

Parshat Teruma

All The Vessels Under One Roof

Dovid Zirkind

Baltimore, MD



Parshat Teruma begins with Hashem's command to the Jewish People to build a place for the *Shechina* to dwell: "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, so that I will dwell among them" (*V'asu li Mikdash, v'shachanti b'tocham*). (Shemot 25:8) The *pasuk* first refers to this place as the *Mikdash*, and immediately afterwards, in the next *pasuk*, as the *Mishkan*. However, the term "*Mishkan*" is, in fact, also one of the elements of the *Mikdash*. Specifically, the *Mishkan* was the cloth cover of the Tabernacle. Why, of all pieces, is the *Mishkan* singled out to describe also the entire structure?

The Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 34:3) says that there were three different manners with which Hashem requested the building of the *Mishkan*. The first is in the context of the relationship between a shepherd and his flock. Hashem said: "I am your shepherd, and you are my flock; build for Me a place so that I may stay and shepherd you." Second, as a watchman in his vineyard: "I am your watchman and you are my vineyard; make for Me a place so that I may protect you." The third is that of a father and son: "I am your Father; make for Me a home to visit you." What is the metaphoric significance of these three relationships?

The *Lev Shalom* explains that the Midrash is expressing the requests that Hashem made to three different types of Jews: the righteous, the average, and the wicked people within the nation. The shepherd protects his flock; if not tended to, the sheep will wander off one after the other. However, if the sheep are still together, the shepherd can safely move them as one. Similarly, Hashem asks of the Jewish people to build the *Mishkan* in order to keep even the wicked of the nation together. The word *v'asu* ("They shall make") describes these people; there is value in the *Mishkan*, even if for nothing else but to unite the nation.

The vineyard is already successful; it has nothing inherently wrong. Yet, it still needs to be protected from thieves. The average Jew, as well, stands strong, yet the challenges of life can threaten that strength. For him, the *Mishkan* will serve as support for the trials of life. The word *li* ("for Me"), which indicates proper intention, is for these people. They must build the *Mishkan* to continue their spiritual success.

The relationship between father and child is clear. Hashem asks the righteous to create an even stronger connection than they have already achieved; the *Shechina* will rest within them and all of the Jewish people. *Mikdash* (Sanctuary) is a structure dedicated to adding holiness within the camp of the Jewish People.

The Jewish People are required to combine the "*v'asu li Mikdash*" in order to create the true "*tavnit haMishkan*" (form of the Tabernacle). That form is only made through the unification of all Jews. The fact that this structure is referred to as the *Mishkan* is no coincidence. The *Mishkan* was the one piece of the Tabernacle that was used to combine the others. It placed them all "under one roof." It is only through the unification of all the vessels that the *Mishkan* can be used for its proper service to Hashem.

The same is true for the Jewish People; only when united will they reach success.