

## Terumah - Rabbi Lerner - January 30, 2011

*Transcriber's note: I do not see a clear connection between the following comments that were part of the introduction at the beginning of the class with the remainder of the shiur, but I try to be as accurate as possible with the transcription and include as much of the material as possible. I welcome comments about this:*

Opening comments of the shiur:

Aaron to Rabbi Lerner: "Don't forget to say hello to Effie."

Rabbi Lerner: "Aaron warned me I better say hello to Effie because otherwise he will be offended; 'Hello Effie!' Anyone else want to shout out hello? We love you Effie, we miss you."

The Building of the Mishkan and the Aron

**Oznayim LaTorah** - it was very strange to have the first part of the mishkan discussed at the end of parshas Yisro, where the Hashem commands Bnei Yisrael to construct a mizbeach of earth and altars of stone for korbanos; and then the Torah goes off in another direction with parshas Mishpatim. Why does the Torah begin discussing the concept of the mizbeach and then interrupts with the laws of Mishpatim? There is an important issue of proper funding, of kosher funding, that is emphasized here. The Torah first discussed altars of earth and stone, two virtually worthless substances which may be found everywhere. Before giving the command for Bnei Yisrael about gifts of silver and gold, it first had to be clarified that God hates offerings financed through theft. He therefore takes the opportunity to admonish them about social and financial ethics, to assure that all of the gifts of silver and gold for construction of God's house were legitimately obtained. But why would the torah take Mizbeach out of the mix - why mention it at all - why not just have the parsha of Mishpatim and then Terumah, and then discuss the mizbeach as part of the mishkan, as the torah does later? **Rav Nissan Alpert**: based on the Rambam who writes that there is a difference in the kedusha of eretz yisrael and the kedusha of Yerushalayim and the mikdash: The halachick vehicle that sanctified the land was the physical conquest of the land; when there is no longer physical control of the land, when the land is lost, as happened when Nevuchadnezzar and the Babylonians conquered the land - the kedusha of the land then evaporated, it disappeared completely. The first kedusha of the land when Yehoshua conquered it land did not last forever - it was based on conquest and depended on its being held by the Jewish people - the kedusha was created by the conquest of the land and was subsequently lost when the land was conquered and they were exiled. It was not until the return 70 years later with Ezra coming to the land accompanied by only a small percentage of the Babylonian Jews when the kedusha returned. This return was not by conquest, but by the permission given to return by king Koresh - he bequeathed the rights to the land to the Jewish people - he gave us the deed to the land. This second kedusha was everlasting because we were now given an official title to the land; even now, the holiness of the land today is not based on the original conquest of the land by Yehoshua, but by the contract given to Ezra. So, the kedusha of the land was not always present. But when it comes to Yerushalayim, the kedusha situation is not like that; Yerushalayim and the Bais Hamikdash became holy

from a certain point and that kedusha was never lost; when it comes to maaser and shemita and other mitzvos depending on the kedusha of the land, those only became permanent from the time of Ezra, when the land attained permanent kedusha, and was not in effect when the land had lost that kedusha. but the kedusha of Yerushalayim and the Mikdash came about because of the shechina, when Hashem's shechina resided there, and the kedusha of the shechina can not be nullified; God's shechina made the whole city holy; this kedusha had nothing to do with the conquest of the land. The kedushas shechina came into being after God selected the city and David purchased it and then God resided in the mikdash - that kedusha can never be lost. Because of this, we don't even need a bais hamikdash to bring korbanos because the holiness is still there - we can build a small mizbeach in that site if we were not tamei, and offer korbanos there without a bais hamikdash. Rav Nissan says that the section of mizbeach in Yisro may have been separated from the rest of the details of the mishkan because we don't need the mikdash to bring korbanos - it might be tremendous support for the Rambam's position. God chose this place and you can offer a korban there without a bais hamikdash if not for the issue of tumas mais.

**Rav Velvel Soloveitchik:** Hashem says in 25:2 *Veyikchu Li Terumah Me'eis Kal Ish Asher Yidvenu Libo* - that they should take for Me a Terumah for all those whose heart motivates them - not something obligatory. But then later it says in 25:8 *Ve'asu Li Mikdash* - they should build a sanctuary - it is a command, a mitzvas Asei - but how can that be if people cannot be coerced and were told to give if their hearts are so motivated? The obligation to build the mikdash is on the tzibur - the collective nation has this mitzvah; but it is not an obligation of the individual person, like tefillin; other mitzvos apply to the nation as a whole and not individuals, such as the battle against Amalek. This mitzvah of building the mishkan is also an obligation of the congregation - as a tzibur they have to build it, but you can't go to anyone person to give a donation - each individual must be motivated to give what he wants.

25:9: *According to all that I show you as a mishkan as a whole and each individual object, so shall you do.* **Rashi:** this pasuk is connected to the previous pasuk; God showed Moshe through nevuah what each object should look like. What is added by the words *and so shall you do*? It means so shall you do for the generations to come; it is for the future as well. This could mean that if one of the vessels is damaged or lost, it should be replicated exactly as it is done now for the first time. Or, it could mean that when you will make the vessels of the Bais Hamikdash, the permanent place in Yerushalayim in the future, then the vessels that Shlomo will make must be made exactly like this was done for the mishkan; the instructions and plans for the mishkan should be for the bais hamikdash as well. If this pasuk was not connected with the previous pasuk, it wouldn't have to say *Vechain Ta'asu* - And thus shall you build it - the vav connects the pasukim, telling us that it is for the mikdash of the future as well.

**Ramban:** Rashi is making a huge mistake, it cannot be true; should Shlomo be restricted to making the mikdash and the mizbeach using the same dimensions as the mishkan? In fact, the mizbeach of Shlomo was much larger - 20x20 amos instead of 10x10? The **Ibn Ezra** didn't like Rashi's peshat either - it did not mean for the future construction as well, as the bais mikdash was much more grandiose; it means that only the vessels should be made exactly the same. **Rav Shevel:** Rashi's opinion may be salvaged by explaining that Rashi didn't say exact measure for measure - he meant the

proportions must be maintained - the mizbeach needed to be a square, of any dimensions; Shlomo just had to adhere to the same proportions. The **Gur Aryeh** gives another answer - Rashi didn't mean that all things should be exactly like those first ones - he meant only that the portable vessels, the smaller things should be the same exact size; but those things fixed in the ground, like the large mizbeach and the entire mikdash, those can change in size; the edifice of the bais hamikdash and the mizbeach were rooted in the ground and could be much larger.

**Ramban**: according to the peshat you don't have to say that this is for the future; the pesukim say that Hashem will live in His throne in the Bais Hamikdash - what does that mean? Hashem doesn't want us to just build the mishkan - He wants us to build it with excitement, with great love and fire so that God should dwell amongst us.

What is the meaning of Hashem dwelling on his Kisay Hakovod? **Rabbeinu Bachya**: the Aron is the most important of the vessels in the mishkan and that is why it is mentioned first; we are commanded to build an Aron - the Midrash says it mimics the Kisay Hakovod above - when we say shmona esray we bow and take steps forward and backward as if before the spiritual throne; making the Aron is like the Kisay Hakovod as we say in Az Yashir - *Machon Leshivtachah Pa'alta Hashem, Mikdash Hashem Konenu Yadechah* - Hashem has established the foundation of His dwelling place, the mikdash that your hands built; God is seated in the Bais Hamikdash; this teaches us that the Aron is like the Kisay Hakovod, with the two Keruvim on the cover representing the heavens and the earth - they are the two places that God dwells. The whole point of the mishkan is to have the Aron Kodesh, above which the shechina dwells - that is where Moshe always communicates with Hashem; here Hashem is seated, between the two Keruvim. We see this in Shmuel as well where it talks about Hashem being Yotzei Hakeruvim, emanating from between the Keruvim. God is seated on this Kisay Hakovod, above the Aron.

**Ramban**: this shows us how important the Aron is. We are commanded to build the Aron out of shittim wood - 2.5 amos, by 1.5, by 1.5. It is a small container of the luchos. The midrash comments about why the measurements are broken, they are not whole numbers but all three dimensions are fractions - it is because it represents the Torah, it represents our connecting to the Torah - we are like broken people, people who are not whole; we cannot connect to Hashem and His Torah with arrogance; to approach the Aron we do it with humility.

Ve'asu Aron - you should build it - these words are in the plural. With the shulchan and menorah it is Ve'asisaw - singular; either Moshe or Betzalel. The only one that is in the plural is the Aron. **Ramban**: the nation as a whole have to build it; the other vessels were for Moshe to attend to - he designed it and Betzalel built it. But with the Aron, every Jew has to have his hand in it because that is where God dwells. What does that mean that every Jew is involved with it? There are three possibilities: either every Jew is involved by contributing some gold for the Aron specifically for the Aron, aside from the general building fund. Alternatively it could mean that in some small token way every Jew has to physically help Betzalel. Alternatively, in every Jew's mind they have to have some thoughts of helping Betzalel - in Hashem's mind, if you have the thought to help him build it, then God says we then have a portion in its building; every Jew should be yearning to build it and Hashem will credit him. **Rav Shevel**: when the Ramban talks about the building of the mishkan, he seems to think that the Rambam made a big mistake in his counting of the mitzvos - that there is a general mitzvah to build the

mishkan, but there is also a separate mitzvah to build the Aron, and the Rambam failed to count it. Because it says Ve'asu in the plural, this is a mitzvah for everyone, to be accomplished in one of the three possible listed ways above; this is a separate mitzvah for everyone. The Rambam did not count it because it was not an eternal mitzvah; immediately before the first bais hamikdash was destroyed, the Aron was swallowed by the ground miraculously, to be returned only in the future when the mashiach comes. But this means that there was no Aron in the second Bais Hamikdash - the throne of God, the light of God was missing from the second temple; according to the Rambam there was only a one time mitzvah to build it, that first time - the minchas chinuch says that the Rambam gives the dimensions for building all of the kailim except for the Aron because there was no command to build it for all generations - it was a one time thing, was not counted as a mitzvah for all of the generations and that is why it was not present in the second bais hamikdash and was not counted as a separate mitzvah; the Ramban disputes this - he says there is a separate independent mitzvah for all generations.

**Maharal** based on a question raised by the **Ibn Ezra**: the Torah tells us that the Aron is made of shittim wood with inner and outer linings of gold. The Ibn Ezra says that this is crazy construction, to use wood in the middle with gold around it - who needs the wood in the middle - why not have pure gold, like the menorah? **Maharal** quotes the Ibn Ezra's question - he answers that there is a medrish tanchuma that says that the Torah is an Etz Chayim - the essence of the Aron has to be wood because otherwise it is not an Etz Chayim - it is a deep concept - the Torah is described as an Etz Chayim Lamachazikim Bah - a living wood for those who grab hold of it - like wood, it is something that is planted and has roots - it is a tree of life to those that take hold of it; the Torah is connected to Hashem, the source of all life; if you hold on to the Torah, it is a way of rooting yourself to Hashem; we are rooted to the eternal God this way. Then why do we need the gold on the inside and outside? Because there are two levels of God's existence in terms of reward; on the outside we look like gold but on the inside we feel like wood. In Mishlei it says on the right God places longevity, eternal life, while on the left is honor and wealth and kavod. The left, the weaker arm, is this world - it is the reward of gold and kavod, gold on the inside and outside - but the real essence of God's connection and reward is on the right, the wood, being rooted in God to help us make it across to Olam Habah, with an eternal life near God, with our neshama living on and on with God - that is the real powerful reward; we see the weaker reward, the gold in the here and now of this world, but that is not the real reward we strive for.