

Parshas Terumah in a Nutshell
(Exodus 25:1-27:19)

The people of Israel are called upon to contribute thirteen materials—gold, silver and copper; blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool; flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices and gems—out of which, G-d says to Moses, “They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell amidst them.”

On the summit of Mount Sinai, Moses is given detailed instructions on how to construct this dwelling for G-d so that it could be readily dismantled, transported and reassembled as the people journeyed in the desert.

In the Sanctuary's inner chamber, behind an artistically woven curtain, was the ark containing the tablets of the testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; on the ark's cover stood two winged cherubim hammered out of pure gold. In the outer chamber stood the seven-branched menorah, and the table upon which the “showbread” was arranged.

The Sanctuary's three walls were fitted together from 48 upright wooden boards, each of which was overlaid with gold and held up by a pair of silver foundation sockets.

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With regard to the G-dly light present within every individual, this light should not be self-contained. G-d does not grant a person spiritual awareness for his own satisfaction. The intent in making a person “a sanctuary in microcosm” is not so that he will appreciate G-d, but rather that he should share his awareness with others, that he should shine light outward and influence his environment.

-- The Rebbe

The roof was formed of three layers of coverings: (a) tapestries of multicolored wool and linen; (b) a covering made of goat hair; (c) a covering of ram and tachash skins. Across the front of the Sanctuary was an embroidered screen held up by five posts.

Surrounding the Sanctuary and the copper-plated altar which fronted it was an enclosure of linen hangings, supported by 60 wooden posts with silver hooks and trimmings, and reinforced by copper stakes. ❖

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Feb 24 / Adar 3

Candle Lighting5:24 pm

Mincha5:25 pm

Shabbos Day – Feb 25 / Adar 4

Shacharis9:30 am*

Torah Reading10:30 am

Kiddush.....12:00 pm

Mincha5:25 pm

Rabbi's Drasha5:45 pm

Shabbos Ends6:24 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:21 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs).....1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin

*This week's Bulletin
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**Join us each
weekday morning
Mon-Fri as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am,
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

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Halachic Zmanim

**Shabbos, Feb 25, 2023
Eastern Standard Time**

Earliest Tallis.....5:41 AM
Latest Morning Shema9:21 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:38 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 4:37 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 6:11 PM

Chassidic Masters

The Answer to the Mother of All Questions

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

Why are we here?

This, the mother of all questions, is addressed in turn by the various streams of Torah thought, each after its own style.

The Talmud states, simply and succinctly, “I was created to serve my Creator.” The moralistic-oriented works of Mussar describe the purpose of life as the refinement of one’s character traits. The Zohar says that G-d created us “in order that His creations should know Him.” Master Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria offered the following reason for creation: G-d is the essence of good, and the nature of good is to bestow goodness. But goodness cannot be bestowed when there is no one to receive it. To this end G-d created our world—so that there should be recipients of His goodness.

Chassidic teaching explains that these reasons, as well as the reasons given by other Kabbalistic and philosophical works, are but the various faces of a singular Divine desire for creation, as expressed in the various “worlds” or realms of G-d’s creation. Chassidism also offers its own formulation of this Divine desire: that we “make a home for G-d in the material world.”

A Home For G-d

What does it mean to make our world a home for G-d?

A basic tenet of our faith is that “the entire world is filled with His presence” and “there is no place void of Him.” So it’s not that we have to bring G-d into the material world—He is already there. But G-d can be in the world without being at home in it.

Being “at home” means being in a place that is receptive to your presence, a place devoted to serving your needs and desires. It means being in a place where you are your true, private self, as opposed to the public self you assume in other environments.

The material world, in its natural state, is not an environment hospitable to G-d. If there is one common feature to all things material, it is their intrinsic egocentrism, their placement of the self as the foundation and purpose of existence. With every iota of its mass, the stone proclaims: “I am.” In the tree and in the animal, the preservation and propagation of the self is the focus of every instinct and the aim of every achievement. And who more than the human being has elevated ambition to an art and self-advancement to an all-consuming ideal?

The only thing wrong with all this selfishness is that it blurs the truth of what lies behind it: the truth that creation is not an end in itself, but a product of and vehicle for its Creator. And this selfishness is not an incidental or secondary characteristic of our world, but its most basic feature.

So to make our world a “home” for G-d, we must transform its very nature. We must recast the very foundations of its identity from a self-oriented entity into something that exists for a purpose that is greater than itself.

Every time we take a material object or resource and enlist it in the service of G-d, we are effecting such a transformation. When we take a piece of leather and make a pair of tefillin out of it, when we take a dollar bill and give it to charity, when we employ our minds to study a chapter of Torah—we are effecting such a transformation. In its initial state the piece of leather proclaimed “I exist”; now it says “I exist to serve my Creator.” A dollar in pocket says “Greed is good”; in the charity box it says “The purpose of life is not to receive, but to give.” The human brain says “Enrich thyself”; the brain studying Torah says “Know thy G-d.”

The Frontier of Self

There are two basic steps to the endeavor of making our world a home for G-d. The first step involves priming the material resource as a “vessel for G-dliness”: shaping the leather into tefillin, donating the money to charity, scheduling time for Torah study. The second step is the actual employment of these “vessels” to serve the Divine will: binding the tefillin on the arm and head, using the donated money to feed the hungry, studying Torah, etc.

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At first glance it would seem that the second step is the more significant one, while the first step is merely an enabler of the second, a means to its end. But the Torah's account of the first home for G-d built in our world places the greater emphasis on the construction of the "home," rather than its actual employment as a Divine dwelling.

A sizable portion of the book of Exodus is devoted to the construction of the Sanctuary built by the children of Israel in the desert. The Torah, which is usually so sparing with words that many of its laws are contained within a single word or letter, is uncharacteristically elaborate. The fifteen materials used in the Sanctuary's construction are listed no less than three times; the components and furnishings of the Sanctuary are listed eight times; and every minute detail of the Sanctuary's construction, down to the dimensions of every wall panel and pillar and the colors in every tapestry, is spelled out not once, but twice—in the account of G-d's instructions to Moses, and again in the account of the Sanctuary's construction.

All in all, thirteen chapters are devoted to describing how certain physical materials were fashioned into an edifice dedicated to the service of G-d, and the training of the kohanim (priests) who were to officiate there. (In contrast, the Torah devotes one chapter to its account of the creation of the universe, three chapters to its description of the revelation at Mount Sinai, and eleven chapters to the story of the Exodus.)

The Sanctuary is the model and prototype for all subsequent homes for G-d constructed on physical earth. So the overwhelming emphasis on its "construction" stage (as opposed to the "implementation" stage) implies that in our lives, too, there is something very special about forging our personal resources into things that have the potential to serve G-d. Making ourselves "vessels" for G-dliness is, in a certain sense, a greater feat than actually bringing G-dliness into our lives.

For this is where the true point of transformation lies—the transformation from a self-oriented object to a thing committed to something greater than itself. If G-d had merely desired a hospitable environment, He need not have bothered with a material world; a spiritual world could just as easily have been enlisted to serve Him.

What G-d desired was the transformation itself: the challenge and achievement of selfhood transcended and materiality redefined. This transformation and redefinition occurs in the first stage, when something material is forged into an instrument of the Divine. The second stage is only a matter of actualizing an already established potential, of putting a thing to its now natural use.

Making Vessels

You meet a person who has yet to invite G-d into his or her life. A person whose endeavors and accomplishments—no matter how successful and laudable—have yet to transcend the self and self-oriented goals.

You wish to expand her horizons—to show him a life beyond the strictures of self. You wish to put on tefillin with him, to share with her the Divine wisdom of Torah.

But he's not ready yet. You know that the concept of serving G-d is still alien to a life trained and conditioned to view everything through the lens of self. You know that before you can introduce her to the world of Torah and mitzvot, you must first make her receptive to G-dliness, receptive to a life of intimacy with the Divine.

So when you meet him on the street, you simply smile and say, "Good morning!" You invite her to your home for a cup of coffee or a Shabbat dinner. You make small talk. You don't at this point suggest any changes in his lifestyle. You just want her to become open to you and what you represent.

Ostensibly, you haven't "done" anything. But in essence, a most profound and radical transformation has taken place. The person has become a vessel for G-dliness.

Of course, the purpose of a vessel is that it be filled with content; the purpose of a home is that it be inhabited. The Sanctuary was built to house the presence of G-d. But it is the making of vessels for G-dliness that is life's greatest challenge and its most revolutionary achievement. ❖

From Our Sages – Terumah

Speak to the children of Israel, that they should take to Me a terumah (“uplifting”) (Exodus 25:2)

Every created entity has a spark of G-dliness within it, a pinpoint of divinity that constitutes its “soul,” its spiritual function and design. When we utilize something to serve the Creator, we penetrate its shell of mundanity, revealing and realizing its divine essence. Thus we elevate these “sparks,” reuniting them with their Source.

(The Chassidic Masters)

They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amidst them (Exodus 25:8)

G-d desired a dwelling place in the lower realms.

(Midrash Tanchuma, Naso 16)

This is what man is all about; this is the purpose of his creation and of the creation of all the worlds, higher and lower—that there be made for G-d a dwelling in the lower realms.

(Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell within them (Exodus 25:8)

The verse does not say “and I will dwell within it,” but “and I will dwell within them”—within each and every one of them.

(Shaloh)

You shall set showbread upon the table before Me always (Exodus 25:30)

The table stood in the Tabernacle, and there rested upon it a blessing from Above, and from it issued nourishment to the whole world. Not for a moment was that table to remain empty, since blessing does not rest upon an empty place. Therefore the showbread had always to be renewed upon it each Sabbath, in order that the blessing from Above might always rest upon it, and that food and blessing, because of it, might emanate from that table to all the tables of the world.

So too should every man’s table [have bread on it] when he says grace after meals: in order that the blessing from Above should rest upon it, it must not be empty.

(Zohar 2:153b)

You shall make boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood (Exodus 26:15)

According to the Talmud, the shittah was a type of cedar; in Rabbi Saadiah Gaon’s (Arabic) translation of the Torah it is rendered shant, or “acacia.”

Chassidic teaching sees the word shittim as related to the word shetut, “folly”—an allusion to the fact that the function of the Mishkan was to transform the folly of materialism into “folly of holiness,” commitment to G-d that transcends the rationale and normalcy of “the way things are.”

(The Chassidic Masters)

You shall make an altar . . . and you shall overlay it with copper (Exodus 27:1–2)

Why copper? Just like copper tarnishes and then can be scrubbed clean, so the people of Israel, although they sin, they repent and are forgiven.

(Midrash HaGadol) ❖

Haftorah for Terumah in a nutshell

I Kings 5:26-6:13

This week's haftorah describes the construction of the Holy Temple under the direction of King Solomon, echoing this week's Torah portion which discusses the construction of the Desert Tabernacle.

The haftorah discusses the manpower — both Jewish and non-Jewish — that Solomon recruited for the building of the Holy Temple. Also discussed are the hewing and transportation of the stone, the laying of the foundation, as well as the dimensions of the Holy Temple, its components and materials.

The haftorah ends with G-d's word to King Solomon: "This house which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, and execute My ordinances, and keep all My commandments to walk in them; then will I establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people, Israel." ❖

Paterson Shul Minyan

"The Paterson Shul" at Seniors Tower of Paterson located at 510 E. 27th Street/Paterson will have Minyanim on Shabbat March 4 at 9 a.m. (PARSHAT TEZAVEH / ZACHOR)

They will also have a Purim Megillah reading on Monday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. (SEPHARDIC RENDITION) and Tuesday, March 7 after Shachris at 9:00 a.m. (ASHKENAZIC RENDITION)

Costumes and children welcome to attend! Hoping to be back in the basement level (if not social hall). For more information, please email: JerrySchrantz@Gmail.com or visit Facebook: The Paterson Shul.



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Good Shabbos to all!