



Likkutei Sichos

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A Human Enterprise

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1.

TERUMAH, THE NAME

Often, we have discussed the significance of a *sedrah's* name:¹ At first glance, each *sedrah* is simply named after its opening words. However, since customarily, Jewish people call each *sedrah* by its particular name, and a Jewish custom is considered **Torah**,² we must conclude that each *sedrah's* name encapsulates the unique subject of that *parshah*, since everything in Torah is absolutely precise.

This idea is further appreciated in light by the Baal Shem Tov's teaching regarding all material things:³ "The Hebrew⁴ name of everything" serves as a receptacle for its life-force (and consequently, it alludes to its inherent nature).

This idea, that the name of the *parshah* was not given merely for identification, is also evident from the name of our *parshah* — *Terumah*:⁵ [However, the name also is needed to differentiate between one *sedrah* and the next. Therefore, in most instances, we cannot name the *sedrah* after its actual opening word(s) because the same words appear at the beginning of several *sedros*. For example, more than one *sedrah* begins with the clause, "These are the offspring," or with the clause, "Hashem said," and so forth. Therefore, we must select a unique word that appears *near* the beginning of the *parshah* that can differentiate one *parshah* from the others.]

Were we to presume that every *parshah* is simply named after its opening words, this *parshah* should have been called (not *Terumah*, but) "*Veyikchu* {and they shall take}," as this word appears earlier in the *sedrah*, closer to the beginning.

¹ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, p. 57 ff.

² See *Jerusalem Talmud, Pesachim*, ch. 4, sec. 1.

³ *Tanya*, "*Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*," ch. 1.

⁴ {Lit., "the Holy Tongue."}

⁵ {Lit., "donation."}

Thus, we call this *sedrah* “*Terumah*” (not only to identify this *parshah*, and differentiate it from the other *parshiyos* but) because this word encapsulates the subject of the *sedrah*, the general message making this *sedrah* unique.

We need to clarify: Not only does the name *Terumah* seemingly **not** express the subject of the entire *sedrah* (as explained below, in Section 2), but moreover, the idea of *terumah* {meaning, “a donation”} is not unique to our *sedrah*. There are many different types of *terumah*; in the words of our Sages, “There are ten *terumos*.”⁶ Our *sedrah* only speaks about **one** type — the *terumah* {of the materials} needed for building the *Mishkan*.⁷ (And even according to the exposition of our Sages,⁸ there are (only) “**three** *terumos* stated here.”) Moreover, the word “*terumah*,” unqualified, refers to the *terumah* given to a *kohen*. How can we say that the name “*Terumah*” conveys the **unique** subject of **this** (entire) *sedrah*? The idea of *terumah* — unqualified — is discussed in other *sedros* in the Torah (and at greater length than is the *terumah* of the *Mishkan* here).

2.

WHO IS DOING THE WORK?

Furthermore, at first glance, the distinctive subject of our *sedrah* seems to be a record of the command regarding the **tasks involved in fashioning and building the *Mishkan***. Ostensibly, this point is not expressed at all by the word “*terumah*,” which refers only to the **Jewish people** setting aside {material} and donating for the building of the *Mishkan*. But the word “*terumah*” does not refer to the actual **building** of the *Mishkan* — “They shall make Me a *Mikdash* {a Sanctuary}.”⁹ How, then, can we say that the subject of the *sedrah* — the building of the *Mishkan* — is conveyed by (the word) “*terumah*”?

⁶ *Beraysa D’Melech HaMishkan*, beg.; *Yalkut Shimoni*, commenting on this verse; see also *Peirush Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam*, beg. of our *parshah*.

⁷ {The portable temple that was built in the desert.}

⁸ See *Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim*, ch. 1, halachah 1; Rashi on our verse at the beg. of the *parshah*, *Shemos* 25:2.

⁹ *Shemos* 25:8.

The question is even stronger: Ostensibly, the *sedrah* should have **started** with the verse, “They shall make Me a *Mikdash*.” **This** is the fundamental point introducing all the mitzvos of this *sedrah*, including, “they shall take to Me *terumah*.” (These donations were given to fulfill the command, “they shall make Me a *Mikdash*.”) Thus, the Torah should have first said, “Hashem spoke... they shall make Me a *Mikdash*,” and subsequently, the Torah should have recorded all the commands how to make it: “They shall take to Me *terumah*...” — the donation {of materials} for the *Mishkan*, and (subsequently, the Torah should record) how to build the *Mishkan*.

By recording the command, “they shall take to Me *terumah*...,” **before** the verse, “they shall make Me a *Mikdash*,” the Torah implies the opposite — the word “*terumah*” evinces the underlying idea of the *Mishkan* **to a greater extent** than the verse, “they shall make Me a *Mikdash*”!

Moreover, at first glance, the idea of the *Mishkan* and the idea of *terumah* seem to be opposites. The idea of the *Mishkan*, משכן, as its name suggests, is (similar to the word) “*ושכנתי*, I will dwell {among them}.”¹⁰ Meaning, the emphasis is (not on **building** the *Mishkan* — “they shall make Me a *Mikdash*” — but) on the **indwelling of the *Shechinah***¹¹ in the *Mishkan*. Thus, as long as the *Shechinah* has not come to rest in the *Mishkan* (even after they had finished building the entire structure), it cannot (truly) be called ***Mishkan***.¹²

Only with Hashem’s will and power can the *Shechinah* come to dwell in the *Mishkan*. As King Shlomo says,¹³ “Behold, the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain You, and surely not this Temple!” (This conundrum remains for all time: How can His unbounded *Shechinah* — which “the heavens and the highest heavens,” including by the supernal worlds, “cannot contain” — rest and dwell in “this house”?) This emphasizes that only Hashem’s unbounded power¹⁴

¹⁰ See *Ibn Ezra* on *Shemos* 25:8.

¹¹ {The Divine Presence.}

¹² See *Rashi* on *Vayikra* 9:23.

¹³ *Melachim I* 8:27.

¹⁴ See *Or HaTorah*, “*Vayeitzei*,” 178b ff.; Tzemach Tzedek’s *Biurei HaZohar*, “*Vayeitzei*,” p. 104 ff.; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5680, end of p. 183 ff.; *Maamar* “*Rav Berachiah*,” 5643; *Maamar* “*HaUmmam*,” 5643.

can bring this about, but it cannot be brought about by people using their own strengths and abilities.

In contrast, the definition and meaning of the word *terumah* emphasizes (not Hashem causing G-dliness to dwell in, and to be drawn into the *Mishkan*, but) what the **person** accomplishes in this respect. Moreover, the word “*terumah*” (as opposed to “*Mikdash*”) does not even allude to the donations made to the *Mishkan* “coming into” Hashem’s possession. This word only refers to a **person setting aside** *terumah*.

3.

WHY IS IT EVEN RELEVANT

We can clarify this by prefacing with a general question on this topic: Why does the Torah recount at such great length the details of the donations of materials for the *Mishkan*, the construction of the beams, the skins, etc.? This question echoes our Sages’ classic question: “What was, was!”¹⁵ The Torah itself teaches us that the *Mishkan* was a temporary structure, as Scripture says,¹⁶ “I have moved about in a **tent** and *Mishkan*.” The command “was only temporary, as it says,¹⁷ ‘For you have not come... {to the resting place¹⁸ and to the inheritance}....’”¹⁹ The command for {future} generations was to build the *Mikdash* in Yerushalayim — the **Eternal** House. Why, then, are the details of the *Mishkan*’s construction relevant to all the Jewish people of all generations in all places, even after the *Mishkan* was secreted away,²⁰ and in its place, the *Beis HaMikdash* was built?

¹⁵ *Yoma* 5b. {I.e., how is this discussion of past events relevant ?}

¹⁶ *Shmuel II* 7:6; see Rashi’s commentary, loc. cit.; see *Zohar*, vol. 2, 241a; et al.

¹⁷ *Devarim* 12:9.

¹⁸ {“The resting place” refers to Shiloh, and “the inheritance” refers to Yerushalayim, which were (more) permanent.}

¹⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 1, par. 1.

²⁰ *Sotah* 9a.

We can understand why the Jewish people living in all generations need to know the narrative (and laws) of the two *Battei Mikdash*,²¹ even though they both were destroyed. This information is needed for the *Beis HaMikdash* of the Future Era, since the design of the future *Beis HaMikdash* follows primarily the blueprint of the first two. But why is it relevant nowadays to know about all the details regarding the donations towards the ***Mishkan*** and its construction?

Furthermore, when people learn and read about the details of the building of the *Beis HaMikdash*, not only are they preparing for the future construction, for, “when the *Beis HaMikdash* will be built, there will be a need to preserve and to replicate that model...,”²² but moreover, by reading and learning about the design of the *Beis HaMikdash* — Hashem says — “I consider it as if they were busy building the *Beis HaMikdash*.”²³ (And as our Sages explain,²⁴this way the Jewish people prevent “the building of My house from being stopped.”)²⁵

When does this apply? When a person reads and learns about the construction of the ***Beis HaMikdash***. This is because the mitzvah to build the *Beis HaMikdash* applies in all generations (albeit, **practically**, nowadays, we cannot implement it).²⁶ In contrast, the command to build the *Mishkan* was only in force for that generation.

4.

THE MISHKAN AS A STEP IN THE PROCESS, AND BY ITSELF

Ostensibly, we could offer the following answer, as discussed at length previously:²⁷ Although the command, “They shall make Me a *Mikdash* and I will dwell among them” was said regarding the *Mishkan*, it is a command for **all**

²¹ {Plural of *Beis HaMikdash*.}

²² Rambam in his *Introduction to Mishnah*, concerning tractate *Midos*.”

²³ *Midrash Tanchuma*, “*Tzav*,” sec. 14.

²⁴ *Midrash Tanchuma*, *ibid*.

²⁵ See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 411 ff.

²⁶ See *Or HaChaim* on *Shemos* 25:8.

²⁷ *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 302 ff.

generations to build a “House for Hashem.”²⁸ Meaning, this command refers to **all** sanctuaries, including those in the Future Era. (Meaning, we infer the command to build all the sanctuaries from the command to build the *Mishkan*.)

Furthermore, the design and details concerning the length and width of the *Beis HaMikdash* differed from those of the *Mishkan*. However, the principal components resembled those of the *Mishkan* (as Rambam explains).²⁹ Similarly, from the command concerning the donations of materials for the *Mishkan*, we learn **concerning the *Beis HaMikdash*** that “everyone is obligated to build and to assist{in its construction} both personally and financially — men and women.”³⁰

On this basis, we can also appreciate how learning and reading about the *Mishkan*’s construction relates to, and aids in, building the *Beis HaMikdash* properly.

We can further posit (at least according to the inner dimension of the Torah):

In actuality, they first built a temporary *Mishkan* (during the era described by the verse, “for you have **not** come {to the resting place and to the inheritance}”), and only afterwards, “a House for all successive generations”³¹ was built. This is because this is the **correct order** and way of performing this mitzvah (in increasing importance): First, there had to be a *Mishkan* (a tent, something temporary); this type of property cannot be called an inheritance. Only afterwards could there be erected (a house in a designated place for eternity) the **Eternal House in Yerushalayim**.

On this basis, we can also clarify something concerning the reading and learning about the “design of the House.”³² In order for Hashem to consider it “as if they were busy building the *Beis HaMikdash*,” in a complete sense, it is not

²⁸ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis Habechirah*,” ch. 1, par. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, par. 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, par. 3.

³² {*Yechezkel* 43:11.}

enough if Jews merely read and learn about the *Beis HaMikdash*. Rather, they must first read and learn about the design of the ***Mishkan*** — including the components of the *Mishkan* that were **not** present in the *Beis HaMikdash*. Only after doing so (reading about the design of the **House**) can it be said that Hashem considers it “as if they were busy building the *Beis HaMikdash*.”

However, this is not sufficient, for the Torah is eternal!³³ The reality is that there was a time and situation when only the *Mishkan* stood, when the Jewish people fulfilled the mitzvah of making a *Mikdash* for Hashem by **building the *Mishkan***. Therefore, we must say that the building of the ***Mishkan*** is also eternal. Meaning, there is a lesson, and a spiritual paradigm that parallels this idea of fulfilling the mitzvah of building the *Mishkan*.³⁴

5.

WHO IS DOING THE WORK?

The explanation: In the Midrash, we find two opinions as to when the *Shechinah* came to rest in this physical world. One saying of our Sages is that this occurred when the Torah was given:³⁵

{Then} Hashem nullified the original decree, declaring: “The lower realms will ascend to the upper realms, and the upper realms will descend to the lower realms. And I will initiate this.” As the verse says,³⁶ “Hashem descended upon Mount Sinai.” And a {later} verse says,³⁷ “To Moshe, He said, ‘Go up to Hashem.’”

In another place, our Sages say:³⁸ “When did the *Shechinah* rest upon the earth? On the day the *Mishkan* was erected.”

It is clear that, in the words of the Talmud, that “one Sage said the first statement, and another Sage said the second statement, yet they don’t disagree.”

³³ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 17.

³⁴ {I.e., building the *Mishkan* is an eternal, spiritual abstraction, with lessons to be gleaned from it.}

³⁵ *Shemos Rabbah* 12:3; *Tanchuma*, “*Va’era*,” sec. 15.

³⁶ *Shemos* 19:20.

³⁷ *Shemos* 24:1.

³⁸ *Bamidbar Rabbah*, ch. 13, sec. 2; ch. 12, sec. 6.

When the Torah was given, the *Shechinah* descended because, “I will initiate this... ‘Hashem descended upon Mount Sinai.’” While Hashem was settled upon the mountain, it says, “whoever touches the mountain shall surely die,”³⁹ since the holiness permeated the physical mountain. However, since this indwelling was precipitated by Hashem, after “the blast of the *shofar* is drawn out,”⁴⁰ after the *Shechinah* had departed, “they may ascend the mountain,” because the mountain remained as it was before the revelation: **mundane**.

In contrast, the *Shechinah* rested in the *Mishkan* because the Jews had fulfilled the command, “**they shall make** Me a *Mikdash*” — because of the Jewish construction. (As the verse emphasizes regarding many details of {fashioning} the *Mishkan* and its utensils: “**They shall make**”;⁴¹ “**You shall make** the *Mishkan*,”⁴² etc.) Since the *Shechinah* descended as a result of what the people made, the resultant holiness affixed itself into the “object” (that is, into the very material) of the *Mishkan*. Consequently, the *Mishkan* and its various parts became sanctified.

This process can be articulated in the distinctive style of Chassidus, and using the wording of the aforementioned *Midrash: At Matan Torah*, the *Shechinah*’s descent was started by Hashem:⁴³ “**I will initiate this**. As the verse says,⁴⁴ ‘Hashem descended upon Mount Sinai.’” Ultimately, the reason the upper realms descended to the lower realms was so that the lower realms could ascend to the upper ones. (Thus, the world would become Hashem’s home.) From Hashem’s perspective, what already existed below became a home for Him, because for Hashem, “potential does not lack actualization.”⁴⁵ (For this reason we find⁴⁶ that the voice of Hashem saying the Ten Commandments came from all

³⁹ *Shemos* 19:12.

⁴⁰ *Shemos* 19:13.

⁴¹ *Shemos* 25:10 ff.

⁴² *Shemos* 26:1.

⁴³ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Reeh*,” 28b.

⁴⁴ *Shemos* 19:20.

⁴⁵ {Meaning, from Hashem’s perspective, potentiality and ability already incorporate the actualization of that potential. Alternatively, G-dliness lacks nothing.} See *Pardes, Shaar* 11, ch. 3, quoted and elucidated in *Derech Mitzvosecha*, “*Mitzvas Haamanas Elokus*,” ch. 11; *Hemshech* 5666, p. 5 ff, p. 139 ff.

⁴⁶ *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Shemos*, sec. 25; *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 5, sec. 9; Rashi on *Shemos* 20:2.

four directions, and from the heavens and the earth. That is, the world itself, so to speak, exemplified the ideal: “I am Hashem, your G-d.”⁴⁷

However, the ultimate goal is for the lower realms to become a home for Hashem not only as a result of the actualization of Hashem’s ability (which {in truth} does not lack actualization). For then, the objective is not reached in the manner of “his *kav*”⁴⁸ {by dint of his own efforts} — by the **product** of a denizen in the lower realms. Rather, the ultimate goal is for the “actualization” to be accomplished in the lower realms — by a person, through his *avodah*,⁴⁹ **making** the world into a home for Hashem.

This, then, is the advantage of the *Mishkan* over the *Matan Torah*. By building the *Mishkan*, the Jewish people elicited the actualization of the verse, “I will dwell among them.” They did so through their own *avodah*, by fulfilling the directive: “**They shall make Me a Mikdash.**”

On this basis, we can also appreciate why the verse begins with, “they shall take to Me *terumah*.” This idea — that the *Shechinah* descended and came to rest (in the *Mishkan*) as a result of the ***avodah*** of the Jewish people — is conveyed by the idea of *terumah*, as will be explained below.

6.

ALL AT ONCE OR LITTLE BY LITTLE

Terumah has two definitions: (a) Rashi’s interpretation⁵⁰ — “**apportioning**”;⁵¹ and (b) “elevating.”⁵² These two interpretations, which are certainly interconnected, explain not only that elevating (the world and what it

⁴⁷ {*Shemos* 20:2.}

⁴⁸ *Bava Metzia* 38a. {The full quote reads: “A person prefers a *kav* {a dry measure} of his own produce over nine of another’s produce.” This adage depicts the desirability of a person doing the work himself, as opposed to receiving the product of someone else’s labor.}

⁴⁹ {Divine service.}

⁵⁰ *Rashi* on *Shemos* 25:2.

⁵¹ {In the original, “*hafrashah*”; also translated above as “setting aside.”}

⁵² *Zohar*, on our *parshah*, 147a.

contains: gold, silver, etc.) to G-dliness is brought about by **a person** “apportioning,” but they also explain **how** this *avodah* and elevation is brought about:

The word “*terumah*” — apportioning — emphasizes that a person should not give away everything he has. He must **allocate** (some) of his possessions, and **elevate** them; he must give them away to that which is Above, to Hashem: “*To Me* — for My sake.”⁵³

There is a difference between the two above-mentioned ways in which the *Shechinah* descends and comes to dwell in this world. When this process is initiated by Hashem — as it was when the Torah was given — the *Shechinah* dwells in all parts of the world equally.

In contrast, when the indwelling of the *Shechinah* is brought about by the *avodah* and actions of people in the lower realms, there is a difference proportional with the degree of a person's **heartfelt** generosity.⁵⁴ In this regard, there is an order and a process of increasing magnitude {starting with} the lower realms that are not (*battel*⁵⁵ to) G-dliness: A Jewish person begins his *avodah* by taking hold of his divinely designated portions in the world (“if you try to grasp too much, you end up with nothing”).⁵⁶ He then apportions them, elevates them to Hashem. Subsequently, the person moves from level to level. He sets aside and elevates more portions of the world (more challenging ones), until eventually the entire world becomes a home for Hashem through his *avodah*.

This difference applies not only to the **order** and method of refining and elevating the world. Rather, this difference also expresses itself in the sort of *bittul* the indwelling of the *Shechinah* effects:

When Hashem initiates the indwelling of the *Shechinah*, this causes the reality of the world to become **nullified** (for the *Shechinah*'s revelation does not

⁵³ *Rashi* on *Shemos* 25:2.

⁵⁴ {*Shemos* 35:5; cf. *Shemos* 25:2.}

⁵⁵ {*Bittul* denotes submission to Hashem; self-nullification, humility, and the negation of ego.}

⁵⁶ *Chagigah* 17a.

allow for the reality of anything other than G-dliness). As our Sages say:⁵⁷ (During *Matan Torah*) “the birds did not chirp... the oxen did not bellow.” In contrast, the *bittul* triggered by the indwelling of the *Shechinah* that results from a person’s *avodah* and actions (especially, at the beginning of his *avodah*, when he begins to “build the *Mishkan*”) only serves to “separate.” The person takes from his selfhood and gives it up. He lifts it up (above himself) to Hashem, but not in a way that his selfhood is totally nullified, in a way that **neutralizes** his essential identity. A person, **by himself**, cannot completely neutralize and nullify his essential sense of selfhood.

In more general terms, at the **giving** of the Torah, the lower realms became nullified; when the *Mishkan* was **made**, the lower realms were refined.

7.

ANSWERING THE NAME

For this reason, the Torah itemizes all thirteen⁵⁸ (or fifteen)⁵⁹ materials donated for the work of the *Mishkan*. This is because during a person’s *avodah* of transforming worldly matters into a home for Hashem,⁶⁰ the *avodah* and elevation of every part of the world is different.⁶¹ Each part has its distinct type of *terumah*. (This was true both concerning separating the material and lifting it).

Now we can appreciate why the Torah records the command, “they shall take to Me *terumah*” before the command, “they shall make Me a *Mikdash*.” This is because the primary theme and novelty of our *parshah* concerns the ultimate goal of making the world a home for Hashem (by building the *Mishkan*) through a person’s *avodah* and actions, in which the process of this *avodah* is one of increasing difficulty (first by setting aside {materials} and donating, and

⁵⁷ *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 29.

⁵⁸ See *Rashi* on *Shemos* 25:2.

⁵⁹ *Rabbeinu Bachya* on *Shemos* 25:7; *Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 25:3.

⁶⁰ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 907 ff.

⁶¹ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 112 ff.

only afterwards — {building} the Sanctuary).⁶² In this way, specifically, a person can completely fulfill Hashem’s purpose in creating the world.

This is the deeper meaning of *terumah*: First, the *Shechinah* was brought into the world at *Matan Torah* through Hashem’s initiative (“I will initiate this”). Then, the indwelling of the *Shechinah* is brought about by a person “apportioning,” in the manner discussed above, through his *avodah*. Precisely, then, the **principal** {manifestation} of the *Shechinah*⁶³ is drawn into the lower realms.⁶⁴

On this basis, we can also appreciate why this *sedrah* is called “*Terumah*.” The *terumah* discussed in our *parshah* — setting aside, elevating, and making a *Mishkan* — represents the complete form and the greatest state of all the (ten) *terumos*,⁶⁵ that is, the indwelling of the *Shechinah* brought about by the person’s actions and divine *avodah*.

8.

SPECIFICALLY THE *MISHKAN*

On this basis, we can also appreciate how the building and paradigm of the *Mishkan* itself (not as a precursor for the *Beis HaMikdash*) is also eternal, for the Torah is eternal:

At that time, the idea of “*terumah*” — the *avodah* of the **lower realms** — began. This is not only because the giving of the Torah had already happened and the *shofar* sounded (signaling the departure of the *Shechinah*), and thus, the people could not experience Hashem’s descent upon Mount Sinai in a revealed way. Rather, it was also because the people were in the **desert**:

⁶² {In the original, “*Mikdash*.”}

⁶³ {In the original Hebrew, “*ikar Shechinah*.”}

⁶⁴ See *Hemshech 5672*, end of p. 935 ff.

⁶⁵ See at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 221 ff. (Sec. 4-8) that the ultimate dwelling place for Hashem in the lower realms is expressed by **separating** *terumah* and all the gifted portions designated for the *kohanim*.

In a spiritual sense, the desert (because of its conditions) is a place where “no man (the Supernal Man upon the throne)⁶⁶ has settled.”⁶⁷ There is no **habitation** at all — no **revelation** of G-dliness. In contrast, an **inhabited** city is a place where there is G-dly revelation — the Supernal Man settles there.

This explains the difference between the *Mishkan* and the *Beis HaMikdash* (in Yerushalayim). The Jewish people built the *Beis HaMikdash* after they had come “to the resting place and to the inheritance,” i.e., after they had left the desert and entered an inhabited land. They then built the *Beis HaMikdash* in the land (of Israel), regarding which the verse says,⁶⁸ “Hashem’s eyes are constantly upon it, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.” Within the land of Israel itself, the *Beis HaMikdash* stood in Yerushalayim — a locus of *yiras shaleim*⁶⁹ (flawless fear of Hashem),⁷⁰ and within Yerushalayim itself, in a spot that is “Heaven’s Gate.”⁷¹

Thus, the *Beis HaMikdash* — the home for His Essence, made of earthly things, for Hashem’s Essence — is not entirely a product of human effort. Rather, this home is also a result of “I {Hashem} will **choose**,”⁷² where the Divine choice (and holiness) resides. This makes the place (more) prepared to become a receptacle for G-dliness.

A desert, however, is uninhabitable, and is completely unworthy of housing G-dliness. On the contrary, it is “the desert of the nations,”⁷³ a region with “snakes, serpents, scorpions, and no water to quench thirst.”⁷⁴ It was there that the Jewish people made the *Mishkan*. (They transformed that {barren, inhospitable} place into a home for Hashem.) This accomplishment was achieved entirely through their *avodah*, as exemplified by *terumah*, as discussed above.

⁶⁶ *Likkutei Torah, parshas Re’eh*, 32b, ff.

⁶⁷ *Yirmiyahu* 2:6.

⁶⁸ *Devarim* 11:12.

⁶⁹ *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 56, par. 10. {“Yerushalayim” connects two different names given to the city by Avraham — *yirah* and *shalem*, “awe” and “perfect.”}

⁷⁰ *Likkutei Torah, “Rosh Hashanah*,” 60b; “*Shir HaShirim*,” 6c.

⁷¹ *Bereishis* 28:17; see the teachings of our Sages based on this verse.

⁷² {*Bamidbar* 17:20; cf. *Devarim* 12:5.}

⁷³ *Yechezkel* 20:25; see *Rabbeinu Bachya* and *Or HaChaim*, beg. of *parshas Masei*.

⁷⁴ *Devarim* 8:15.

For this reason, we derive this lesson and motivation specifically from the *Mishkan* in the desert: Even during exile, when we find ourselves in the “desert of the nations,” when “our eyes do not see,”⁷⁵ when we experience no G-dly revelation and we live in a doubled and redoubled darkness, even in this situation, we can build a *Mishkan* for Hashem, “I will dwell **within** them.”

9.

THE BEIS HAMIKDASH IS LIKE THE MISHKAN

On this basis, we can also understand why we specifically learn the command to build the *Beis HaMikdash* from the command to build the *Mishkan* (as discussed above, in Section 4):

The primary novelty of the indwelling of the *Shechinah* in the *Beis HaMikdash* (relative to its indwelling at the giving of the Torah) is that it was brought about by people’s *avodah*. **This** novelty happened mainly, and more openly, specifically in the *Mishkan* in the desert. Therefore, from the *Mishkan*, we can infer that this novelty was also the primary emphasis made by the *Beis HaMikdash*.

In this context, we can explain, according to the inner dimension of Torah, why Rambam⁷⁶ specifically refers to the *Mishkan* as “the *Mikdash* of the **desert**” in his halachah that “everyone is obligated to build and to assist, both **personally** and financially; both men and women, just like the *Mikdash* of the **desert**.” In contrast, in a previous halachah,⁷⁷ Rambam mentions the *Mishkan* but does **not** use the expression, “the *Mikdash* of the desert”:⁷⁸

This obligation regarding the *Beis HaMikdash*, “to build and to assist, both personally and financially” — a person’s *avodah* in the manner of *terumah* — is inferred from (and is like) “the *Mikdash* of the **desert**,” “no man settled there.”

⁷⁵ *Tehillim* 74:9.

⁷⁶ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis Habechirah*,” ch. 1, par. 12.

⁷⁷ In the beg. of *Beis Habechirah*, Rambam does not write “(the *Mishkan*) that Moshe made in the **desert**.”

⁷⁸ Whereas in the halachah 5, he writes, “... resembling the curtains of the Courtyard that were in the desert.”

The desert is a place that has no possibility for G-dly revelation, and the *Mishkan* was built there entirely as a result of the people's *avodah* and their actions, as discussed above.

10.

THE LESSON

This also the lesson we can glean from the idea of the *Mishkan* and its *terumah* that is relevant for every person in particular, and for all times:

Sometimes, a person may feel that his spiritual condition is that of a “desert,” a place where “no man settled there.” Heaven forbid, he finds that no holiness or G-dliness can “settle” within him. In this state, the person might, G-d forbid, give up hope. We tell him: There is the *Mikdash* in the **desert!** Moreover, the Divine imperative, “they shall make Me a *Mikdash* so that I may dwell among them” began and was actually implemented through the *Mishkan* when the Jewish people were in (a situation of) a desert.

When the person makes a *Mishkan* while in a desert-like state, he attains the benefit of light that comes through darkness,⁷⁹ until eventually he reaches the {spiritual level of} “desert within the realm of holiness.” This level is alluded to by the verse, “for He is not a man.”⁸⁰ It is a divine consciousness that transcends even the divine consciousness of the Supernal Man.⁸¹

— Based on talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Terumah*, 5740 (1980)

⁷⁹ *Koheles* 2:13.

⁸⁰ {*Shmuel I* 15:29.}

⁸¹ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Bamidbar*,” 4c ff; *Shir HaShirim*, 22a, 23b ff.