

# VeAssu Li Mikdash

- Mordecai Zeitz. Divine plans are a result of diverse human action.

Terumah 2006

Be Happy! It's Adar. Our sages teach us: KeSheNichnas Adar Marbin BeSimcha - With the advent of the Hebrew month of Adar, we rev up the volume of joy. I was particularly joyous in being able to welcome Adar this past week with 80 degree temperatures and no snow or ice. It is also a personal joy -- in this Shabbat being Parshat Terumah and coincidentally the 4th of Adar, to celebrate a special personal milestone - VeHamaivin Yavin! I count my blessings and rejoice with another year successfully navigated.

The Portion of Terumah marks the initiation of the building of the Mishkan - the first Sanctuary devoted to the worship of G-d. "VeAssu Li Mikdash" - 'Make for me a Sanctuary' and the details of the component parts fill up the next few portions. There appears to be a lot of Torah space allotted for the design and construction of these pieces. We could really trust the Divine architect that everything fit and skip the details, but no, every artifact, the shulchan, the Ark, the Menorah, the altars, is carefully described in full detail.

The accepted explanation is that the Torah is showing us that it truly works. It's a blueprint that's actually doable. More than that, it's repeated, to emphasize that while there is a time for individual creativity, there is a time for following directions. This was one of those special times.

But more than a physical Sanctuary, we are perhaps being handed a guidebook for successful and meaningful life. `VeAssu Li Mikdash' in the same manner that I have shown you to make the Mikdash for Me (G-d) "?VeAssu" - know, that you, yourself, are a reflection of that Mikdash. What was deemed necessary for the physical construction of the Temple is basic to ones personal growth? a Temple of personal life.

To help us understand this, consider the city person who saw a farmer in action for the very first time. The farmer was driving this huge, loud machine which was, in fact, not only polluting the air and the environment but as well was churning and literally destroying a beautiful field. Leaving deep channels in its wake, the farmer was scattering wheat kernels over the now destroyed field. A waste of land and of good food. No wonder farmers have such problems!

A few weeks later he noticed stalks of wheat growing from those seeds along the rows created by that mad machine. Obviously this was the purpose. But then the farmer came with another machine and cut everything down. Again perplexed, he followed the farmer with his truck full of wheat to the miller where these beautiful stalks of wheat were ground into powder which everyone called flour. He followed his nose to the ovens and witnessed the process of mixing the flour with other ingredients with the final product being bread, the product of our original intention. While the original goal was to bake the bread, it would not be accomplished without all of the individual steps along the way.

Yes, it could have said "Make for me a Sanctuary" and with the power of G-d - all the necessary

pieces would appear and even fit together - with Divine precision. But no! The temple is many things to many different people and each piece was not only necessary in and of itself but each formed an integral piece of the final picture. It needed to emphasize that a Sanctuary needs an Ark and an altar, a Menorah and partitions. They might be Divine plans but they are a result of diverse human action.

"V'Assu" - we make a meaningful and successful life for ourselves if we recognize that there will be times like the Altar, requiring sacrifice. But we dare not remain as martyrs. There is the Shulchan - the table of plenty filled with joy and satisfaction. Indulge a bit.

There are partitions and walls to protect and direct us and an Ark to create opportunities of scholarship for some and a set of instruction for others. There is a Menorah to shed some light in dark times and the Eternal Light to remind us that, as we had a past, as rough as it might have appeared to be, there is, as well, a future for not only us, but for the many peace and freedom loving people in the world, right alongside of us.

V'assu - life is a combination of all the pieces. A realistic Temple of Life is not one emotion or one experience. It is the sum total of all the experiences good, bad and in between that creates a Sanctuary of life. In Adar we pray that there be an abundance of joy, we each richly deserve. Work on it. It doesn't just happen. Be happy - today; for tomorrow; for being able to build a Temple of Life.

Shabbat Shalom, Chodesh Sameach  
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