

**Facing Forward, Looking Back: Torah Rededication**  
**Parshat Terumah**  
**February 25, 2023**  
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## Torah Introduction

This verse in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Trumah, contains a famous grammatical problem.

V'Asu Li Mikdash V'Shachanti B'tocham

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם:  
(Exodus 25:8)

God says, Build me a sanctuary so that I may dwell in them.

בְּתוֹכְכֶם  
B'tocham.  
Them??

Shouldn't it be בְּתוֹכוֹ/B'tocho, Build me a sanctuary so that I may dwell in it?  
What is this them that God is hoping to dwell in?

The teaching offered by the commentator Ibn Ezra is that the בְּתוֹכְכֶם/b'tocham is not the Sanctuary. The sanctuary is not where God is going to dwell, but rather, that בְּתוֹכְכֶם/B'tocham, that inside of them is הָעַם בְּתוֹךְ/B'toch HaAm inside of the people and בְּתוֹכֵנוּ/B'tochenu, inside of us. We people who live in the material world experience God through the material world. And it is through our actions that we can feel God's presence in the world and that is why we have a parsha dedicated to the details of the construction of the Mishkan because it is through the intricate and specific ways that we interact with our material world that we are able to glimpse that there is this larger mystery behind all of our existence:

The gold and the silver and the copper  
blue, purple, and crimson yarns  
The linens, the leathers, the acacia wood

As we imagine the building of the temple, we imagine each person giving the objects that they most desired to contribute because as the text teaches us that God tells Moses:

מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנֵהוּ לְבָבוֹ תִּקְחוּ

that each person should bring as they are moved by their own hearts. As a result, the Mishkan is built of materials that each person is deeply moved by.

In Today's service, we get to celebrate a precious object that has moved the hearts of many people here, as well as many people who are not here. That object is known humbly as Scroll #345, one of the 1,564 Torah scrolls rescued by the Jewish community of Prague during World

War II. Like the Mishkan, it is made of wood and leather, decorated with beautiful fabrics and adorned with shining metals, which you will get to see in just a few moments.

I imagine each Torah scroll as a descendant of the Mishkan, carrying down its traditions with its inheritance of shining metals, colorful fabrics, and sturdy wood. At the same time, Torahs have their own aesthetics that make each of them unique. They function very differently than their great great great aunt the Mishkan, but they remain connected in that they also help us to access the Divine presence in our lives.

So I imagine today kind of like a re-enactment of the day that the Mishkan was established. Today was only possible because this Torah scroll moved so many people's hearts to generosity including Amelia and Aubrey Jay, Charley and Sheila Jay, Zara and Charles Brenner, Elissa Hozore and Charles Locke, Elise and David Saltzberg, Cheryl Kaplowitz and Irwin Weiss, Alan Cohen, and many others. And after so much effort of love by many people, the big day has finally arrived. We can hardly believe it. We will finally be able to bring the words of this Torah back to life.

We, like our Torahs, today become inheritors. We are all inheritors of this Torah, of Scroll #345. When we received this scroll, it was turned to this very parasha, to Parashat Trumah. So we can imagine that we are picking up this scroll exactly where it was put down by our Czech ancestors. We all have the honor and responsibility of remembering their history and of carrying on this Torah's legacy.

Today's Torah service will begin a little differently. Amit will teach us a niggun. We will then escort the Torah in through the center aisle. It is the tradition in many synagogues on the day of a Bnei Mitzvah to pass the Torah from the oldest relatives in the family down to the next generation down to the bnei mitzvah, symbolizing passing on the inheritance of our sacred tradition dor l'dor, from generation. We too will pass the Torah from one person to the next. So in a few moments, I invite anyone who would like to be part of this chain of transmission by finding a place in the center aisle. As we sing and pass the Torah along, I invite you open yourself to our Torah and all that it has to offer. What parts of this Torah's story speak to you? What about it animates you and makes you come alive?