



## **The Mishkan: A Mutual Abode**

Our Parsha informs us that the people “shall make a sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them” (Sh'mot 25:8). We might then ask how it is possible for the Infinite G-d to dwell in a finite dwelling. How can the Infinite be confined, as it were, into a small space which, to cite Rabbi Avishai David, was to be a permanent, irreplaceable, and exclusive abode for G-d?

One answer is given above: the Sanctuary is for Hashem but, in reality, it serves as a conduit so that the Shechina can dwell within us.

Indeed, for the Ramban, the Mishkan was a receptacle for Hashem's communication with the people, albeit through Moshe who heard G-d's voice through the Cherubim hovering over the Aron HaBrit.

Following Rashi, the Mishkan served as testimony of Hashem's teachings, which is why the Aron would contain the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. For the Rambam, the Mishkan was a rallying point for sacrifices to Hashem (later, the Beit HaMikdash), of particular significance

following the Golden Calf. With all these possibilities, we return to our question: “Behold the highest heavens cannot contain you and surely not this Temple” (Melachim Alef 8:27). For Rabbi David there is no clear answer because, following the Midrash, G-d tells Moshe “your thinking is not my thinking.”

Perhaps, following Kabbala, we might suggest that the all-powerful Hashem is able to “reduce Himself” (the supernal light), as it were, through a process of TZIMSUM, just as tinted glass allows us to view the blinding sun. G-d thus communicates with us so that we might know Him and fulfil His will and bask in the goodness that He wishes to bestow upon us.

Through the Mishkan, we get to share the same abode with Hashem: We are so close that His message filters down to us, while our sacrifices and prayers arch up to His Heavenly throne. The Mishkan is like the Chupa where a mutual bond is created – now between Hashem and his beloved people. **MP**