

Building the Holy Place

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם

Va'asu li mikdash, v'shochanti b'tocham

Make for Me a Holy Place so that I may dwell within, among,
between them. (Exodus 25:8)

For me this is a central commandment of Torah. It is my life's purpose. I know that when I make my heart, my body, my energy field, my relationships, my communities, my world into a Mishkan- a dwelling place for the Divine Mystery Then God will indeed be invited to dwell within. My heart becomes a holy place when I bring attention, care and healing to its unending capacity for love and connection. My body becomes a holy place when I honor its rhythms, listen and respond to its messages, and know its perfection. My energy field becomes a holy place when I attend to its integrity, transparency and resilience. My relationships become holy places when I meet others with compassion, curiosity, openness and truth. My communities become holy places when we connect with each other in service, humility, joy and friendship. My world becomes a holy place when I open my eyes to beauty and my heart to meaning and purpose.

When I chant I am building a holy place so that in the silence after the chant, Shechina / God's indwelling Presence can enter. Each chant becomes a model for how I might build and strengthen the Mishkan of heart, body, energy field, relationship, community and world.