

## "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood." (6:14)

The *Torah* recounts the construction of two "structures" the Ark and the *Mishkan*. In a lecture to a group of students, **Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl**, commented that these two structures can serve as metaphors to describe the disparity between Jewish education during pre-World War II Europe and its parallel in contemporary society. The *Mishkan* was an edifice dedicated to spiritual ascendancy. All the people who resided in proximity of the *Mishkan* were "spiritually correct." They were not exposed to harmful environmental influences which were antithetical to their faith in Hashem and His *Torah*. Their commitment to the Almighty was not tested every time that they walked out of the shelter of their home. The *Mishkan*, therefore, served as a place where people could assemble and ascend to greater spiritual heights, to establish a closer bond with holiness.

The Ark served an alternative purpose. It was a vehicle of rescue unto which to save a select group of humans, animals and fowl from certain destruction. While the *Mishkan* was a medium for enhancing one's individual spiritual level, the Ark was a structure without which humanity would have been decimated.

In previous generations, the institutions of *Torah* education served to further develop the students' knowledge of *Torah*. The spiritual climate outside of the school was not adverse to a child's continuing observance. In today's society, however, Jewish Day Schools serve as a means for protecting a Jewish child from the various ills of contemporary society to which he is routinely exposed. Indeed, our *Torah* institutions are similar to the Ark that transported Noach to safety amidst the waves of destruction.