



Torah Reflections: Conversations on the Weekly Parsha
Parshat Terumah 5785 – Building a Dwelling Place for Him

Integrating Torah into one's life through reflection and conversation can be an incredibly fun and engaging experience. It's a journey of discovery, where ancient wisdom and timeless teachings come to life in our daily experiences. Through reflection, we have the opportunity to dive deep into the rich tapestry of Torah, extracting profound insights and lessons that resonate with our modern lives. The joy lies in the 'aha' moments, those instances when a Torah verse or story suddenly connects with our personal challenges, aspirations, and values. And when we engage in conversations about Torah with others, it becomes an interactive exploration, where diverse perspectives and interpretations enhance our understanding. These dialogues often spark excitement and intellectual curiosity, making the learning process both enjoyable and fulfilling. Torah becomes a vibrant and dynamic part of our lives, offering not just guidance but also a source of endless fascination, connection, and growth.

NOTE: Don't feel obligated to go through every source or answer all the questions—unless you want to. Even one source, or one question will give you plenty of material for discussion and meditation. Enjoy this!

Some Thoughts from the Parsha

The construction of the Mishkan was more than just a physical act—it represented bringing G-d's Presence into the world. While the command to contribute was given specifically to the Israelites, the underlying principle speaks to a broader truth: human beings are called to create spaces where the Divine can dwell.

For Noahides, this idea is deeply relevant. Although the Mishkan and later the Beit HaMikdash were built by Israel (who have the commandment to do so), the vision of the Third Temple is one of universality, where all nations will come to recognize and serve G-d:

“For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (*Isaiah 56:7*)

This means that while Jewish sacred institutions must remain uniquely Jewish, Noahides have a role in sanctifying the world by creating spiritual and ethical structures in their own lives and communities. Just as the Israelites gave “from the heart” to build a dwelling place for G-d, Noahides are called to shape their lives in ways that make room for divine awareness, whether through acts of righteousness, relevant Torah study, or spreading Divine Wisdom.

Non-Jewish donations to Torah institutions must reflect an important balance: honoring the distinctiveness of Jewish religious life while finding meaningful ways to support and connect with Torah. The *Mishkan* was built exclusively through the contributions of *Bnei Yisrael*, and is an extension of their covenantal responsibility. Similarly, Jewish institutions must remain fundamentally Jewish in foundation and leadership.

However, Jewish tradition acknowledges that non-Jews can support Torah and divine service in ways that align with their role. In the time of the Beit HaMikdash, non-Jews were permitted to bring offerings (see *Nazir 62a*), demonstrating that sincere devotion is valued. Additionally, the Mishneh Torah (*Hilchot Rotzeach u'Shemirat Nefesh 12:15*) emphasizes that Jewish religious structures should not become dependent on outside support, ensuring that the integrity of Torah remains uncompromised.



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For Noahides, this principle suggests that true spiritual contribution goes beyond financial giving. Instead, Noahides can engage with Torah in ways that strengthen their own divine service while respecting the unique role of Israel. For example, deepening their study of Torah, and aligning their lives with divine wisdom; upholding moral and ethical conduct and making their homes and communities places of justice and holiness; and supporting righteous causes—helping to build a world that reflects G-d’s values.

Parshat Teruma teaches that holiness is built through personal dedication and sincere giving of oneself. The Mishkan was not just a place—it was an idea: that G-d’s presence can dwell wherever people make space for Him. This applies to Noahides as well. Instead of focusing solely on external contributions, Noahides can build a personal Mishkan—a life dedicated to G-d’s truth, where every action becomes part of a greater Divine Purpose. By creating lives of righteousness, faith, and devotion, Noahides prepare themselves and the world for that ultimate reality.

Socratic Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Now, reflect on the following questions:

1. How can you “build a dwelling place for G-d” in your own life and community?
2. What does the idea of the Beit HaMikdash as a “house of prayer for all nations” mean to you personally?
3. How can Noahides meaningfully support Torah while respecting the distinct role of the Jewish people?
4. In what ways does sincere giving—whether time, effort, or devotion—bring us closer to G-d?
5. How does the concept of voluntary, heartfelt contributions in the Mishkan teach us about the nature of genuine spiritual growth?

Shabbat Shalom!