

Cong. Etz Chaim's
Torah at the Table
Parshat Teruma

In his famous work, Nefesh Hachayim, Rav Chaim Volozhiner (1749-1821) writes beautifully on the pasuk in this weeks Parsha "וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם:

"And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them."

He says:

For this reason, definitely the focal point of holiness and the Holy Temple, and the appearance in a particular place of the Sh'kheena, is man. For if he makes himself as holy as is possible by fulfilling all of the commandments, then he becomes the actual Holy Temple, and within him is Hashem, as it says: "and I will dwell within them"—it does not say "among them" but rather "within them."

Rav Chaim Volozhiner is telling us that the commandment to build the Mishkan, the resting place of Hashem, is not just a physical building that must be built, but we need to make ourselves into a Mishkan, a sanctuary, for Hashem to dwell within us as well.

What do you think are the necessary "pieces" for us to have in our Mishkan?

Who would you want to serve in your Mishkan? Are there people who "bring you up" when you are around them? Make you a better person?

The focal point of the physical Mishkan was the Kodesh Kodashim with the Aron inside. What would be at the middle of your Mishkan? Is there a specific mitzvah, goal, or ideal that would be your focal point?

