

## **Parashat Terumah**

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YOUR PARASHAH: <http://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.25.1-27.19?lang=bi>

### SUMMARY:

Today is *Rosh Hodesh Adar*--which means that Purim is only a couple of weeks away! Although this week we also read from *Parashat Terumah* in *Sefer Shemot*--the book of Exodus--today I will be reading the first *Rosh Hodesh aliyah*, Numbers 28:1-3 in celebration of the new month.

In *Parashat Terumah* God asks the Israelites to give gifts from their hearts - voluntary gifts. These gifts are to be used to build the **מִשְׁכָּן**--a portable, holy place for God to dwell. God says:

**וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם**

“build me a holy place and I will dwell within them.” This **מִשְׁכָּן** will travel with the Israelites through the wilderness and will even serve as a model for the future Temple to be built in Jerusalem. Some of the items that God asks them to use in building the **מִשְׁכָּן** are gold, silver, copper, gemstones, and even dolphin skins.

At the center of the **מִשְׁכָּן** will be the **אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ**, the holy ark, containing the tablets on which the **עֲשֹׂת הַדִּיבְרוֹת**, the Ten Commandments, are written. On top of the Ark are two winged creatures of gold called **כְּרוּבִים**. God promises to speak between the faces of these winged figures. *Parashat Terumah* also describes the gold *menorah*, as well as the tapestries--which are woven pictures--and the poles that create the body of the **מִשְׁכָּן**.

## Questions

**1) In the opening lines of this week's *parashah*, we read that G!d tells Moshe to tell the Israelites to bring voluntary gifts that can be used in constructing the *mishkan*--the portable desert place in which G!d lives with the Israelites. How can God both command us to do something, and want us choose to do the same thing? <<pick 3>>**

This reminds me a little of my dad who tells me, "Ben--you should want to do your chores. That way you'll gain more responsibility." The Israelites should *want* to do what G!d says--to donate their valuables and to build the *mishkan*--so that they can gain more freedom, leadership, and trust. When G!d sees that they are responsible and enthusiastic about building the *mishkan*--G!d will know that they can be responsible with freedom when they enter the promised land.

**2) If G!d is powerful enough to take the Israelites out of slavery and part the Sea of Reeds, why did G!d not choose to make the *mishkan* without any help from the Israelites and just give it to them? Why might G!d have asked the Israelites to make it? <<pick 3>>**

I think that G!d knew that as slaves the Israelites had to follow Pharaoh's directions, but part of being free and responsible is learning how to follow G!d's directions, so maybe G!d wanted to give them practice. I also think that another part of freedom is learning how to be generous with others so maybe G!d wanted the Israelites to practice generosity by giving them a chance to donate their valuables to create a holy place.

**3) We know that G!d didn't need a place to live amongst the Israelites in order to speak with Moshe, to bring them out of Egypt, or to give them the Ten Commandments and Torah. Why do you think that in this week's *parasha* G!d tells the Israelites to build a physical place for G!d to live amongst them? <<pick 3>>**

When G!d gives the Israelites the Ten Commandments and Torah, we learn that the Israelites don't want to hear G!d's voice directly. Maybe the reason that G!d tells the Israelites to create a physical place for G!d to live in is so that there is a smaller space in the middle of camp--separated from the rest of the Israelite community--where Moshe and Aharon and the elders can meet with G!d and learn from G!d . Then they can then pass along important information to the Israelites.