but now in the privacy of our own homes. We repeat the prayer in hopes of calling upon that same inspiration to lead us in our personal lives.

The Kotzker Rebbe once said, “Where is God? God is where you let Him in.” When we make our homes into a sanctuary, when we use it as a place for Torah and Mitzvot, when we make a point of connecting with Him there, then His presence can be readily and easily felt.

Reflections of Humanity

Rabbi Dr. Dvir Ginsberg

The Torah portion of Terumah does not, on the surface, present the usual drama found in other readings. It presents as a detailed instruction manual in construction. The Shulchan, the “table” used in the Tabernacle (and future Temple), does not really stand out from the other keilim, or vessels. After the commands involving the construction of the Aron, the Torah introduces the Shulchan (Shemot 25:23):

“And you shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits its

length, one cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height.”

The Shulchan, as we see later, was commanded to be placed in a very specific location (ibid 26:35):

“And you shall place the table on the outer side of the dividing curtain and the menorah opposite the table, on the southern side of the Mishkan, and you shall place the table on the northern side.”

The location of the Shulchan, then, was opposite that of the Menorah.

There is a Midrash that explores the significance of the location of the Shulchan. It begins by explaining that the objective of this kli was not for food or drink. Rather, as we know, the actions of man are revealed before Hashem. There are those who only desire food and drink in this world, and the command to construct the Shulchan is in response to them. How so? The Shulchan was placed in the north of the Temple, the same location as the evil inclination, or yezter hara, in humans (which corresponds to the left of a person). The Menorah was placed in the south (corresponding to the right of a person), a hint to the Sages who learn Torah at night by the light of the candles. The Shulchan, though, was placed on the left, a hint to those who follow their evil inclination. After making a point concerning tefillin, the Midrash concludes with an observation concerning the Mizbeach, the primary altar for sacrifices. The Mizbeach's location was directly between the Menorah and the Shulchan. Why? The Mizbeach is comparable to a beit midrash, a study hall of Torah. A person cannot succeed in learning all day without eating, as he must sustain his body. Therefore, the Mizbeach was placed directly in the center.

While one may commend this attempt at trying to explain the purpose and position of the Shulchan, the overall concept being presented is quite difficult to understand at first glance. The locating of the evil inclination may be one of the opaquest to comprehend, and we will leave that to the side. The notion of the yezter hara being associated with the Shulchan is very bizarre. Add to this the "opposition" of it by the location of the Menora, which reflected the dedicated learning of great Sages by the lights of the candles, and the lesson becomes even murkier. The Mizbeach's somehow naturally fitting in between the two and being compared to a beit midrash? What lesson is being conveyed in this Midrash?

What is most fascinating about this Midrash is the idea of tying the state of the human condition with the various keilim of the Temple. As we will see, the Sages understood why this theme was of the utmost importance to all Jews.

The simplest step to take is to understand that the idea of the placement of any object in the Temple as being haphazard should be tossed aside. Every aspect of the Temple reflected the infinite wisdom of God, from the measurements to the materials to the shapes of the keilim to the locations. The Sages step forward in this instance to assist us in discovering these rationales.

The vision of humans solely driven by the desire to

eat best reflects the idea of being guided by one's base instincts. It is considered the lowest level for humanity, where the differentiation from the animal world is nil. The Torah dedicates a tremendous amount of Jewish law and philosophy to combating this terrible state for humanity. The Shulchan, then, reflects this one extreme of humanity.

The Midrash then points to the Menora, a presentation of the other extreme of humanity. We are blessed with our minds, tools which thirst for inquiry and knowledge. The scene in the Midrash captures an attitude towards learning that is so unique. Daytime is usually reserved for accomplishment and success. These individuals use the time of night, the period the world utilizes for relaxation and sleep, as more precious moments to learn. The light illuminates the texts, and one can imagine them squinting to see every single word. The illumination of the text by the lights of the candle point to the primary function of any Menora. Light helps us see, interpret and comprehend. It ties to the core aspect of the human who seeks knowledge.

What we have, then, are two keilim which reflect the great conflict that defines the human existence. We have a strong inclination towards our base instincts, drawn towards the illusion of pleasure as being the end all for our existences. We also have our minds, equipped with a powerful interest in inquiry and investigation. We are not dormant creatures; rather, we want to engage with the universe around us, peel away the layers, and comprehend more and more. The keilim reflect the two extremes of each aspect of humanity. The individual who is solely focused on the physical world versus the individual whose entire focus is on the world of the abstract.

The position of the Mizbeach, and the analogy to a beit midrash, fits the above concept quite well. While our makeups are defined by these tensions, we must learn to work with them together, rather than discard one for the other. The hedonist can never live in line with the correct path for humanity. But the person who only sees the mind can end up denying the importance the physical world plays in life. Asceticism is not a value found in the Torah, and often leads to an even more difficult time being part of the other world being sought out. Of course, a person naturally may not desire as much from the physical world as others. The key is that it is natural, not a decision to become something one cannot be.

The beit midrash is the location where the two parts of the person can be brought together in perfect harmony. There is learning, of course. Alongside is the reality of the

physical world benefiting the person, and its role is clearly defined. When one works in service of the other, the ideal state of humanity is reached. The Mizbeach reflects this idea as well. When one brings a sacrifice, the animal is being used in the service of God. Taking that which represents on its own the base instincts, and redefining it now for usage in the Temple, truly reflects the ultimate bringing together of the two worlds.

Why is this message to be found in the keilim of the Temple? The idea of a central place of worship to God is something that we understand is of the utmost importance. What role does the average person play? While the kohanim had full access, the general populace was kept away. Yes, there were moments, such as certain some sacrifices and holidays, where the people came to the

Living Through Giving

Mrs. Michal Horowitz

In this week's parsha, Parshas Terumah, the Bnei Yisrael are commanded regarding the building of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary that would accompany them during their desert wanderings, from where the Almighty would dwell amongst them (*keviyachol*) and within them (Shemos 25:8), and where the kohanim would perform the avodah (service). Moshe was commanded to collect donations from the people, including donations of: gold, silver, copper, turquoise, purple and scarlet wools, linen and goats' hair, ram skins dyed red and techashim skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, and precious stones for the apron and the breastplate (Shemos 25:2-7).

Hashem said to Moshe to speak to the Bnei Yisrael: וְיִקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה: מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לִבּוֹ, תִּקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי, *and take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him (to give), you shall take My portion (25:2).*

Targum Yonasan b. Uziel explains this verse as follows: מִלִּיל עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִסְבּוּן קִדְמֵי אֶפְרָשׁוּתָא מִן כָּל דִּיתְרַעֵי לְבִיָּה וְלֹא מִלִּיל עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִסְבּוּן קִדְמֵי אֶפְרָשׁוּתָא מִן כָּל דִּיתְרַעֵי לְבִיָּה וְלֹא - *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they shall set apart (take) before me a separation: of every one whose heart is willing, but not by force, you shall take my separation.*

Rav Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, "Yonasan b. Uziel clarifies this phrase to mean, Do not use force or methods of coercion for this collection. Although everyone, whether poor or rich, must give the half shekel (Shemos 30:13), the

Temple. However, they are never part of the entire service, especially when it comes to such keilim as the Shulchan and Menorah.

The idea of this exclusivity could lead one to conclude the service to God that takes place there is of a different quality and type altogether. The concepts are something beyond the reach of the citizen, and one must "settle" for the best that can be done outside the Temple domain. The message here is that the Temple encapsulates that which is humanity. It is the paradigmatic expression of who we are, and many of the concepts contained within are built from us. We should not think of the Temple as a location off limits. We should see in the Temple the portrait of who we are, and within the keilim important beacons to guide us on the proper path of life.

contribution to the Mishkan was voluntary. The collection of money for the Mishkan is different from the collection of charity. Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim (3:53) explains that charity is an act of justice (as the word tzedaka implies), not mercy or chessed. The Torah allows the taking of charity by force. There is an explicit halacha in Bava Basra 8b to the effect that it is permissible to remove objects from the home of a prosperous person who refuses to give charity, even on Friday just before sundown. Most Rishonim agree that there is a legal lien on one's charity similar to the lien of a borrower.

"Why did the Torah eliminate the construction of the Mishkan from that class of activity which does not require consent on the part of the giver? Man is basically a homeless being. No matter how large and opulent his home, he is exposed. He is subject to the vicissitudes of life, subject to nature - which at best is indifferent to man, at worst is hostile - and subject to an inscrutable future. There is only one home where man gains security: G-d is called Me'onah, an abode (Deut.33:27). The only home where man can find security is in the Ribbono Shel Olam. G-d told Moshe not to collect the money for the Mishkan by using force, because the Mishkan was to be built only if the nation felt the need to build a home for G-d on their own. For G-d to descend from infinity into a Mishkan built by man is, keviyachol, a sacrificial act on His part.

This act of self-contraction was a sacrifice He was willing to make, but only if the people themselves wanted a Mishkan and were willing to contribute to build it” (Chumash Masores HaRav Shemos p.224-225).

When it came to the building of the Mishkan, we had to want to want to give. Hashem was waiting for us to demonstrate our love for Him, and our desire to be close to Him, by contributing to the Mishkan fund of our own free will. The lesson is clear for us today, even in the absence of the Mishkan/Mikdash: If we want a life of connection, spirituality, Torah and mitzvos, Hashem will come down (so to speak) and enrich our lives with His ever-present Presence.

“וְיִקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה, *and take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him to give.*”

Ha’Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein quotes Rabbi Chaim Palachi who teaches that “the letters of the word תְרוּמָה (a portion) can be rearranged to spell המותר - the extra. This implies that there is a certain correlation between המותר - the extras and luxuries that a person enjoys - and תְרוּמָה - the charitable donations he gives. A person’s commitment to charity is measured against the luxuries which he allows himself. If it is clear from his lifestyle that he is not frugal with money, and is prepared to spend money on extras and luxuries - המותר, then Heaven pays careful heed to what occurs when someone comes knocking at his door, collecting for a worthy cause. Is he as free with his תְרוּמָה (donation) as he is with המותר? Does the same generosity that manifests itself in his own lifestyle manifest itself in his spending for mitzvos?”

Concludes Rav Zilberstein, “Aside from the primary danger of luxuries, which is that people become accustomed to indulging in unnecessary pleasures, luxuries also cause judgement to be brought on a person in Heaven. ‘If you had money for these luxuries,’ he will be asked,

The Mishkan: Surprises of the Chatzer

Rabbi Avraham Gordimer

Even though the Torah (in Parshas Terumah) presents the command to construct the Aron (Ark), Shulchan (Table) and Menorah (Shemos 25:10-40) before presenting the command to construct the edifice of the Mishkan (ibid. 26:1-37), Betzalel and his crew (in Parshas Vayakhel) do the opposite, by first constructing

‘where were you when you were asked to give charity?’” (Aleinu L’Shabei’ach Shemos, p.426-427).

We must learn the proper balance in life between the תְרוּמָה - the portion and donation we give to tzedaka and Torah - and המותר, the extras and luxuries that we often consider ‘essential’ in our lives.

The great and holy R’ Levi Yitzchak m’Berditchev (1740–1809) once traveled around to nearby villages to collect funds for a bride who was the daughter of a prominent man, yet who lacked the funds to marry off his daughter. In one town, he chanced upon a certain rabbi who, when he heard the purpose of R’ Levi Yitzchak’s visit, blessed him that Hashem be at his side, and that the needy Jew should merit to arrange a wedding for his daughter with abundance. Reb Levi Yitzchak replied with a Torah insight: “The Torah teaches us ‘And Malki-Tzedek, king of Shalem, brought out bread and wine (to welcome Avraham) ... and he blessed him.’ First, ‘he brought out bread and wine,’ and only afterward, ‘he blessed him.’ Said Reb Levi Yitzchak to the rabbi, “first one must give, and only afterward may one extend blessings” (Loving and Beloved, by S. Raz, p.191-192).

After the redemption from Egypt, the crossing of the Reed Sea, and the giving of the Torah, it was time to build an abode for the RS”O to dwell amongst us. And who shall contribute? Any one whose heart motivated him to give: וְיִקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה: מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לָבוֹ. The Mishkan further teaches us about the balance between giving to others, תְרוּמָה, and living for ourselves, המותר.

Let us be sure that the lives we lead are elevated, sanctified and ennobled by closeness to G-d and giving and doing for others, so that we will truly merit: וְעָשׂוּ לִי, מִקְדָּשׁ; וְיִשְׁכְּנֵתִי, בְּתוֹכָם - *and they shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell amongst them* (25:8).

Mishkan’s edifice and only afterwards constructing the Keilim (Holy Articles – the Aron, Shulchan, etc.). The Gemara (Berachos 55A, cited by Rashi on Shemos 38:22) explains this reversal of sequence as follows:

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: Betzalel’s name was a reflection of his wisdom.

When the Holy One, blessed is He, told Moshe to instruct Betzalel, “Make Me a Mishkan, (and then an) Aron and Keilim”, Moshe went and reversed the order, instructing Betzalel, “Make an Aron, Keilim, and (then) the Mishkan.” Betzalel replied, “Moshe Rabbeinu: The way of the world is that a person first builds a house and afterwards places objects in the house, but you are telling me to first make an Aron, Keilim and (then) a Mishkan. According to your directive, where will I place the Keilim? Perhaps the Holy One, blessed is He, actually told you to construct a Mishkan, and (then) an Aron and Keilim?” Moshe replied to Betzalel, “Perhaps you were in the Shadow of God (“B’tzel Kel”), such that you knew this (inside) information!” (The Gemara thereupon proceeds to explain further Betzalel’s special knowledge of Divine wisdom.)

Although this narrative explains why Betzalel and his crew first constructed the Mishkan’s edifice and only afterwards constructed the Keilim, a major difficulty appears to arise: If the Keilim were not to be constructed until the place that would house them would be constructed first, why did Betzalel and his crew first construct the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes (Copper Altar) and Kiyor (Laver), as related in Shemos 38:1-8, and only afterwards construct the Chatzer (Courtyard), which was to house the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor, as related in Shemos 38:9-20? Why was the Chatzer not constructed first, in consonance with Betzalel’s mandate to first construct the area that would house the Keilim and only afterwards construct the Keilim?

The answer to this perplexity touches upon a fundamental difference between the Chatzer and the actual Mishkan edifice. The kedushah (sanctity) of the Mishkan edifice was a reflection of the Keilim that it was designed to contain. Inside the Aron were the Luchos (Tablets), and from upon the wings of the Aron’s Keruvim (Cherubs) did Hashem’s voice emanate when speaking to Moshe. The Aron was the most intense reflection of kedushah in the entire Mishkan, and accordingly, it was housed in the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim (Holy of Holies) section. The Shulchan and Menorah, as Chazal (the Sages) tell us, likewise represented Hashem’s Presence, the Shechinah, in different ways. These two Keilim were housed in the Kodesh (Holy) section of the Mishkan. The Mishkan’s kedushah, evidencing Hashra’as Ha-Shechinah (Manifestation of Hashem’s Presence), related directly to the Keilim that were housed therein.

The Chatzer, however, was a somewhat less intense area. Unlike the Mishkan edifice, comprised of the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim and the Kodesh sections, where only Kohanim entered, the Chatzer was open to those who were not Kohanim. Ordinary Jews assembled there to sacrifice and to observe the Avodah (Service). Although the Chatzer housed the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor, the sanctity of these Keilim did not represent Hashra’as Ha-Shechinah per se. Nonetheless, the Chatzer was part of the Machaneh Ha-Shechinah (Encampment of the Shechinah) area, along with the Mishkan edifice, into which people with even the lowest levels of tumah (impurity) were barred entry. (Similarly, the Azarah area of the Beis Ha-Mikdash, which corresponded to the Chatzer of the Mishkan, was included in Machaneh Ha-Shechinah, together with the Heichal edifice of the Beis Ha-Mikdash, which was comprised of the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim and the Kodesh). Even though the Chatzer was apparently of lesser sanctity than the Mishkan edifice, as it did not contain Keilim representing Hashra’as Ha-Shechinah, and it was open to ordinary Jews, it had the full kedushah character of Machaneh Ha-Shechinah. How could this be?

The answer is that the Chatzer’s kedushah derived from the Mishkan edifice itself, rather than from the Chatzer’s own Keilim. As such, the Chatzer served as an extension of the Mishkan edifice, and it thus shared the same classification of kedushah. The Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor were located and functioned in the Chatzer, but did not define its actual kedushah character.

Based on this understanding, we can appreciate why Betzalel, with his Divine wisdom, constructed the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor along with the rest of the Mishkan’s Keilim, before constructing the Chatzer, which would house the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor. Since the Chatzer’s kedushah would not reflect the kedushah of the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor, but would instead derive from the Mishkan’s edifice, such that the Mishkan’s edifice and Chatzer would together comprise Machaneh Ha-Shechinah, there was no need to first construct the Chatzer in dedication and preparation for the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor, as these two Keilim were not intrinsic to the motif and kedushah status of the Chatzer. Betzalel’s logic of first constructing a house and then the objects that would be placed therein was not a mere pragmatic scheme, but was a conceptual vision of first constructing the loci whose essence would

be reflected by their Keilim, as dedication and preparation for those Keilim. The Chatzer's essence related to the Mishkan edifice as an extension of the latter's Hashra'as Ha-Shechinah character; the Chatzer's kedushah did not derive from the Mizbach Ha-Nechoshes and Kiyor which it contained.

This notion operates in tandem with the message of

Raising Givers

Rabbi Yosef Goldin

It is an idea that many of us are familiar with, yet we may not realize that its significance in our lives as Jews, and especially as parents, is immense.

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Hashem commands Am Yisrael to collect materials for the construction of the Mishkan, with each person in the nation donating to the Mishkan as he sees fit. The language that Hashem uses, however, seems peculiar, almost counter-intuitive-תקחו את תרומה...תקחו לי תרומה, "and you shall take for me a donation... they shall take my donation". Shouldn't Hashem have said "you shall give to me a donation"? Why does G-d use the language of "taking" when referring to the act of giving? Had G-d been speaking specifically to Moshe or the leaders of the nation, we might have suggested that Hashem was asking the leaders to "take (collect) the donation on His behalf" from the people. G-d's request, however, is directed towards the entire nation. The question, therefore, remains- why does HaShem direct the people to "take," rather than "give" a donation?

Many commentaries suggest a simple, yet extremely poignant, answer. Hashem is using the construction of the Mishkan as an opportunity to teach Am Yisrael a fundamental lesson- the power and importance of giving. In contrast to the contemporary view of giving, where a person feels that he loses each time he gives to another, the Jewish view of giving is that one who gives actually receives more than he gives. The act of giving to another- be it from one's resources, knowledge, time, or simply giving of oneself- is incredibly meaningful, and can impact upon one's own life in a most significant way.

Jewish thought abounds with sources that stress the importance of giving and bestowing kindness upon others. Most fundamentally, Dovid Hamelech in Sefer Tehillim declares עולם חסד יבנה, "the world is built upon Chessed", while the Mishna in Avot 1:2 famously lists במילת חסדים,

another d'var Torah in this series, establishing the Mishkan both as an entity of extraordinary Hashra'as Ha-Shechinah, as well as a place where the Jew comes to approach Hashem. The Chazter, which manifests the kedushah of the Kodesh and the Kodesh Ha-Kodoshim, yet is accessible to all for sacrifice and supplication, so magnificently embodies this beautiful duality.

acts of kindness, as one of the three pillars upon which the world stands. These foundational sources are not simply "nice phrases", but instead underscore a fundamental point. Chessed and giving are central to our existence, and profoundly impact all aspects of our relationships- our relationship with G-d, our relationship with those around us, and our relationship with ourselves.

The Ramchal, in his seminal work Mesilat Yesharim, writes that G-d created man for one purpose- in order to give to man, and to allow him to benefit from, and bask in, God's own wonder and splendor., King David's proclamation, עולם חסד יבנה, can thus be understood in a deeper, more literal, sense. The world itself was created so that G-d could give to man. When an individual gives to another, therefore, he imitates G-d actions and expresses his own "G-dliness." Thus each time an individual gives to another, he grows more deeply in his relationship with Hashem.

In his pivotal work Michtav Me'elياهو, Rav Eliyahu Dessler notes as well the powerful effect that giving can have on interpersonal relationships. While it is commonly perceived that people "give because they love", Rav Dessler argues that the opposite is actually true. More fundamentally, people "love because

they give." The more we give to another, the more we come to love that person, due to the time and effort that they invest in him/her. This is why, suggests Rav Dessler, the most powerful bond of love is that of a parent to a child- as parents give endlessly to their children from the moment that they are born. In this vein, Rav Dessler points out that the root of the Hebrew word for love, אהבה, is the Aramaic word הבה, to give- because we come to love others by giving to them.

Finally, as highlighted by the opening of this week's Parsha, giving has a profound impact on our relationship with ourselves, and our own sense of self. Many authorities

note that the Hebrew word for giving, נתן, is a palindrome; it can be read the same way in both directions- in order to highlight that one who gives really receives in return. In his commentary on Pirkei Avot, Ethics from Sinai, Mr. Irving Bunim adds that the Hebrew phrase for bestowing kindness upon another, גמילות חסדים, is phrased in the plural- in order to show that “every act of kindness is, in reality, a two-fold act. While you are certainly doing something for the next man, you are also doing something for yourself.”

As parents, one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to teach them how to be givers. Children naturally grow up self-absorbed and egocentric, and if left to their own devices, their selfishness and self-centeredness could well continue throughout their lives. From an early age, therefore, we must cultivate within our children a sense of the “other”, and the importance of giving to another. The more our children experience the wonder that comes with making another person happy, and the more they express this “Godliness” within themselves, the more this aspect of their personalities will become an integral part their daily lives.

And as each child becomes more thoughtful and independent, the importance and power of giving must be stressed even more. A “bar/bat mitzvah chessed project” can, for example, become a powerful tool, enabling a child to assume the responsibility of helping someone less fortunate than themselves in celebration of their important milestone. It is important, however, that chessed and giving are not simply seen as a one-time rite of passage- but instead become an integral part of their lives. Many studies have shown that one of the most effective ways to help “at-risk” teenagers is to give them a role as givers- helping and mentoring others. This experience provides the teens with a sense of purpose and connection, thus igniting, as we

have noted, the G-dliness within their own personalities. Clearly, the attainment of such meaning and purpose can enrich the life of any teenager.

How can we successfully raise our children as givers? I would suggest a few practical points to keep in mind:

1) As noted, we must consciously begin teaching this early on. The earlier that kindness is ingrained in our childrens’ psyche, the more natural it will be for them. Seek out opportunities for your child help others, and help them experience the amazing feeling that such opportunities bring.

2) At the same time, we should realize that giving can impact and inspire children (and people) of all ages. We should encourage all our children, at every age and stage of life, to involve themselves in opportunities of giving and making a difference in the lives of those around them.

3) One important way we can help our children become givers is by allowing them to give to us. While at first glance this may seem simple, it is not as easy as it sounds. Enabling others to give means happily accepting help or a gift that you don’t want or need- simply to allow the other person to give to you. This is a crucial skill in all relationships, but is particularly important in raising kids. By graciously accepting the picture your toddler made for you; or letting your child help you build the Succah, even though you could have done it much quicker by yourself, you enable your children to give to you, thereby allowing them to feel the beauty of giving, and the incredible satisfaction that comes along with it.

4) As with most important lessons, modeling is crucial. If we live our lives as givers of our resources or of ourselves; if we show our children what it means to live a life of giving, both within and outside the family; then our children will learn firsthand the value of being givers, themselves.

The Mishkan and the Sanctity of the Jewish Home

Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

With this week’s parasha, we begin a series of five weekly Torah portions that deal with the building of the מִשְׁכָּן —Mishkan, the Tabernacle—the portable sanctuary that the Jews erected and utilized in the wilderness.

Parashiot Terumah, Tetzaveh, a part of Kee Tisah, as well as parshiot Vayakhel and Pekudei, describe the

processes of the design and the building of the Mishkan. These portions recount in minute detail all the materials utilized in the construction of the Mishkan: the acacia wood, rams’ skin dyed red, cherubs, and more. There’s even a reference to the skins of animals called תְּחָשִׁים —T’chashim, which is translated in some texts as seal skins. It is, obviously, highly unlikely that there were any

seals in the wilderness, but, with so miracles happening, one can never be certain!

These parshiot also refer extensively to measurements: a cubit, a cubit and a half, two cubits, two and a half cubits. In essence, while these Torah portions may be an architect's dream, they are truly a rabbi's nightmare!

Notwithstanding, all the seemingly vexing detail of the Tabernacle, the Torah is never, ever irrelevant. To the contrary, with proper explication, the Torah always ultimately proves itself to be highly relevant and, at times, quite ahead of its time. Part of the challenge of studying these Torah portions is to uncover the inner meanings, and often the inner magic, that is to be found in each of the Tabernacle's furnishings, as well as in each of the extensive descriptions.

In this week's parasha, parashat Terumah, G-d instructs the Israelites to donate various precious materials to the national building effort—gold, silver, purple thread, red thread, various animal skins and precious stones, all to be utilized in the construction of the Tabernacle.

In Exodus 25:8 the Bible records G-d's command, וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ, וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, “And you [Israel] shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst.” Interestingly, the Al-mighty does not instruct the people to build a sanctuary to dwell in the sanctuary. After all, an Omnipresent G-d, cannot be confined to a sanctuary. Rather the verse is affirming, that if the Jewish people build a sanctuary for G-d, He will dwell “in their midst”—among the people of Israel.

Clearly, the obvious and ultimate purpose of the Tabernacle is to help the Jewish people focus on G-d. That place of focus may be a miniature Temple, such as a local synagogue, or even a location somewhere in the wilderness. Obviously, the portable Tabernacle, and, of course, the permanent Temple that was later erected in Jerusalem, are significant locations in which, and upon which, Jews are to focus.

The Torah, in another of its revolutionary statements, introduces to the world the idea of קֹדֶשׁ, —sacred or holy. The Torah affirms that there can be sacred time, sacred space, and that human beings themselves are considered sacred.

The idea of “sacred” is a truly revolutionary idea of unfathomable proportion, but its grandeur is often unappreciated. Contemporary society, in fact, has abandoned much of the idea that human beings are intended to be sacred beings, and, as that appreciation

is lost, the humanity of our society is significantly and progressively diminished. Furthermore, nowhere is that sense of sanctity more necessary than in the Jewish home.

Therefore, a major function of the ancient Tabernacle was to serve as a מִקְדָּשׁ –Mikdash, a sanctuary. The fact that the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, and its central furnishings so closely resemble the Jewish home, is intended to underscore the sanctity of the Jewish domicile. By analyzing each of the Tabernacle's furnishings, we may uncover the vital symbolic meanings that are being communicated.

In the front and larger portion of the inner sanctuary known as the פְּנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ —Kodesh or “holy” section, are to be found three most significant furnishings: the Menorah (the candelabra), the Table of Showbread, and the Golden Altar. According to rabbinic interpretation, the menorah, which is a seven-branched candelabra, represents the seven streams of wisdom, sciences, philosophy, literature, language and all other wisdom, with the central branch of the Menorah representing the flame of Torah. The menorah is designed so that all the wicks of the three left branches and the three right branches face toward the center. This underscores the idea that all of human wisdom and understanding emanate from the central branch, from the Torah.

Every home has a table. The table in the Tabernacle is known as the שֻׁלְחַן הַפָּנִים, the Table of the Showbread. Every week, 12 fresh showbreads, which were actually shaped like bent matzot and represent the 12 tribes, were baked, to replace the previous week's 12 loaves, which were eaten on Shabbat. These breads represent material endowment, the food that Jews have on their tables, and the people's general economic wherewithal. While the spiritual endowments of the home are reflected in the menorah, the material endowments are symbolized by the table.

In the forefront of the Kodesh section, stood the מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב, the Golden Altar. Offered to G-d on this altar is the melding of the Jews' intellectual endowments (represented by the Menorah), and material endowments (represented by the Table of Showbread). The horns of the altar point upward to underscore that all our endowments are offered toward heaven.

The innermost chamber of the holy Tabernacle is known as the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים, the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies only a single, most sacred, furnishing is found, the Holy Ark—known as the Aron. The Torah text, at great

length, describes the details of the Ark. The ark itself, a rectangular-shaped box, contained the Torah, the five books of Moses, and the two stone tablets upon which were etched the Ten Commandments. The extensive detailed instructions concerning the building of the Ark underscore its prime centrality to Jewish life.

A fascinating feature of the Ark is that while it looks as though it is made of solid gold, it is really constructed of acacia wood. Gold, of course, is a most valuable substance, perhaps the purest precious metal found in nature. Unlike copper or silver, when gold is removed from the earth it contains no impurities. The Talmud tells us that the ark was actually constructed, not of metal, but of three concentric wooden boxes, each fitting into the next. The outermost and innermost boxes were covered with gold, while the middle box, is simply natural, unadorned acacia wood.

The rabbis suggest that despite gold's unparalleled purity and beauty, it is, after all, a mineral substance that does not grow. That is why the essential structure of the Ark must be constructed of wood—a live and growing material. Of course, those who hold onto the Torah, those who learn the Torah, must shine, like gold, but if the scholars can't grow, and don't grow, in their learning, then their value is effectively diminished.

This urgent need for growth is what the Kotzker Rebbe meant, when he was asked, "Who is higher on the ladder, the person on top, or the person on bottom?" He realized that the question was a set up, and responded very cleverly: "It depends in which direction they are going! If the person on the bottom is on his or her way up, and the person on top is on her or his way down, then theoretically, the person at the bottom, may very well be higher than the one on top."

This, then, is really what Jewish homes are meant to represent. At the very core of our homes must be Torah, the Ark, made purposely of modest wood, yet covered with beautiful gold. More important than the beauty of the gold is the desire and ability to grow.

The lesson of the Mishkan is that each of us must see the ultimate purpose in life to be the desire to strive upwards, to climb to a higher rung on the ladder. This is the ultimate secret of the Jewish home—sanctity and growth.