

## Does a Sinner Belong in G-d's Home?

### Exodus, Chapter 25

8. And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst...

10. They shall make an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.

11. And you shall overlay it with pure gold; from inside and from outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make upon it a golden crown all around.

12. And you shall cast four golden rings for it, and you shall place them upon its four corners, two rings on its one side, and two rings on its other side.

13. And you shall make poles of acacia wood and you shall overlay them with gold.

14. And you shall bring the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them.

15. The poles of the ark shall be in the rings; they shall not be removed from it.

16. And you shall place into the ark the testimony, which I will give you.

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

#### Shelah

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.

#### Rashi and Midrah

The instruction to build the mishkan was given after the sin of the Golden Calf on Yom Kippur demonstrating that G-d had forgiven the sin.

#### Zohar

1) Both the instruction and construction took place immediately after the giving of the Torah, i.e. before the sin of the Golden Calf. 2) Moses heard the instruction before the sin but transmitted it to the people only after Yom Kippur.

#### The Rebbe

These differing opinions show G-d is addressing all Jews to build a personal home for G-d. 1) The righteous and pure, having just experienced their rebirth at Sinai, may be unwilling to dirty his hands with gold and silver. He is told, despite your holiness, your purpose is to sanctify physicality and transform the physical world into G-d dwelling place. 2) To the returnee, who has repented G-d says, it is not enough to renounce materialism. Your return is incomplete until you have built G-d a Tabernacle by transforming the material world into G-d's dwelling place. 3) The sinner may feel tainted by his misdeeds, convinced that the command to build a the Tabernacle does not apply to him. Although the instruction according to this opinion was given before the sin, it was not voided by it. G-d's tabernacle is to be build by every Jew, even those that are idol-worshippers.

*They shall make the Ark... two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height (25:10)*

#### Rabbi Natan Adler

The measurements of the Ark were all in fractions, indicating that to become a vessel for Torah, a person must first "break" his ego.

#### פרק כה

ח. ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם :

י. ועשו ארון עצי שטים אמתים וחצי

ארכו ואמה וחצי רחבו ואמה וחצי

קמתו: יא. וצפית אתו זהב טהור מבית

ומחוץ תצפנו ועשית עליו זר זהב סביב: יב. וניצקת לו ארבע

טבעת זהב ונתתה על ארבע פעמתיו ושתי טבעת על צלעו

האחת ושתי טבעת על צלעו השנית: יג. ועשית כהי עצי שטים

וצפית אתם זהב: יד. והבאת את הברדים בטבעת על צלעת הארון

לשאת את הארון בהם: טו. בטבעת הארון יהיו הברדים לא יסרו

ממנו: טז. ונתת אל הארון את העדת אשר אמתן אליך:



## **Pardes Yosef**

The measurements of the Ark were all in halves, indicating that no matter how much one studies Torah, one never masters its whole.

*And you shall overlay [the Ark] with pure gold, inside and outside (25:11)*

## **Talmud, Yoma 72b**

Any Torah scholar whose interior is not like his exterior is no Torah scholar.

## **Bava Batra 14a**

The Ark contained both the second set of tablets as well as the broken remains of the first set.

## **The Rebbe**

The first tablets (before they were broken) represent the Jew in his pristine state at Sinai prior to the sin of the Golden Calf. The second tablets which were given on Yom Kippur after the Jews had been forgiven for their sin, represent the Jew that has strayed and then returned to the Ark of Torah. There is also a third Jew, one who lacks the purity of the first tablets but who has not yet returned to the path of the Torah sufficiently to deserve receiving the second tablets. He too is represented in the Ark, in the broken pieces of the first tablets. Even when we are shattered and broken, we are worthy of a place in the ark.

*The poles shall be in the rings of the Ark; they shall not be removed (25:15)*

## **Chinuch**

If at some point it would be necessary to depart with the Ark hurriedly and there were no designated rods, there would not be time to search for rods strong enough to bear the Arks weight. Therefore the rods were permanently installed.

## **The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

This is actually one of the 365 prohibitions of the Torah---the poles remained in the Ark for the more than 380 years that it stood in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem! The Ark, which served as the depository of the Torah, was the most secluded of the Mishkan's vessels, expressing the ideal that the Torah scholar (who serves as an "Ark" for the Torah) must remove himself from all worldly endeavors. At the same time, however, he must be in a constant state of "portability"--even more so than the other "vessels." If there is a soul thirsting for the word of G-d, the Torah scholar must always be prepared to leave his inner sanctum to transport the Torah to that place.

## SUMMARY

- G-d tells us to make a sanctuary so that He may dwell within us. This refers to the physical Tabernacle as well as the inner sanctuary that we must each construct out of our lives and spheres of influence, transforming our world into G-d's home.
- The Tabernacle was to be built by and depended on every man, woman and child, regardless of their spiritual status. Even a Jew who may appear to be a sinner is still obligated and capable of building a dwelling for G-d.
- The righteous Jew involved with Torah study cannot absolve himself of his responsibility of transforming this physical world into a place that is a home for G-d. Moreover, like the poles ready to transport the ark, he must always be ready to venture out, at a moment's notice, to bring his Torah knowledge to the world outside.
- The first and second tablets housed in the holy ark represented every type of Jew. Even a "shattered" Jew can find a home in the ark.

