

Candle Lighting

6:00

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:41

Sunset

6:19

Motzei
Shabbat

6:54



Parshat HaShavuah

TERUMAH

תרומה

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ב' אדר תשע"ב

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מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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BILVAVI MISHKAN EVNE

MRS. AMY HOROWITZ

My children absolutely LOVE the Uncle Moishy song that teaches them: "Kol mitzvah leveinah hee, every mitzvah is a brick, you see..." When that song comes to bat on our CD player, it never fails to rouse a chorus from the backseat of our car.

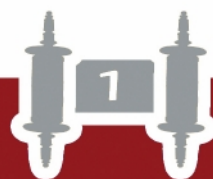
In those rare moments of sibling harmony, I never bothered to pay much attention to the words, but this week's parsha made me take notice.

In perhaps the most famous phrase from Parashat Terumah, Hashem commands us to build Him a physical sanctuary: "Ve'asu li mikdash veshachanti b'tocham." This mitzvah has been understood by our sages to apply to the Mishkan that Moshe built in the wilderness, as well as to the two Batei Mikdash that stood in Yerushalayim. In both locations, this sanctuary was to serve as Hashem's house, or in other words, a place where we could attempt to feel Hashem's presence despite His divine intangibility and our limited human perception.

I am lucky enough to have spent good quality time in Israel, and I have davened at the Kotel many times, yet I still struggle: How am I supposed to relate to the Beit Hamikdash in my lifetime? I've seen pictures, studied diagrams, and even watched YouTube videos that attempt to bring the experience to life, but I'm still not sure I have any feelings for a building I've never seen with my own eyes. So when I stand in shul this Shabbat and listen to the parsha being read aloud, and *kal v'chomer*, when I sit on the floor on Tisha B'Av and read *Kinot*, what am I supposed to feel? How do I understand what I've lost when I'm not sure I appreciate it in the first place?

Chazal point out that the grammar of our pasuk is strange. It should say, "Ve'asu li mikdash veshachanti b'tocho," which means that if we build a sanctuary, Hashem will dwell in it. However, our pasuk promises that if we build a sanctuary, Hashem will dwell in "them," a reference to Bnei Yisrael.

Continued page 4





LUCKY 13

CHAIM BITTERMAN ('13)

In this week's parsha, Hashem commands the Jewish nation to build a Mishkan. This enormous task requires many donations from various resources within the Jewish people. The Torah seems to list 15 materials that Bnei Yisrael is commanded to donate in order to fully construct each aspect of the Mishkan.

Rashi, however, explains that there are only 13 materials needed from Bnei Yisrael. Therefore, the question is, why does the Torah list 15?

The Siftei Chachamim answers this by stating that either the different wools should all count as one, since they only vary in color, or, according to Rashi, the stones that the *Nesiim* donate are not counted. The Mizrachi also states that only 13 materials are needed. He poses that the *shittim* wood (which is used to build the Mishkan) is not counted since it has been prepared by Yaakov many years prior. In addition, the *techatim* (another material needed for the Mishkan) is not counted because it comes from an animal that Hashem specifically makes for this occasion.

From the above, the question arises as to why the mefarshim try so hard to establish that there are only 13 different types of materials used and not settle with the pshat of 15?

The answer is that the number 13 is very significant. As the Olelot Ephraim discusses, 13 is the age of a Bar Mitzvah, when one begins to **serve** Hashem. There are 13 *midot shehaTorah nidreshet bahem* (hermeneutical laws)- representing the **Torah**. The Torah mentions the word "bris" 13 times in relation to circumcision, and the *yud gimel midot*- 13 attributes of God- **kindness**.

In Yechezkel it says, "The 13 items that you designated for Me were merely replacements for the 13 forms of sustenance (kindness) that I provided for you in Egypt" (Chapter 16).

Still, why 13?

The world stands on three pillars: **kindness**, **Torah**, and **service** to Hashem. These three crucial elements of our being are all connected to the number 13, as the Olelot Ephraim showed in his examples. Therefore it is befitting that in coming to build the Mishkan, a dwelling place for God, we do so with 13 materials that remind us of how to live and structure our lives, fulfilling the three things that sustain this world.

IT'S ALL IN THE INTENT

YAAKOV GRINER ('15)

This week's parsha begins with Hashem's instruction to "take" a donation for the Mishkan. Grammatically, it seems that the Torah should say to "give" a donation.

A simple explanation to this problem can be found in the idea that when we give to another, or to something, with good intent we are also taking. We are taking away with us the added gain of a mitzvah. The money that we own is temporary, but our good deeds are eternal. A wise man once said, "All that I really own is what I have given away."

Additionally, we are told in this week's parsha that the proper way to give is with a full heart.

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Barel continued

The Torah tells us that one can only take money from someone whose heart motivates and inspires him to donate. Rashi comments that one must have a good desire in order to be involved. Hashem is saying, "I don't need your gold, silver or copper to build myself a home. All that I want from you is the relationship. I want you to want to be a part of the building of my home for me. And if you want to be a part of that, I welcome your gift. But, if it is a burden on you and you would rather not, please do not do me any favors."

Hashem's message is, "keep your money to yourself." He only wants it if you want to be a part of it. We must do favors with a smile that says: "I love doing this." That is the type of home that Hashem wants to dwell in and that is the type of home that we all should dwell in.

Horowitz continued

The Ohr HaChaim suggests that this means that the Mishkan should be placed in the center of the camp, surrounded by the 12 tribes of Bnei Yisrael. Others have suggested that "they" are our shuls, our *mikdashei me'at* that serve to connect us to Hashem in our own communities.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler, in his masterpiece *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, explains that building a house for Hashem is much simpler that it sounds. While at times in our history, this mitzvah required precious stones and fine textiles, in reality the best home for Hashem is inside each of us. Bringing Hashem into this physical world requires us to make room for Him inside our hearts and minds. Once we make space and invite Hashem in, when we recognize the godliness within us, we have fulfilled our obligation to build a mikdash. And, of course, the opposite is also true. When we fail to connect to Hashem and we don't recognize the spark of godliness inside us, we destroy that mikdash and send Hashem into exile, the equivalent of a churban.

So when we sit on the floor on Tisha B'Av, we are not only mourning the Beit Hamikdash, but also our own spiritual self-destruction, our inability to connect to Hashem. But, like I said before, we cannot understand what we have lost until we appreciate it in the first place. So this week, when we hear Parshat Terumah read aloud in shul, let's focus on our positive obligation to "rebuild the mikdash." Let's remember that no matter who we are or where we find ourselves, we have that spark of Hashem inside of us. Our task is to uncover what's hidden, to break down barriers so that we can build the walls of our own inner Mishkan brick by brick.

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