

You shall make the planks of the Mishkan of Shittim wood, standing erect. (26:15)

Chazal teach that the *Kerashim*, Planks, of the *Mishkan* were from a tree, *she'eino oseh peiros*, that was non fruit-bearing. One would think that the edifice from which such holiness emanated would have had walls that symbolized the future. What could be more symbolic of the future than bearing fruit? Yet, this is exactly what the Torah does not want. **Dayan Moshe Swift, zl**, explains that when the walls are comprised of fruit-bearing wood, there is always the fear that one might begin to think that it is the edifice that generates holiness, that the building itself is the primary component. We do not believe there is a difference between a small *shul* in a basement and a large arena with all of the modern innovations. It is what takes place within the environs of the building that determines the future. It is not the building – it is what goes on inside.

Alternatively, the *Chachmei Ha'Mussar*, Ethicists, derive from here that one does not build a *shul*, *yeshivah*, or any organization at the expense of others. As long as the tree bears fruit – it should continue to bear fruit. Why stunt its potential, simply because we need wood for a *shul*? It is so easy to take the shirt off of someone else's back – and use it for our own purposes. How often do we take the liberty to contribute someone else's time and money for a project for which we personally have no time or interest? This is why we use a tree that does not bear fruit – so that we do not deprive it of its continued potential to provide fruit.

We might suggest another idea. Every person has his or her own potential function in life. Sadly, there are those who do not appreciate their G-d-given function and desire that which belongs to others. This causes them to lose out doubly. First, they are not achieving what they could do best; and they are also often preventing the realization of the success of a project, because they insist on a position for which they are not qualified.

The “tree” that was created to bear fruit should continue doing so, for it has a vital life-sustaining function. It is when individuals are dissatisfied with themselves, or are envious of others, that problems surface. If Hashem has designated a specific purpose to an individual, it should become his life's focus.