

"And you shall make the boards for the Mishkan from shittim wood standing upright." (26:15)

The *Midrash* questions the specific use of *shittim* wood for the beams of the *Mishkan*. *Chazal* respond that Hashem has chosen to teach a lesson regarding the proper *derech eretz* one must model when building a house or when undertaking any endeavor which affects others. Hashem chose *shittim* wood which comes from a barren tree. Likewise, when we build, we should use wood which originates from a tree which does not produce fruit.

This *Midrash* is noteworthy. The *Mishkan* is the major source of holiness in this world. Yet, its construction may not affect any other form of "life," even inanimate life. How much more so should we be considerate of the sensitivities of others when we embark upon a new venture. When building an edifice for *Torah*, whether it be a place for *Torah* study or prayer, we should construct it of components which do not infringe upon others. The money and materials must originate from reputable sources. One should never identify himself or his activities with financial sources of questionable repute.