

Terumah (Offerings) Dynamic Symbolism, Dynamic Commitment
Torah: Exod. 25:1-27:19

Jewish symbolism appeals to all five senses. It is a **sound** and **light show**; with lots of powerful smells and **tasty treats** and things you could **touch** – even though the presence of G-d was still intangible and unapproachable – you had the sense of His closeness and of His wonder and His desire to be intimately involved with every detail of the people's lives from conception to the grave and beyond.

(1) **25:2:** Willingly offered (from every man whose heart prompts him) It is required that we be willing and not be forced or pressured – not because G-d is optional or that holiness is only relevant to those who agree to uphold it, but because G-d wants servants, not slaves who really want to be elsewhere doing something else.

(2) **25:9:** You shall make the tabernacle and all its utensils according to the model which I will show you (symbolic clarity) (27:8 you shall make the altar hollow, out of boards – you shall make it just as you were shown on the mountain (accurate symbolism). This was not a make it up as you go liturgy of discipleship. Everything represented, clearly and accurately some aspect of the heavenly reality they symbolized.

When we do whatever we do, we have to know what it means – including the mystery, so that it draws us closer to the King and doesn't just occupy our time or cause us to think we are performing magic to cause G-d to appear or to cause Him to hear us or be active on our behalf. We understand that there is a necessary distance between us and G-d, but that we can have contact with Him that is both intimate and safe.

(3) **25:22:** Between the two cherubim on the atonement cover (kaporot) on the ark of the Testimony He will meet and give all of His orders – based on both what He wants us to do (the Ark of testimony) and what He has done for us – as well as what He will do for us – atonement.

(4) **26:6, 11** it shall form a unit – an echad (a composite unity). The composite unity of G-d is testified to in many places in the Scriptures. He is never called Yichad, only Echad. Not that He is like a puzzle that is somehow fit together and can be taken apart, but that He is Echad – with a unique Oneness which appears as the Father, the Spirit and the Branch, the Son.

This is who He is and always has been and always will be forever. Any view of G-d which does not realize His composite unity (Echad) is deficient. Monotheism is a belief in one G-d – and there is only one G-d, eternally existent as Echad – as three in One. We cannot impose our understanding of who G-d is on Him, we have to let this mystery be the cornerstone of our understanding of His trinity.

Haftarah: I Ki. 5:12-6:13

(5) **5:18:** three groups of people prepared the wood, quarried the stones, carried the burdens and supervised the construction for the building 183,000 of them, with as much care an accuracy as the tabernacle – in fact the tabernacle was placed in the temple and the dimensions of the temple followed similar proportions as the tabernacle because it was a similar kind of symbolism, but this time for a permanent location and not for a wandering people.

The same provision and wonder of G-d applies both when we wander and when we settle. The venue may have changed, not the Saviour. He brought them back to the center of the old Garden of Eden and prepared them for the next stage in His redemptive purposes.

(6) **6:1**: 480 years after they came out of Egypt, the temple was finally built. G-d is very patient and very precise and He wants to bring order to our lives however long we take to access His eventually.

Brit Chadashah: 2 Cor. 9:1-15

(7) **9:7** without sadness or obligation. We do not have a temple to build and maintain, but we do have a shul community to build and maintain, but the same principle applies – we have to be willing. Now He will make sure our resources grow to meet our needs – not our wants, but as we trust Him for the practical side of our spirituality, both the practical and the spiritual sides of our lives will grow.

The tabernacle was a magnificent piece of symbolic art which functioned to bring the people into intimate, regular, generational contact with G-d – so the wonder of His presence and the practical sides of their lives were both ordered and focused on their pilgrimage towards their ultimate destination.

The temple was built with the same level and kind of precision so the people would know that they were home in the center of His will, to call all the nations and generations of mankind back to the redeemed, intimate presence of G-d. It was an incredible building – built with similar dimensions to the ark, because even though we may change locations and go through major changes in our own live, He never changes and His agenda for us in B'nai Chayim in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada has not changed.

He wants the same level and kind of intimacy and holiness – and voluntary commitment that He called His people to, both as they gathered around the holy mountain in the wilderness and as they assembled in the holy house 480 years later – and as He calls us to nearly three thousand years later.

How is your intimacy doing?

How is y our holiness doing?

How is your commitment doing?

How is your willingness doing?

As we celebrate Purim and prepare for Passover, may all of us at B'nai Chayim grow in our grasp of His purposes and continue to build (and maintain) with equal beauty and wonder our community of praise, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile – and all the people said: amen.