

# Torah Portion Preview for T'rumah

*Shabbat beginning February 24, 2023*

T'rumah (gifts) begins with "Accept gifts for Me from every person who is so moved...And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell (v'shachanti) among them." Among the gifts called for were precious metals, yarns, skins, wood, oil, spices, and gems. Detailed instructions followed for building the Ark, its cover, table, and lampstand, surrounding these with a tabernacle covered by a tent and undergirded with planks connected by bars, and enclosing all within a curtain that contained a screen and the altar.

In the *Women's Commentary*, Rabbi Ruth Gais points out the connection between v'shachanti, mishkan, and Shechinah as dwelling, tabernacle, and female aspect of God, which mediates between heaven and earth. Torah chanting is a kind of giving to the Shekinah. Most of us gradually learn to pronounce Hebrew phrases or rely on sources like dictionaries and translations. Rabbi Michael Stevens inspires synagogue Torah chanters to translate each phrase, even chanting the English. We may take many daily practice sessions to learn several verses and still read with an accent. Yet, considering that answering foreigners in their language, even if slowly with an accent, is a welcoming gift, Torah chanters experience such giving with the Shechinah.