

## Parshat Terumah 5779

Close to the start of the parashah, we read (25:8) וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם *‘They shall make a sanctuary for Me and I shall dwell among them.’* We would have expected the pasuk to say *‘They shall make a sanctuary for Me and I shall dwell in it’* but instead it says that Hashem will dwell among **them**, among the Bnei Yisra’el. How should we make sense of this? One way to interpret it would be to say that the builders will become transformed. Through the act of construction, they will raise themselves spiritually and become a human home for the Shechinah. Hashem will dwell within each and every one of them.

Although we cannot take part in the construction of the Mishkan, we still have the capacity to turn ourselves into a home for the Shechinah. How can this be done?

This week’s parashah describes the silver sockets known as ‘adanim’ into which were placed the planks that formed the walls of the Mishkan. Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher of thirteenth century Spain wrote a commentary known as the Ba’al HaTurim. In Parshat Pekuday (38:27), he points out that these one hundred sockets are the source of the requirement to recite one hundred blessings each day. Through three prayer services, a meal and an assortment of foods, it is possible during the course of an entire day, to reach a total of one hundred berachot. The name of Hashem that we use when reciting a berachah is ‘Ad-nai’. It is related to the word for the sockets – adanim. By filling our day with one hundred berachot, we lay the foundations on which our day is built, just as the adanim provided the foundations upon which the Mishkan was built.

Two further insights – another made by the Ba’al HaTurim and one from the Shem MiShmuel (Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein, nineteenth century Poland) - will show that there are other aspects of the Mishkan whose construction we relive each and every day.

The original instruction was to make the Mishkan from ten linen curtains. Strangely, the Torah goes on to say:

תָּמַשׁ הַיְרִיעוֹת תְּהַלִּיל הַקְּבֹלֹת אֲשֶׁר אֶל־אֲחֻתָּה וְתָמַשׁ יְרִיעוֹת הַקְּבֹלֹת אֲשֶׁר אֶל־אֲחֻתָּה:

Five curtains shall be joined together and five curtains shall be joined together. (Shemot 26:3). Even more strangely, the next three pesukim go on to say that special loops and hooks had to be made to join the two large sets of curtains

together. What is the need for all this? Why not simply sew together all ten curtains into one large piece?

The Ba’al HaTurim reveals an amazing symbolism: the ten curtains correspond with the Ten Commandments; and the two sets of five curtains match the two sets of commandments, five commandments on one tablet and another five on the second tablet.

The Shem MiShmuel takes this one step further. He notes that there was another covering – known as the Ohel - that was placed over the top of the Mishkan covering. This cover consisted of eleven curtains and, like the lower covering, had to be made as two sets of curtains to be joined together: five curtains to be joined as one large piece and then six curtains to be joined as a second large piece. The Shem MiShmuel suggests that the set of five symbolises the Five Books of the Written Torah, Torah Shebichtav, and the set of six symbolises the six books of the Oral Torah, Torah Sheba’al Peh.

Thus the Mishkan is a physical representation of all that Torah encompasses. At its core, the inner layer of curtains reminds us of the luchot, the tablets given with their Ten Commandments at Har Sinai. From these Ten Commandments, the most fundamental of all, the rest of Torah grows. Thus we have an outer layer of curtains that represents not only the growth of Torah but also the inextricable link between the Written Torah and the Oral Torah; the two must necessarily be sewn together.

As said at the outset, although nowadays we cannot take part in the construction of the Mishkan, we still have the capacity to turn ourselves into a home for the Shechinah. We have now seen that, not only can we lay down the adanim, the sockets that act as foundations by reciting one hundred berachot every day, we can also reconstruct the two sets of coverings overhead by keeping the Ten Commandments and by following all that the Written and Oral Torah tell us on how these Ten Commandments should be applied to our lives.

It thus becomes possible to make the Mishkan anew each and every day. We have the opportunity to build our own personal Mishkan and, in so doing, to become a home for the Shechinah. It is exactly as the pasuk said: וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם *‘They shall make a sanctuary for Me and I shall dwell among them.’*