

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

The walls of the *Mishkan* were formed of huge planks of *Shittim*, acacia wood. The *Midrash* relates that Yaakov *Avinu* foresaw that one day *Bnei Yisrael* would build a *Mishkan* in the wilderness, in a place that evidently did not have such trees growing. He took trees with him when he left for Egypt. He planted these trees in Egypt, instructing his children to take the trees with them when they leave Egypt. It is interesting to note that Yaakov was not concerned about obtaining the various other materials necessary for the *Mishkan*. *Targum Yonasan* explains that these materials were “delivered” to them miraculously by the Heavenly clouds. Why was Yaakov concerned about the pillars, but not about the other materials? Why did he not rely upon a miracle to provide the *atzei Shittim*?

We suggest that a valuable lesson can be inferred from this *pasuk*. The *Kerashim*, planks, formed the foundation of the *Mishkan*. They constituted the walls of the *Mishkan*. When one builds a *Torah* edifice, he should not rely upon miracles. He must apply blood, sweat and tears. He must devote himself totally to creating a *makom Torah*. Then, Hashem will provide the rest. To build a *Torah* institution, one needs more than money. He needs *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice. After one has toiled assiduously and prepared the foundation, he can then anticipate that Hashem will sustain the *makom Torah* that he has built. The raw materials which served as the foundation of the *Mishkan* had been with *Bnei Yisrael* for hundreds of years. Their care and devotion to these materials prepared them for the first *makom Torah*.