

“You shall make the beams of the Mishkan of shittim wood, standing erect.” (26:15)

Rashi notes that it should have said, “You shall make beams.” Why does the *Torah* write *ha’Kerashim*, the beams? He explains that it refers to specific beams, from trees planted by Yaakov Avinu. He carried them down to Egypt and transplanted them there, telling his children to take these trees with them upon their departure from Egypt. The *Midrash* says that these trees were originally planted by Avraham Avinu. *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* says that the *Briach Ha’tichon*, Middle Bar, which miraculously extended from one end of the *Mishkan* to the other was Yaakov Avinu’s “*makeil*,” staff, with which he crossed the *Yarden* River.

Hashem wanted to lend *kedushah*, sanctity, to His Sanctuary. He used Yaakov’s staff, Avraham’s trees. Was it necessary to employ these materials? Was not the mere fact that this edifice was being built *l’shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven, significant? What about the fact that Hashem desired this Sanctuary as the place where His Presence would repose? Does that not lend some sanctity to the *Mishkan*? Why was it necessary to use these foreign materials to assist in establishing the *Mishkan*’s sanctity?

Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita, gleans from here that the most important thing is man’s endeavor, his work that he sanctified through holy intent or purpose. When man sanctifies the material, when he consecrates the mundane, elevating it to a higher spiritual plane, Hashem is pleased. He rests His *Shechinah* on such an edifice.

The foundation stones of this edifice are the *chesed*, kindness, of Avraham Avinu which is represented by the poles derived from his cedar trees and Yaakov Avinu’s ability to suffice with whatever he received from the Almighty. He had no gold, no silver; he had only his staff, a piece of wood – but it is his – which he sanctifies to Hashem. The greatest endeavor is the one that is pure and virtuous. That catalyzes *kedushah*.