

## Parshat Terumah: Inner Sanctuary

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

In Parshat Terumah, Hashem tells the Jews, "Make for me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them." The commentaries ask, why the plural form? If the *Mishkan* is one place, the verse should say, I will dwell in it. The Netivot Shalom answers that this verse refers to each of us. Every Jewish home is a miniature *mikdash* (sanctuary). Building the tabernacle wasn't just a matter of creating a wooden edifice. The building of the *Mishkan* created an earthly abode for the Divine Presence.

Similarly, the goal of creating a Jewish home must be to invite Hashem into our midst. The way we speak and act should reflect this. We must feel as if Hashem's presence is right beside us.

Rav Pincus notes that one of the greatest challenges of our generation is that although we are scrupulous to follow all the details of the Torah, we don't relate to Hashem as a living personality. We don't picture Him as someone who loves us and as someone we can talk to. We are missing the passion and the relationship. Building a Jewish home involves creating an atmosphere of intimacy and connection to Hashem. When we are excited, it has a ripple effect. If we want our

children to develop a love for Judaism, we must infuse joy, warmth, and passion into our avodat Hashem.

When Betzalel built the *mishkan* he first made the curtains and then the beams. Rabbeinu Bachaya explains that the curtains are symbolic of the heavens while the beams symbolize the earth. Betzalel followed Hashem, who first created the heavens and then the earth. This signifies man, a fusion of body and soul. Ideally both aspects of ourselves should work in perfect balance. The body should serve the soul. It should never go after its own desires.

We often get swayed by externals and neglect our inner selves. Our perspective then becomes skewed. We see beauty as the perfect harmony between the physical and the spiritual. The *mishkan* represented this synthesis.

The Torah says, "*Vayichku li teruma*" (Take for me a portion.) Rashi writes, "*Li lishmi*," (For me, for my sake). When they bring the items for the tabernacle it must be for the sake of Hashem. Creating inner beauty entails recognizing that our entire lives must be *lishmi*, to sanctify Hashem's name. We must connect

all our physical actions to spirituality. Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains the verse in Yeshaya, "The rain comes down and waters the ground and then returns to Hashem." Everything we do in this world, our *geshem-gashmiyut* (physical activities), must be elevated back to Hashem.

The Leket V'halibuv notes that the month of Adar is an especially auspicious time to work on the attribute of *emet*, truth. "*Zachor et asher asa Amalek* (Remember what Amalek did) appears right after the law of maintaining just measures and weights. Amalek comes in response to falsehood.

The mazal of Adar is fish. The Gemara says that the fish proclaim, "*V'emet Hashem l'olam*" (Hashem's truth is eternal). We live in a world of deception, where falsity permeates everything. The fish in the sea surrounded by pure water perceive the truth. That's the goal of Adar - bringing Hashem into our midst through the power of *emet*.

The Aron was made of wood covered with gold. Wood connotes life and growth. To make oneself into a *mishkan*, one must be growth-oriented, constantly working on oneself.

## Chulda: A Message of Hope Part I

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Chulda is one of the seven women prophetesses whose prophecies were written down for future generations because they were relevant for all times. Chulda is discussed in two books of the *Tanach*, *Melachim Bet* and *Divrei Hayamim*. She lived in the times of King Yoshiyahu, one of the last kings prior to the destruction of the First Temple. King Yoshiyahu was the grandson of King Menashe who was very wicked. Menashe filled Yerushalayim with idol worship. He erased the name of Hashem from whatever *Torah* scroll he could find and inserted the names of idols. He was king for a few decades and his affect on the nation was so negative that he brought the destruction even closer. His son Amon followed in his ways. But his grandson Yoshiyahu was very different. He is described as following the

ways of King David, the paragon of a righteous king. He created a revolution in the Jewish nation. He ordered the renovation of the *beit hamikdash* and in the process Chilkiah, the high priest told Shafan, the scribe that he had found a *Torah* scroll. This was a special scroll. At the end of Moshe's life he wrote a *Sefer Torah* and placed it in the Aron in the holy of holies and this was supposed to be the *Sefer Torah* that every new *Torah* would be compared to. It would ensure that every *Torah* would be transmitted perfectly from one generation to the next without any mistake. When Menashe went on his rampage, the *kohanim* hid this scroll so it would not be violated. Usually a *Torah* scroll is rolled up and opens up to *Bereishit*. Here the Torah opened to a verse in Devarim, "Hashem will send away you and the kings you appointed upon yourself to a nation that is foreign to you and your

forefathers." This was a prophecy about exile, part of the rebuke where Hashem says what will happen if the Jewish people don't follow the ways of the *Torah*.

Chilkiah and Shafan realized they had to bring the *Torah* to Yoshiyahu who understood it as a message from Hashem. He rent his clothing realizing that if they would not repent they would be sent to exile. He began a *teshuvah* campaign to eradicate all idol worship. Many Jews took it very seriously and changed their behaviour. But it was not all across the board. Yoshiyahu appointed *Torah* scholars to go from home to home to check for idols. Those who did not want to do *teshuvah* engraved images of idols on the inside of their doors so that the messengers wouldn't see it. Unfortunately, the situation of the nation was

Continued on page 2

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Continued from page 1

such that it was impossible anymore to prevent the destruction. If Hashem would have not destroyed the *beit hamikdash* then he would have had to destroy the Jewish people. The more tools you have to do your job the worse it is if you don't do it. It might be more beneficial to take away the tools so you are judged differently. When one's clarity is on

a different level, less is demanded. At that point it was too late to change the situation. The Temple would be destroyed but Yoshiyahu did not know it. He saw great changes in the Jewish nation. He felt that they were improving drastically to the extent that *Mashiach* might come. He thought that perhaps Hashem had made them find the *Torah* so that the people

would repent and the destruction would not happen. But at the same time he wanted to know Hashem's opinion. Was his interpretation correct? Would the *beit hamikdash* be destroyed and would the Jews go into exile? Therefore, he sent people to Chulda, a great prophetess of the generation, to hear what would happen.

## Netivot Olam I: Combating The Yetzer Hara #8

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

As our identity becomes entwined with the evil inclination, the *yetzer hara* becomes progressively stronger. A person must gird himself to fight against it. Rav Yitzchak said, "The *yetzer hara* renews itself every day." It makes sin seem new, when in fact there's nothing new about it. The good seems old, because good is part of the human essence, while evil is superimposed upon it. Good resonates in the deepest part of our self, which is ageless and eternal, while evil appears new because it doesn't exist inside ourselves. Evil by definition doesn't have existence. It conceals it and creates an illusion of darkness.

One of the best ways to fight the *yetzer hara* is by using its own method, by presenting the good inclination in new ways. The two most successful movements during the age of the Enlightenment were Chassidut and Mussar. Both took existent reality and dressed it up in new ways of discovering Hashem in the world and in ourselves.

The Chatam Sofer fought the Enlightenment with his motto, "*Chadash assur min haTorah*." He forbade innovative changes to Jewish practice. He made battle against those who had veered off the path innovative. In this way, he was able to rally his troops around him. Bais Yaakov too in its early days sold newness. It propagated the feeling of sisterhood and of discovering oneself in a Torah framework. This is our challenge today. We must find new and novel ways in our own

personal battles against the *yetzer hara*.

The *yetzer hara* is also called the satan and the *malach hamavet* (angel of death). We may mistakenly think that the *yetzer hara* is physical because it uses physicality as a tool. In reality the *yetzer hara* is spiritual. The tool of the *yetzer hara* is *chisaron*, lack. There are always lacks within ourselves and society. The satan points them out and gives us a new way to contend with it. We must be careful.

The feeling of *chisaron* is a real feeling, but its essence isn't real. The desire to fill the empty spaces is normal. The question is with what will we fill it. When we turn towards evil for a solution to our imperfections we create even deeper deficiencies.

The function of the *malach hamavet* is to take a person out of his body because his soul has no more purpose on this world. Our missions were fragmentized after the sin of the *eitz hadaat* (tree of knowledge). We do things that put us in a place where there's no more reason to continue the battle. In this frame, our task is completed. Death is *tumah*, a blockage. It's not being able to interact with the world any longer. The *malach hamavet*, which creates the heaviest concealment and ends *bechira* (free choice) most completely, is a spiritual force generated by the *yetzer hara*'s reality.

Within us, there's an internal and external aspect. The internal is the soul and the

external is the desires of the body, which feel very basic and real to us. Often our boundaries are so shaky and our awareness of what's going on in our choice processes is so subtle that we have two voices that both sound like the real self. The part that wants dignity and *tzniut* (modesty) resonates as true, but the part that wants newness and attention feels true too because the self that desires is also there, although it's not the most essential aspect of who we are. It's a tough call and most of us don't succeed all of the time.

Bringing upon oneself thoughts of desire is more severe than actually sinning. As long as the thought process isn't involved, the essential self isn't involved. Our contact with our soul comes through thought. A person who makes the wrong choice may say, "I have to be me." Which side of who you are is really you? How deep are you willing to go to find yourself?

We've lost our sense of self. A person who brings evil of the mind upon himself won't dwell with Hashem because he's driven Hashem out of his consciousness. You can't be identified with good and evil at the same time.

The *yetzer hara* can drive a person out of both worlds. It cuts a person's reality off from this world and cuts him off from Hashem, who is the eternal and ultimate source of good.