

"And tachash skins and shittim wood." (25:5)

Rashi says that the *Mishkan*, its vessels, and the priestly garments were made from thirteen types of raw materials. When we count the materials, however, we find that there were actually fifteen. The commentators offer a number of explanations to reconcile this disparity. Interestingly, *Rashi* questions the desert origin of two of these materials. *Rashi* specifically wonders how *Bnei Yisrael* were able to obtain the *shittim* wood and the *tachash* skins in the desert. He explains that Yaakov *Avinu* brought the *shittim* wood to Egypt for the sole purpose of using it in the future *Mishkan*. The *tachash* was a beautiful, multi-colored animal that existed only at that time and later became extinct. These two materials were different in the respect that the people did not actually bring them. They may have been gifts from Hashem Who created the *tachash* for this purpose. Alternatively, Yaakov *Avinu* might have bequeathed them.

Bearing this in mind, **Horav David Shneur, Shlita**, suggests that this is the underlying meaning supporting *Rashi's* count of thirteen materials. While there were actually fifteen materials, only thirteen of them were direct contributions of the people. The other two either came from Hashem or were handed down from their ancestors.

Horav Shneur infers from this *pasuk* that when we are about to create a *Mishkan*, we must consider the notion that no edifice can have viability if a single person believes that he alone is its initiator and builder. If an individual thinks this way, he falls prey to the devastating spiritual malady of *vzv khjv ,t hk vag hsh omugu hjf*, "It is my power and the strength of my hand that has made for me this army." Delusions of grandeur, arrogance and feelings of invincibility are among the most self-destructive attitudes. In building the House for Hashem -- or any edifice or other endeavor -- one should include three ingredients: his own portion, be it material or personal, his ancestor's portion, and Hashem's portion. These three components must be included, for they all play a vital role in the continued existence and success of the endeavor. This idea applies whether we are about to build a *shul*, a home, a school or any function we undertake. We must maintain our belief that only if Hashem sends His blessing will the endeavor succeed. We also supplement our personal endeavor by building upon the foundation which our ancestors laid for us, with their devotion to Yiddishkeit.

We have only to open our eyes to perceive that the success of the organizations that have been blessed with *Siyata Dishmaya*, Divine assistance, may be attributed to their dedication *l'shem Shomayim*, acting for the sake of Heaven. If one acts solely for the sake of sanctifying His Name, he will be accordingly blessed. Those who foolishly believe that their own power and strength effected their success will achieve only temporary fulfillment.

The area of *z'chus Avos*, merit from our ancestors, is also an integral component upon which to build. The *Briach Ha'Tichon*, middle bar, that extended through all of the beams of the *Mishkan* originated with Avraham *Avinu*, who planted it in Be'er Sheva. Yaakov replanted this tree, which eventually *Bnei Yisrael* took with them when they left Egypt. This beam miraculously wound itself

around the corners through all of the beams. When the *Mishkan* was dismantled, it stood erect once again like the wooden beam that it was. Why was this "beam" *zocheh*? What merit did it have that it should be the prime catalyst for "holding up" the *Mishkan*? Obviously, it was the *z'chus Avos*, the ancestral heritage of Avraham *Avinu* and Yaakov *Avinu* that gave this beam unique qualities.

In comparison to the *Batei Mikdash*, the *Mishkan* was built with very little material expense. Yet, it was never destroyed; it never fell into the hands of our enemies. It was built by Moshe *Rabbeinu*, Betzalel, and our ancestors who were determined to infuse it with a legacy from the past. Neither the money nor the aesthetics alone will bring the *Shechinah* to rest in an abode. The incorporation of man and *z'chus Avos* will bring the third component - Hashem. When a *chasan* says to the *kallah*, "*K'das Moshe v'Yisrael*," according to the law of Moshe and Yisrael," he implores Hashem that his adhering to the laws passed on through the generations will render him worthy of having the *Shechinah* rest in his new home. Only after the Divine component is included in the marriage, will all the blessings which are conferred upon the *chasan* and *kallah* be fulfilled.