

A REAL STORY IN THE MAKING

by Rabbi Label Lam

"And they shall make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them." (Shemos 25:8) It's a big wonder that the Torah spends so much ink on the description of the construction of the Tabernacle which was a one-time event in history that seems to have little relevance or practicality for us today. Yet we recite nightly, "It is our life and the length of our days..." There are many other important details about Shabbos or the construction Tefillin that would be much more valuable, seemingly for us to know about and yet they are relegated to the Oral Torah after an abbreviated phrase. Why does the Torah take almost 4 and ½ Parshios to tell us how the Mishkan was built?

The Chofetz Chaim remarked that on a map of the world you'll find the names of big cities like New York, Paris, Tokyo, etc. shown in large print on the map. In Heaven G-d has His map of the world and there is Jerusalem, Vilna, Radin, etc. in his day and Jerusalem, Brooklyn, Queens, Lakewood, Bnei Brak, and Monsey in our time. These are the special places where The Almighty has His people who are quietly learning, and praying, and carrying out His will ever so discretely within the four cubits of Hallacha.

By extension, perhaps we can say that there is a newspaper on earth and we know already what's in the worldly paper. It's a constant recycling of the most sensational combination of jealousy, appetite, and glory seeking. We don't have to guess about the heavenly map either. The Torah is a record of that which catches the Almighty's attention. Whatever is most treasured is most often repeated, like the story of Eliezer the servant of Avraham, loving the convert, and the Exodus from Egypt.

Now we get to a practical point. In a parenting class my wife and I received a most useful piece of advice. If ever children are acting up during meal time, rather than attending immediately to the trouble maker(s), turn attention to the ones acting civilly. "Look how nice Sara is sitting!" "See how Eli is eating so carefully!" etc.

Rather than noticing the rebels and thereby and inviting others too, ignore them. Encourage the good quiet behavior. Give proper attention to those who are doing what they are supposed to be doing. It works like this in class daily and at assemblies as well. Just point out the how much you appreciate some display of good behavior and suddenly there is a contagion of cooperation that spreads like whipped butter on warm bread. It works! Just try it!

By the way, by failing to do this, the news media is complicit in and even responsible for promoting

terrorism and other miscreant behavior in the world by giving free advertisement and attention to their ruinous causes.

When it comes to the construction of the Tabernacle in the dessert, we have a unique event in human history. There is a group of people, a whole nation in fact, working in cooperation, setting aside egos, personal opinions, and political agendas while using their unique talents and resources to create a place for G-d in this world and all according to Divine specs. That action is newsworthy in Heaven. The Torah focuses enormous attention on the good news!

During the time when these Torah events actually occurred there were no doubt presidential scandals, wars, and social upheaval, but that's not new, and it's not news. What's new and what's really news is not the child shouting at the dining room table and disrupting. It's natural to rant and rave, setting the whole house into a state of chaos, and it's not unusual for the parent to obsess only on that.

What would be new and news worthy is the wisdom of a parent who fixes his or her gaze of love on the good one with only a few spots on his shirt and the one who is quietly contributing to the harmony of the family orchestra.

There is a great temptation to be distracted by only the sensational and the silly. If one can remember to search for better behavior and highlight that, there is **a real story in the making**.

DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.