

Parsha Plug: Parshat Terumah

Shemot 25:22-30	שמות כה:כב-ל
<p>22 There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people. 23 You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. 24 Overlay it with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. 25 And you shall make for it a frame a handbreadth [wide] all around, and you shall make a golden crown for its frame all around. 26 And you shall make for it four golden rings, and you shall place the rings on the four corners that are on its four legs. 27 The rings shall be opposite the frame as holders for the poles [with which] to carry the table. 28 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and you shall overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with them. 29 And you shall make its forms, its spoons, its half pipes, and its supports with which it will be covered; of pure gold you shall make them. 30 And you shall place on the table showbread before Me at all times.</p>	<p>כב וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שָׁם וּדְבַרְתִּי אִתְּךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל־אֲרֹן הָעֵדֻת אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה אוֹתְךָ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כג וַעֲשִׂיתָ שֻׁלְחָן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָתִים אַרְבּוֹ וְאַמָּה רֹחְבוֹ וְאַמָּה וָחֵצִי קִמְתּוֹ: כד וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר וַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ זֶרֶק סָבִיב: כה וַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ מִסְגֶּרֶת טָפַח סָבִיב וַעֲשִׂיתָ זֶרֶק זָהָב לְמִסְגֶּרֶתוֹ סָבִיב: כו וַעֲשִׂיתָ לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבָּעֹת זָהָב וְנָתַתָּ אֹתֵיהֶן עַל אַרְבַּע הַפְּאֵת אֲשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּע רַגְלָיו: כז לַעֲמֹת הַמִּסְגֶּרֶת תַּהַיִן הַטַּבָּעֹת לְבָתִּים לְבָדִים לְשָׂאת אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן: כח וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֹתֵיהֶן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתָ אוֹתָם זָהָב וְנִשְׂאֲבָם אֶת־הַשֻּׁלְחָן: כט וַעֲשִׂיתָ קַעֲרֹתָיו וְכַפֹּתָיו וְקִשּׁוֹתָיו וּמִנְקֵיתָיו אֲשֶׁר יִסֹּךְ בָּהֶן זָהָב טָהוֹר תַּעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם: ל וְנָתַתָּ עַל־הַשֻּׁלְחָן לֶחֶם פָּנִים לִפְנֵי תַמִּיד:</p>

Chizkuni on Shemot 26:35	חזקוני שמות כו:לה
<p>“And the candlestick was facing the table.” This was in order to illuminate the surface of the table. As it says in Parshat Behaalotecha: “When you mount the lamps, let the seven lamps give light at the front of the lampstand” (Bamidbar 8:2). This is to say toward the table, for it was across from the menorah that illuminated it with its seven lamps.</p>	<p>וְאֵת הַמְּנֹרָה נָכַח הַשֻּׁלְחָן לְהַאִיר עָלָיו וְכֵן כָּתוּב בַּפֶּרֶשֶׁת בַּהֲעֹלֹתָךְ אֶל מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמְּנֹרָה יֵאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת פִּי אֶל הַשֻּׁלְחָן שֶׁהוּא מוֹל הַמְּנֹרָה יֵאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת.</p>

Tur HaAruch on Shemot 25:23	טור הערוך שמות כה:כג
<p>“You are to construct a table”: For the table is a symbol of wealth, honor, distinction, and greatness. Ramban writes that the significance of the table lies in it being a reminder that all material blessings are channeled to us from the original source, from God, ever since He created the world.</p>	<p>וַעֲשִׂיתָ שֻׁלְחָן. כִּי הַשֻּׁלְחָן הוּא סִמֵּן לְעוֹשֶׁר וְכְבוֹד וְגִדּוּלָהּ. וְכָתוּב הַרְמַבֵּן וַעֲשִׂיתָ שֻׁלְחָן עֲנִין הַשֻּׁלְחָן כִּי בִרְכַת הַשֵּׁם הִיא תַעֲשִׂיר מֵעַת שֶׁנִּבְרָא הָעוֹלָם.</p>

Rabbeinu Bachya on Shemot 25:23	רבינו בחיי שמות כה:כג
<p>“You are to construct a table”: It has already been demonstrated that there was a real need for the Ark seeing that it served to house the Tablets. The kapporet was also essential as it served as the lid for the Ark...The cherubs on top of the kapporet were needed to demonstrate that there are such beings as angels. But what was the need for the table? The question is equally relevant to the presence of the table in the Tabernacle as to its presence in the Temple. According to the plain meaning of the</p>	<p>וַעֲשִׂיתָ שֻׁלְחָן. כִּבְר נִתְבָּאָר כִּי הָאָרוֹן הַצּוּרֵךְ גָּדוֹל הִיָּה לְהִיּוֹת לִוְחוֹת הָעֵדוּת מוֹנָחִים בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְהַכְּפֹרֶת גַּם כֵּן הוּא הַכְּסוּי אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו...וְהַכְּרוּבִים שֶׁהָיוּ מִן הַכְּפֹרֶת לְהוֹרוֹת עַל מִצִּיאוֹת הַמַּלְאָכִים, אֲבָל</p>

text the table was needed in order that the show-breads which the Torah commanded to be ever-present in the Tabernacle (Temple) could be placed upon it. These show-breads were necessary as the basic minimum to which God's bounty could attach itself. The weekly offerings of these show-breads were consumed by the priests who performed the service in the Tabernacle or Temple during the week in question. A small part of this bread was sufficient for many priests. Our sages in Masechet Yoma 39 illustrated this point when they said that if a priest received as little as the size of a bean of that bread this would suffice to still his hunger. This then is the reason that this structure was called "table," seeing God provided His blessing for the bread which was placed upon it [שולח ברכתו/שלחן]. From this table God's blessing for the food of the Jewish people would proliferate to all parts of the country, indeed to all parts of the earth...A Midrashic approach: the word שטים in the phrase ועשית שלחן שטים, "you are to construct a table out of shittim wood," may be understood as an acrostic of the first letters of the words מהילה, טובה, ישועה, ש'לום; we also find similar acrostics in connection with the Ark and the Altar, i.e. that these furnishings of the Tabernacle contained within them the essence of all the principal blessings man is in need of. In fact, the table (in each person's house) symbolizes the altar, the instrument through which man is able to achieve atonement for his errors. The bread on the table is considered as a surrogate for animal sacrifice on the altar provided man is generous and shares his blessings with the poor. This is the deeper meaning of what the sages said (Berachot 55) when they commented on Ezekiel 41,22 שלוש עץ המזבח והמזבח עץ שלוש, "and the altar, a wooden block, three cubits high...and He said to me: 'this is the table before Hashem.'" The remarkable thing in that vision is that it commenced with the altar and concluded with the table. The message to Ezekiel was that as long as the Temple was standing and the altar was functioning, man's atonement was achieved through the sacrifices offered on the altar. When there is no altar upon which to offer sacrifices, man must achieve his atonement by means of his table. It became an accepted practice amongst the pious Jews of France to construct their caskets out of the wood of their tables in order to demonstrate the idea that their table become the means of their atonement just as death is the means to achieve our ultimate atonement. It also was to signify that man does not take with him any of the material things he enjoyed on earth. The only thing he can take with him is the evidence of the charitable deeds he performed while alive. The table was a symbol of such good deeds. This is also why the sages said that he who spends a long time over his meal will have his life extended".

השלחן מה היה משמש ומה צורך היה במשכן ובמקדש לעשות בהם שלחן. וע"ד הפשט הוצרך השלחן בבית ה' בלחם אשר עליו להיות שרש דבר שתחול הברכה בו, והלחם אשר עליו היה נאכל לכהנים משרתי המקדש והיה מספיק לרבים מהם מעט ממנו, וכענין שאמרו רז"ל כל כהן שהיה מגיעו כפול היה שבע, ועל כן נקרא שלחן שהקב"ה שולח ברכתו בלחם שעליו ומשם הברכה משתלח בכל המזונות ויבא שובע לכל העולם...וע"ד המדרש ועשית שלחן עצי שטי"ם, ש'לום ט'ובה י'שועה מ'חילה, וכן מצינו בארון ובמזבח כי כל הטובות האלה נכללות בה ובאות בסבתם גם בסבת השלחן כי הוא מזבח כפרה לאדם והלחם שעל השלחן הוא חשוב כקרבן על גבי המזבח כשאדם טוב עין מיטיב ומאכיל שם העניים והוא שדרשו רז"ל והמזבח עץ שלש אמות וגו' (יחזקאל מ"א:כ"ב) וידבר אלי זה השלחן אשר לפני ה', פתח במזבח וסיים בשלחן, אלא בזמן שבהמ"ק קיים אדם מתכפר ע"י המזבח עכשיו שאין ביהמ"ק קיים אדם מתכפר על ידי השלחן. ומנהג חסידים שבצרפת שעושים משלחנם ארון לקבורה, להורות כי האדם לא ישא מאומה בידו ולא ילוננו בעמלו כי אם הצדקה שעשה בחייו והטובה שהוא מיטיב על שלחנו, ולכך אמרו רז"ל המאריך על שלחנו מאריך לו ימיו ושנותיו.

Rabbi Binyomin Adler “Carry On”: Parshat Terumah ‘Partners In Torah’

[T]he staves were placed on the side of the Ark to carry it, but they did not actually function in that capacity. Rather, the Ark carried and sustained the people. Those who acknowledge G-d as their sole provider reflect the Talmudic dictum that the Ark carried those who carried it. The Table, however, represents people who feel the need to constantly carry their loads with them. Thus, regarding the Table, the verse says “and the Table shall be carried through them,” implying that the people actually carried the Table (Shemot 25:28). In our lives, we are faced with the challenge of striking the right balance between working to earn a livelihood and recognizing that it is G-d Who is really carrying our burden. At times, we mistakenly believe that we are the ones who must carry the burden. The message of the Ark carrying itself reminds us that, while we have the *responsibility* of carrying the burden, it is ultimately G-d Who provides.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, “The Home We Build Together”: Terumah 5774

The narrative [of the Mishkan] takes almost the whole of the last third of the book of Exodus. Why so long? Why such detail? The Tabernacle was, after all, only a temporary home for the Divine presence, eventually superseded by the Temple in Jerusalem. Besides which, why is the making of the Mishkan in the book of Exodus at all? Its natural place seems to be in the book of Vayikra, Leviticus, which is overwhelmingly devoted to an account of the service of the Mishkan and the sacrifices that were offered there...The answer, it seems to me, is profound. First, recall the history of the Israelites until now. It has been a long series of complaints... If an unprecedented sequence of miracles cannot bring about a mature response on the part of the people, what will? It is then that God said: *Let them build something together*. This simple command transformed the Israelites. During the whole construction of the tabernacle there were no complaints. The people contributed, some gold, some silver, some bronze, some brought skins and drapes, others gave their time and skill. They gave so much that Moses had to order them to stop. A remarkable proposition is being framed: *It is not what God does for us that transforms us. It is what we do for God*. So long as every crisis was dealt with by Moses and miracles, the Israelites remained in a state of dependency. Their default response was complaint. For them to grow to adulthood and responsibility, there had to be a transition from passive recipients of God’s blessings to active creators. The people had to become God’s “partners in the work of creation.” That, I believe, is what the sages meant when they said, “Call them not ‘your children’ but ‘your builders.’” People have to become builders if they are to grow from childhood to adulthood. Judaism is God’s call to responsibility. He does not want us to rely on miracles. He does not want us to be dependent on others. He wants us to become His partners, recognising that what we have, we have from Him, but what we make of what we have is up to us, our choices and our effort. This is not an easy balance to achieve. It is easy to live a life of dependency. It is equally easy in the opposite direction to slip into the mistake of saying “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me” (Deut. 8: 17). The Jewish view of the human condition is that everything we achieve is due to our own efforts, but equally and essentially the result of God’s blessing. The building of the Tabernacle was the first great project the Israelites undertook together. It involved their generosity and skill. It gave them the chance to give back to God a little of what He had given them. It conferred on them the dignity of labour and creative endeavour. It brought to closure their birth as a nation and it symbolised the challenge of the future.