

# Terumah

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We're in Purim territory now. *Shabbos* is the first of *Adar* and *Parashas Shekalim*. On a *Pshat* level that may not mean very much, but on a *Sod* level there is so much going on.

For example, the verse says:

*And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst...* (*Shemos* 25:8)

The verse is talking about building a *Mishkan* for the Divine Presence where the *kobanim* can perform the daily service. But according to the *Midrash*, the physical *Mishkan* was only in response to the incident of the golden calf, so they explain the verse to be talking about every individual Jew. It is telling us that every Jew should make themselves into a *Mishkan* that God can dwell within. As the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains, our brains correspond to the Holy of Holies, and our hearts to the altar.

In simple terms, this means being righteous, giving yourself over to the service of God. It means spiritually cleaning house because God will not dwell anywhere that is not holy. Perhaps prior to the golden calf this was something that every Jew could do, at least on their own level. But certainly post-calf so few people seem capable of achieving such high levels of spiritual greatness, making them incapable of being a dwelling place for the *Shechinah*.

Yes and no, especially according to the opinion that the *Mishkan* was commanded *after* the golden calf, and the change back to mortality of the Jewish people. If so, then the *Mishkan* becomes a spiritual road map to becoming someone God can dwell within. And Purim, just two weeks away *b"H*, is one of the best ways to see how successful you have been to date.

We have a *mitzvah* to be happy. We certainly have a *mitzvah* to serve God with joy. But how hard is that to do when you have nothing to make you sad? How difficult is that when God seems to make things go the way you want them to?

On the other hand, can God expect a person to be happy when they are mourning a

loss, especially a very difficult one? Does He expect a person to not hold a grudge against Him when everyone around them seems to be succeeding, and they can't, time after time? Some people seem to have consistently good *mazel* while others seem to have just the opposite, and no one can explain why.

The *Midrash Rabbah*, on last week's *parsha* on the words, "And these are the judgments, etc." says, that Iyov stopped questioning God about what was happening to him when he considered what had happened to great people before him, like Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. Then he realized that he really couldn't understand God's judgment, so he really couldn't question it.

For example, I found out last week about a nine year old girl who didn't wake up, the niece of someone I know. That is two years after the eleven year old granddaughter of a friend of mine also died similarly. And that's against a background of dead hostages being returned, including children, who were brutally murdered. Who understands any of *that*?

It depends on which level you are asking the question. The world outside the Mishkan is where the reality of God is the least felt and, people believe the most in nature as a force. In that world, the questions abound about why things happen to good people to the point that people feel compelled to assume that God is not involved in human history.

When you entered the first area of the Mishkan, the Courtyard, the reality of God was more real. The focus was on God and how to serve Him. Miracles already occurred there just because of the level of consciousness present there. The questions became fewer if only because it was clear that God was in the world and fully in charge.

Beyond the Courtyard was the Sanctuary where only *kobanim* could go. It was home to the Menorah, the Shulchan and Showbread, and the Incense Altar. It was part of this world, and yet separate from it. The only way to describe the atmosphere was Messianic because the good was so overpowering. If a person had questions of *emunah* going in there, they didn't have them coming out.

Finally, there was the Holy of Holies, the place of the Holy Ark. It was ten *amos* by ten *amos*, but time and space didn't matter there. It was so holy that only the *Kohen Gadol* could go in and, that was only once a year on Yom Kippur. The Laws of Physics ceased to operate there, which is why the *Aron HaKodesh* could be too big for the space and yet still fit.

The progression from one area to another represented a person's spiritually progression as well, from their heart, their personal altar, to their mind, their personal

Holy of Holies. Being human *mishkans*, we possess the potential to do the same in ourselves, and to be happy despite the things in life trying to make us miserable. We drink on Purim, not to drown our sorrows, but to discover how to be happy despite them.

How? The answer to that question is the reason for my latest book, "*Taking It Even Higher: Going Beyond Everyday Reality*." And to help with this answer, I am giving a two session webinar, *b"H*, on March 4 and 11 on this topic. To register go to <https://www.shaarnunproductions.org/webinars.html>. Shaarnun Productions. For more details, write to [pinchasw@shaarnun.org](mailto:pinchasw@shaarnun.org).

And while you're there, you can also check out my new *Haggadah, b"H*, called "The Wise Son Says."

Good Shabbos,  
Pinchas Winston