

## Terumah: Exodus 25:1-22

### *Moses built an arky arky*

Rashbam

The Israelites were so anxious to contribute that they did not wait until the High Court organised all this, but they approached Moses personally bringing with them so many contributions that Moses was forced to call a halt to this (36.5). This was also the reason that there was nothing left for the princes of Israel (the tribal chiefs) to contribute other than the gemstones for Aaron's breastplate and the various oils making up the "oil of anointing. God commanded that the procedure should not be like the imposition of every man's contribution for the public charity fund which was treated as a tax. Contributions were to be accepted only from volunteers.

The word "zot" means that no substitutes for the materials listed would be acceptable. Even the kind of gemstones (pearls, for instance) not usable for Aaron's breastplate, were not accepted. The only type of contributions that were accepted were those that in themselves would be used in the construction of the Tabernacle and its paraphernalia.

I will dwell among them permanently in order to receive their prayers and their sacrificial offerings in a manner similar to the way I displayed My presence at the mountain.

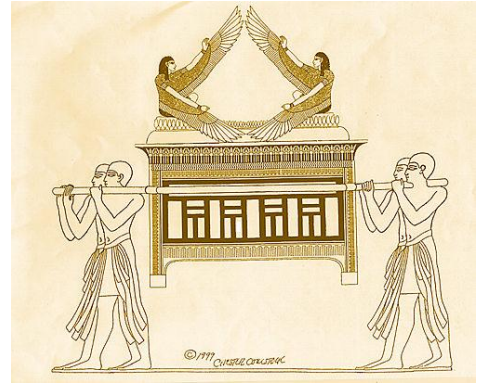
Seforno

Henceforth My presence will be manifest between the two cherubs on the lid of the Holy Ark as part of the overall Structure called the Tabernacle. The author perceives of different degrees of holiness, just as the Kabbalists perceive holiness in the extra terrestrial world as consisting of



spiritually progressively higher different levels. The outer structure known as "the format," visual image, lead up to the cherubs in the innermost part of that structure. The very concept of the Tabernacle leads the intelligent viewer to conclude that hidden deep within it God's presence must be manifest.

The terrestrial Tabernacle, if viewed as parallel to God's throne in the celestial domains, contained different sections of progressively higher levels of sanctity which progressively restricted the type of people allowed to approach those levels. The Torah itself, for which the Holy Ark served as repository, was in an ark constructed of wood but overlaid with gold on the inside and on the outside, to reflect the saying of our sages that every Torah scholar whose external appearance did not reflect his internal stature is not a Torah scholar at all.



The levels of sanctity in the Tabernacle, beginning already with the courtyard around it, were not sealed off from one another, but, on the contrary, were connected to one another all the way to the innermost sanctuary to demonstrate that sanctity is attainable progressively.

On top of the physical box containing the spiritual teaching, the Torah, there was placed a lid also made from pure gold which symbolized the image of God. This lid was not linked, attached, to the ark itself at all. The detached nature of this "lid" symbolized that at a certain level of holiness there is no longer a physical bond with the human body, with the terrestrial domain, a domain which is essentially mortal, i.e. requiring regeneration from time to time.

