

# א ביסל תורה!

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ל' שבט תשפ"ה · תרומה

## The Purpose of the משכן

By Benjy Gerber '28

In פרשת תרומה we are told how to build the various parts of the משכן. At the start of the פרשה, ה' tells משה to tell ישראל בני ישראל that they should donate all the materials and it lists the needed materials. Then the תורה says, "וַיֵּצְאוּ לִי מִקֹּדֶשׁ וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְתוֹכָם:" "And they should make me a sanctuary and I will be present among them." But what is the purpose of the sanctuary (משכן)? Why are we going through all this work and effort and donating so much?

A simple explanation is that the משכן was built so that בני ישראל could be raised to a level of holiness to the point that could talk to him in His holy house. We know giving a קרבן is an extremely high level of talking to ה', and the כהנים had to be pure just to make the משכן holy.

ספורנו says that it was so that ה' could more readily answer בני ישראל's prayers and "see" their קרבנות. He also says that ה' would be between the ארון on top of the ארון which made the ארון a visualization of ה' holiness for בני ישראל to see. Then ספורנו talks about how the ארון was a representation of different types of holiness and how the תורה is at the center of it.

חזקוני says that ה' ordered the משכן to be built so that He could have meetings at the right times whether it be with משה, or with אהרן on כיפור. He quotes רשב"ם who says that ה' always has times to talk to people laid out in advance. He goes another step and says that the whole purpose of the משכן is actually for

to be able to more easily talk to ה' and vice versa.

מלבי"ם says that the purpose of the משכן was for ה' to be able to group all בני ישראל in one area. Not only that but at the center would be a building of holiness which מלבי"ם says is how the world to come will look like. Meaning that the משכן was meant as a way to raise the holiness of בני ישראל to a level similar to that in heaven.

Here we see that the משכן was the Holiest structure which we have ever constructed in the history of Judaism. How do we learn from the holiness of the משכן? We learn that in order to achieve holiness you need to try hard. בני ישראל wasn't just given the משכן, they had to donate the resources and assemble it themselves. This is a representation of how we need to put in the time, and effort if we want to reach a high level of holiness or connection with ה'. May we all be able to put in the effort to be able to connect with ה'.

## What is the Difference Between משכן and מקדש?

By Sheva Burstein '27

In this week's פרשה, פרשת תרומה, Hashem tells משה to tell בני ישראל what they need to do in order to make Him a place to dwell. He gives them all types of instructions on what to use to build it and how to correctly build it. When Hashem refers to this place as a מקדש, He says: "וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְתוֹכָם." "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (שמות כ"ה:ח). But then in the next פסוק, Hashem refers to it as a משכן, He says: "כָּכֹל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵרָאָה אוֹתָךְ." "Exactly as I show you—the pattern of the משכן and the pattern of all its furnishings—so shall you make it." This begs the question: what is the difference between a מקדש and a משכן? There are many answers to this question from different commentaries and here are three of them.

The first answer is from אבן עזרא. He explains that the משכן is called a מקדש because it is the משכן of God the Holy. Meaning, Hashem's holiness enters the משכן and makes it a מקדש, a holy place.

Rather than interpreting the משכן and מקדש as one term explaining another, רב הירש makes it clear that the structure בני ישראל are supposed to build will serve two purposes: מקדש, which is sanctification, and משכן, which is closeness to Hashem. He is saying that the משכן and מקדש are the exact same thing and that the difference between them is in their actual function: the מקדש emphasizes the aspect of holiness and sanctification, while the משכן highlights the aspect of Hashem's dwelling among His people. These two terms reflect the double purpose of the structure: it will not only sanctify the people but also bring them closer to Hashem, giving them a way to relate to

Hashem and how He exists within their physical space. These two purposes work together and demonstrate how the physical space of the משכן serves to increase the spiritual connection between the people and Hashem.

Although רבינו בחיי agrees that the two terms relate to each other, he takes a different spin on them. He says that the term מקדש is used to describe the משכן because the fact that the שכינה is dwelling in the משכן is what gives it its holiness and makes it a מקדש. The שכינה's presence changes the human-built משכן into a מקדש, giving it holiness that people could not give it.

This lesson—that the building of the משכן gave בני ישראל the opportunity for the existence of the מקדש—is particularly important in modern times, when we no longer have the משכן or the המקדש. Our Shul serves a similar purpose to the משכן, providing a physical space in which we can feel Hashem's presence and where we can bring increased holiness into our lives through Prayer.



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