



Text Study Text Study X- Bet

Building the Mishkan (The Tabernacle)

After saying the blessing before study, read the following texts in small groups and discuss the questions that follow.

τφ-σ ευξΠ τκ επΠ ,υνα

ο□φ♣Τfτ∞ν Υφ♣ε :ρ↔ντ□κ τ"υτ±η τ"Υ□μ ρ/θ≤τ ρ□χ♦Σ♥τ τ→ζ
χ□κ ο□φ≤φ κ□φ±υ ♦τ/τη□χ±η ΙΧ□κ χηfσ±β κ↔Φ σ"υ↔ση□κ τ♦νΥρ♣Τ
/τ :τ"υτ±η τ"Υ□μ ρ/θ≤τ κ□Φ ,∞τ ΥΓ□γ≥η±υ Υτ↔χ"η ο□φ□Χ
ρ/θ≤τ κ↔φ±υ ΙΧ□κ Ιτ♦Γ±β ρ/θ≤τ θηfτ κ□Φ Υτ↔χ"H≥υ ι□Φ♣θfN♥τ
 ,□φτ□κ♣ν□κ τ"υτ±η ,♥νΥρ♣Τ /τ Υτη□χ∞τ Ι,↔τ ΙφΥρ τ□χ♣σ"β
 :θ/σ↔Ε♥τ η∞σ±δ□χ□κΥ Ι,♦σ↔χ□γ κ□φ□κΥ σ□γΙν κ/τ↔τ

This is what the Lord has commanded: Take from among you gifts to the Lord; everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring them... And let all among you who are skilled come and make all that the Lord has commanded: the Tabernacle... And everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose spirit moved him came, bringing to the Lord his offering for the Tent of Meeting [the Tabernacle] and for all its service and for the sacral vestments.

Exodus 35:4-11, 21

1. The building of the *Mishkan* (the Tabernacle) was a voluntary effort. Only those who were "moved" were expected to contribute and participate. What is the value of organizing a communal effort this way? What is the downside?
2. In what ways is this similar, and in what ways is it different from how your synagogue and our Jewish communities operate today?

In the building of the Tabernacle, all Israel were joined in their hearts; no one felt superior to his fellow. At first, each skilled individual did his own part of the construction, and it seemed to each one that his own work was extraordinary. Afterward, they saw how their several contributions to the “service” of the tabernacle were integrated—all the boards, the sockets, the curtains, and the loops fit together as if one person had done it all. Then they realized how each of them had depended on the other. They then understood that what they had accomplished was not by virtue of their own skill alone, but that the Holy One had guided the hands of everyone who had worked on the Tabernacle. They had merely joined in completing its master building plan, so that “It came to pass that the Tabernacle was one.” (Exodus 36:13). Moreover, the one who made the holy ark itself was unable to feel superior to the one who had made only the courtyard tent pegs.

Sparks Beneath the Surface: A Spiritual Commentary on the Torah
by Lawrence Kushner and Kerry Olitsky, p. 109-110

3. At what time(s) in your life, if ever, have you worked on a project in which you felt “joined in your hearts” with the other workers? What did it feel like?
4. What are the benefits when people feel like this about their contributions to an effort?
5. How do these texts help you think about taking your first bold step towards realization of your alternative model of children’s Jewish learning?

Please note that God’s Hebrew name appears in this text study. As a sign of respect, instead of discarding it after use you may prefer to store it in a geniza—a place where printed materials containing God’s name and old ritual objects are collected in preparation for ritual burial.