

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 28

Naso, Sicha 2

The Context:

The Mishkan was the portable sanctuary which accompanied the Jewish people throughout their forty-year desert sojourn. The removable walls of the structure were 48 acacia-wood beams, each measuring 10x1.5 biblical amot (approximately 15x2.5 feet).

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel collectively donated the means of transportation — six wagons and twelve oxen. When it was time to disassemble the Mishkan and move on to a new location, the Levites would load the components onto the wagons and escort the convoy to the destination.

The Question:

A curious fact emerges when we consider the dimensions of the wagons and the beams. Of the six wagons, only four were used to transport the beams, sockets, and bars; space was so constricted that the beams had to be piled atop each other, necessitating the Levites to walk alongside the wagons to prevent the load from falling.

Why did the leaders offer a limited donation, dividing one wagon between two people, and not something more expansive, in line with the general opulence of the Mishkan's part of G-d's creation as useless, in a word, wasting material that was expressly created with a purpose.

The Explanation:

If six wagons could contain the Mishkan's pillars, then the addition of more wagons would mean that each container would be carrying less than its capacity. The Mishkan was built with calculated extravagance; with intentional beauty. Each component and flourish had to be accounted for. To have unutilized potential in the Mishkan would be anathema to what it represented — a home for G-d where it was evident how every detail served a purpose.

The overarching task of life is to construct a Mishkan, a home that expresses the Divine reality, out of the materials that comprise our individual worlds. Divine providence has granted us certain abilities and opportunities. The wagons remind us that our task is to discover how every feature of our life can contribute to building the home for G-d.
