

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT TERUMAH

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Our Mishkan



LEAH, MIRIAM AND TEHILLA

Banot Sherut

Hi! We're the Banot Sherut. We are from Israel, doing our national service in the UK, working with Tribe, South Hampstead Synagogue, JFS and Immanuel College. Please say hi if you see us in schools or in South Hampstead!

This week's parasha opens with God's command to Moshe (Moses) to ask for donations from the Jewish people to build the *Mishkan*, the portable Tabernacle. But why should the Jewish people build God a Sanctuary here in this world?

God commands: "Create a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell in their midst". The opening of this verse sounds like the purpose of the *Mishkan* is to create a base for God here on Earth. However, the continuation of the verse shifts the focus: God commands the Jewish people to create a Tabernacle so that He can dwell in their midst. The verse does not conclude, "and I will dwell in it", in the *Mishkan*, but rather, "in their midst", amongst the Jewish people.

Is the *Mishkan* intended to be a Sanctuary for God or is its purpose that God's presence be felt amongst the Jewish people?

The *Mishkan* combines both of these goals. To make the Sanctuary, God commands all Jews to contribute supplies and skills to the project. For God's presence to dwell "in their midst", the entire Jewish people must be part of the construction project, and must give of themselves.

When the nation comes together to create a Sanctuary for God here on Earth, God accepts the invitation and dwells among us.

The plural "in their midst", is made up of individuals, each of whom seek out a connection with God. American rabbi and rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980), wrote a poem that describes the '*Mishkan*' that is present in each and every person: "In my heart I will build a *Mishkan*, to give glory to God". Each person has the potential to build their own, internal *Mishkan*, and to connect to God in their own way.

Today, we have no Temple or *Mishkan*. Yet, we each have the potential to create a *Mishkan* in our hearts, a daily connection with God, Torah and Mitzvot. When each person fashions their own *Mishkan* and creates a space for God in their life, then His presence will truly dwell "in their midst".

Mishkan Maze!

The *Mishkan* is like God's home on Earth. Help the Jewish people bring their offerings to the *Mishkan*.

