

- It's clear from our Gemara, that there is a special "ingredient" we all need in order to properly build our own Mishkan.
- Before we even try to explore WHAT to put in to it, we need to know first HOW to build it.
- We need to appreciate "**minhago shel olam**," the way the real world works practically and through the use of common sense.
- Just as Betzalel told Moshe that the kaylim needed a "house" to protect them before they could be built, we too need a "house" around the kaylim we hope to construct. That "house" is understanding how the world around us works and through common sense. It involves appreciating the "nuts and bolts" of how things function and happen in this world.
- Moshe knew what needed to be built "intellectually" and "in the air," but it took Betzalel to "ground him" in how the Mishkan needed to be built "down here."
- **We need to become connoisseurs of "minhago shel olam"**—we need to be deeply grounded in reality and practicality.
- Example 1: It means being mature enough to know that staying up to learn until 2AM will likely lead to you having too little sleep, possibly missing Shacharit, being grouchy, and negatively impacting your ben adam l'chavero the following day.
- Example 2: A great Rosh Yeshiva was once invited to come to Moodus, CT for a kiruv trip run by Rabbi Rosenberg. Rebbe (Rabbi Gershenfeld) asked to pick him up from the train, but Rabbi Rosenberg said he didn't think it would work out. Quite puzzled, Rebbe asked why not. Rabbi Rosenberg, who never minced words, explained that the great Rosh Yeshiva was going to get lost because—in spite of his great knowledge of Torah—he didn't know how the world runs. Rebbe thought Rabbi Rosenberg was perhaps exaggerating a bit, so he went to the train station to pick up the great Rosh Yeshiva, and, sure enough, the train arrived and the Rosh Yeshiva never got off the train... so Rebbe raced to meet him at the next station the train was set to arrive at. Out of respect for the great Rosh Yeshiva, Rebbe never told us how many stops the Rosh Yeshiva missed, but you can imagine...
- Knowing how the world runs, and being able to properly operate within it, is the first step to properly building your Mishkan.
- We cannot be "stuck in the clouds" (or even a sefer!) all day long without seeing the ramifications of our actions. At some point, we need to "get off the train," "arrive at our destination," and make life happen.

What Should Be Inside Our Mishkan?

- Once we create the “house” for our “kaylim”—by learning how to practically operate in this world—we can start building the kaylim to put in our Mishkan.
- Each of the kaylim in the Mishkan represent: 1) an aspect of life or 2) a middah that Hashem asks us to 3) involve ourselves in or 4) work on and acquire.
- **The Kerashim (Beams)** that held up and supported the Mishkan were made from shoteh wood (literally “foolish” wood). Why? Rebbe tells us that from this wood, we learn how to approach our negative traits.
 - We need to take our own “foolishness” and carve it into something beautiful and useable in the world.
 - By understanding the nature of a fool, we can learn how to do this: fools tend to say falsehoods, “sheker.” When we rearrange the letters in that word (ר-ק-ש) and put them in their correct alphabetical order, they spell “keresh” (ש-ר-ק).
 - The Takeaway: When a person takes the time to reorder his thinking and strips away the falsehoods residing within him, the mature and well-developed thoughts that remain can solidify into the very beams that hold up his internal spiritual world. In this sense, they form the kerashim of your own personal Mishkan.
- **The Menorah** represents Torah Sh’Baal Peh, and the ornaments of the Menorah show us how to properly learn Torah: Cups (learning a lot), Globes (containing and remembering a lot via chazarah), and Flowers (making chiddushim, but ONLY after the first two are solidified can we do this) [Rav Immanuel Bernstein].
- **The Aron** represents Torah Sh’Bichtav - “Ohr” means light or illumination; we need to be a positive light for others and the world by living Torah in a way that inspires others and positively impacts the world (our Bonfire Shiur: be an “illuminator,” not a “consumer”).
- **The Shulchan** and the lechem ha’panim symbolize making a parnasah. Contrary to how some think, Hashem DOES want you to make parnasah for your family! He put a Shulchan in the Mishkan—with lechem on it; make sure that you have the ability to do the same for your family.
- **Red-Dyed Ram Skins** were used to make a covering for the Mishkan. Rebbe has said that red connotes self-sacrifice, putting your blood, sweat, and tears into what you are striving after and fearlessly pursuing it.