


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

**Friday 15 February 2013 - 5 Adar 5773**  
**Sedra Terumah**

### THE SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

**A** LONE WITH G-D ON MOUNT SINAI, MOSES LEARNT THE details of building the Sanctuary, the portable Temple described in the Sedra<sup>1</sup>. This was to be the spiritual centre for the Jews, and eventually for the whole world: the place where the Shechinah, the Presence of G-d, would be revealed.

The Sanctuary was constructed of heavy wooden planks standing upright. Each plank was supported at its base by a heavy block of silver. The plank slotted into this. The upright planks were overlaid with gold and securely fastened together. These planks formed the walls of the Sanctuary, and layers of curtaining formed the roof.

Inside the Sanctuary were the Menorah, a Table and an Altar for incense, all made of gold. Behind a beautifully embroidered curtain was the Holy of Holies, containing the golden Ark. Inside this were the sapphire tablets with the Ten Commandments engraved on them, which Moses brought down from Sinai.

The Sanctuary built by Moses existed long ago, and in the form of the Temple will again be rebuilt in Jerusalem. But there is also an inner Sanctuary, within the heart of every man and woman. The details



In Loving Memory of Mrs Jeanne Gewolb-Sostrin  
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 Dedicated by her Son Dr Roger Gewolb שי'

of the physical Sanctuary described in the Sedra help us understand how we can build this inner Sanctuary, so that the Presence of G-d should be revealed there too, within us.

The acacia wood of which the Sanctuary was made has in Hebrew a strange name. It can be translated as “the wood of folly”.

This helps us understand the purpose of the Sanctuary and of life.

There is a level of ordinary, civilised behaviour. This is the norm. Low, base and callous behaviour means acting in a way which is lower than this norm: this is folly. All sin and evil come from this lower kind of folly.

But there is also another kind of folly, which entails going *above* the norm. This is termed “sacred folly”. Through faith, dedication, devotion and love, the person goes beyond their ordinary level. He or she makes a step which might be exceptional. Imagine a person deciding to put on Tefilin every day, or to change round the kitchen, so as to make it truly kosher.

Judaism is based on the power generated by such decisions. We have survived for thousands of years because of the power of this “sacred folly”, our willingness - occasionally - to go beyond the norm of conventional rationality. The leap forward which we then achieve redeems the blunders and excesses of our lower, unpleasant folly. Bad is changed into good, darkness into light. It is through this process that we build our inner Sanctuary.

This is why the Sanctuary described in the Sedra was built of acacia wood, “wood of folly”. Through the quest to advance we go beyond ordinary reason into the realm of sacred folly, transforming our coarse, worldly folly into something spiritual. Thus we reveal the radiant Shechinah, the Presence of G-d. It illuminates the Sanctuary in our heart, our home, our life and ultimately, from the Temple in Jerusalem, the entire world<sup>2</sup>.

1. Exodus 25:1-27:19. 2. Based freely on the discourse by Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Bati LeGani*, ch.5.

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### *SEDRA TERUMAH*

#### **MY OWN MINI-SANCTUARY**

It was a chilly Saturday morning and Sarah Weinman was on her way to synagogue with her younger brother, Benjy, wrapping her scarf tight around her to keep her warmer. She couldn't wait for spring to come so she could see and feel the sun again.

When they arrived, Sarah made her way over to where her friends were sitting. "You're just in time," Leah whispered, "They are about to start reading from the Torah."

Sarah opened her Chumash and began reading the English translation. This week was Sedra Terumah and she was fascinated by the descriptions of the holy Mishkan, the Sanctuary. As the Rabbi chanted the Torah, Sarah was intently reading the translation.

"Gold, silver and copper, turquoise, purple and crimson wool; white linen... ram skins dyed red, multi-coloured furs and acacia wood.... and incense... onyx stones and other jewels..." Sarah was fascinated by the rich variety of materials the Jews had to collect for the Sanctuary. It had walls of wooden planks covered with gold, and a roof of fine multi-coloured tapestries. A picture began to form in Sarah's mind of what the Sanctuary looked like. It seemed really beautiful!

When the girls came home from the synagogue, they helped their mother prepare the Shabbat meal by setting the table and cutting up vegetables for salads.

Soon, the whole Weinman family was sitting around the table and Mr Weinman made Kiddush. When they were all sitting comfortably enjoying the tasty food, Sarah decided she would share her thoughts about the beauty of the Sanctuary.

“I was reading about the materials they used for the Sanctuary. Did anyone else read about them? It was quite interesting!”

“Yes,” Mrs Weinman agreed, “It must have been amazing.”

“I wish I could help build one myself!” Sarah exclaimed, “I have so many pieces of jewellery I could have donated to help build it, just like the Jewish people did in those times.”

“How generous of you, Sarah!” Mr Weinman chuckled, “But do you know that you can actually build your very own Sanctuary yourself?”

“Really?!” little Benjy asked. “But, will she be able to lift those heavy, heavy planks of wood?”

Everyone laughed. “Well, not quite as literal as that,” Mr Weinman said, “But nearly. When G-d commanded the Jews to build a Sanctuary, it says ‘They should make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell in them’. If you notice, it refers to the Sanctuary in the singular and then it says ‘I will dwell in **them**’, in the plural. That means, inside each person. The Sanctuary is inside each of us. This refers to our own heart, and also our home. When we make our home into a place of Torah learning, acts of goodness and Mitzvot, we create our own mini-Sanctuary, a place where the Divine Presence dwells.”

“That’s amazing!” Sarah remarked. “Well then, I’ll start right now. Mom, you stay right where you are and I am going to do my very own Mitzvah and clear the table while you relax. That will help make our home into a lovely Sanctuary!”

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