



## The Mishkan's Inflated Real Estate

When I sat down to learn some approaches on the parsha this week, I found myself seated not far from a local community Rav, R' Yosef Bromberg. Being someone who delivers a *d'var Torah* multiple times each Shabbos, R' Bromberg seemed to be a useful resource about where to look for ideas to speak/write about on the parsha. And he certainly was, yet he followed up his list of sources with the following disclaimer: "you have to find an idea that *really* grabs you. Sometimes the *vort* you said over last year doesn't speak to you anymore. Or the *d'var Torah* you've been telling each year since yeshiva just isn't catching. Don't use it; it has to be something you're excited about." So, after a few tries, here's what grabbed me.

The Nesivos Shalom, the Rebbe of Slonim (today Belarus), draws out a question that resonates with each of us: the Torah's treatment of the *Mishkan* is highly unusual. The real estate given to this topic on the Torah's parchment seems disproportionate. There are five parshiyos that contain the building and preparation of the *Mishkan*, totaling into the hundreds in number of pesukim! Compare that with, say, the creation of the universe, which spans 56 pesukim. The holy Torah elaborates on the *Mishkan* with painstaking detail: measurements down the  $\frac{1}{2}$  *amah* (25:23), the decorative flower-shaped knob that accents each cup on the *Menorah* (25:33), and a copper-net strip that surrounds the center of the *mizbeach* to name a few. Rashi (26:3) even specifies the type of stitching required to sew the curtain ends to one another!

I want to deepen the question even more; since it's obviously true that Hashem can use tersity or verbosity in the Torah where He sees fit.

1. This particular mitzvah of *Mishkan* is a mitzvah that's only for those generations that lived with it. The Torah tends to give *mitzvot l'dorot*, giving laws that will span the life of the Jewish people.
2. The pasuk writes that Betzalel, the chosen builder of the *Mishkan*, filled him with רוח ודעת אלהים בחכמה ובתבונה ובדעת, "a divine spirit of skill, ability of knowledge". This is a unique gift of knowledge...why is it given to the contractor of the Mishkan?

The Slonimer Rebbe reminds us that our first glance at something is often inaccurate. While the Mishkan, as described, is a physical structure that is meticulously crafted and designed; it is nothing more than a mirror of what's going on in the heavens. Each vessel, large and small, is crafted to represent an energy that exists in *shamayim* and permeates this world through the vessel. Hashem commanded that they "make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them" (25:8); appropriately this home for Hashem has to span both realms- the spiritual and the physical.

This helps with our previous questions.

1. The *Mishkan* is not only for its generation; it's for all generations. The Mishkan's purpose is extended to the Beis HaMikdash, and then to our local *shuls* and *batei medrash* where Hashem dwells.
2. The need for Betzalel's unprecedented level of knowledge was in order to know how "the individual letters of Torah can be combined" to build vessels that represent its heavenly parallel. Nesivos Shalom compares this to an embroidered tablecloth. The tablecloth is decorated with images of, say, flowers and trees. But surely no one would mistake the embroidery for an actual flower. The two have nearly nothing in common! No one expects the embroidery to *be* a flower because you can't actually create a flower in that realm. The Mishkan and all of its parts are the best way one can represent the energy of the heavenly realm down here on earth.

To appreciate the parshiyot of the mishkan, we are asked to see past its physical structure. Just as nobody expects the embroidered flower to look like a real flower; the mishkan's elements can't actually depict its subject. Ironically, in our current era where the media can depict almost anything with an accuracy that has never before been achieved, our *imagination* has been weakened as a result. It's worth our while to second-guess our first impression of the Torah's events, and dig deeper to find its meaning.

Good Shabbos!