

**Ex. 25:1** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart so moves him. <sup>3</sup> And these are the gifts that you shall accept from them: gold, silver, and copper; <sup>4</sup> blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats' hair; <sup>5</sup> tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood; <sup>6</sup> oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; <sup>7</sup> lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. <sup>8</sup> And let them make Me a sanctuary [מִקְדָּשׁ] that I may dwell [וַיִּשְׁכְּנֵנִי] among them. <sup>9</sup> Exactly as I show you—the pattern of the Tabernacle [תְּבַלְתֵּן] and the pattern of all its furnishings—so shall you make it.

William H. C. Propp, *Exodus* (Anchor Bible)

**<sup>8</sup>And they shall make for me a Sanctum, and I will tent in your midst.**

**25:8 [Textual Notes].** *I may tent.* LXX paraphrases “I will appear.”

**Ex. 25:8 [NETS]** and I shall appear [ὁφθῆσομαι] among you [future, passive, indicative]

Nahum Sarna, *Exodus* (JPS Torah Commentary)

**8. dwell** Careful analysis of the language used here is essential for a proper understanding of the underlying concept and role of the sanctuary. First, the text speaks of God dwelling not “in it,” that is in the sanctuary, but “among them,” that is, among the people of Israel (v. 2). Then, the verb “to dwell” is not the common Hebrew stem *y-sh-v* but the rarer *sh-k-n*, which has a different connotation. This verb conveys the idea of temporary lodging in a tent and characterizes the nomadic style of life. That is why the structure is called a *mishkan* (e.g., v. 9) and why the verbal form is frequently used together with *'ohel*,<sup>23</sup> the common word for “a tent,” and in connection with nomads. The noun *mishkan* is often employed in synonymous parallelism with *'ohel*, and the other designations of the wilderness Tabernacle are the “Tent of the Pact” and the “Tent of Meeting.”

Thus, the sanctuary is not meant to be understood literally as God’s abode, as are other such institutions in the pagan world. Rather, it functions to make perceptible and tangible the conception of God’s immanence, that is, of the indwelling of the Divine Presence in the camp of Israel, to which the people may orient their hearts and minds. A postbiblical extension of this usage of the verb *sh-k-n* is the Hebrew term *shekhinah* for the Divine Presence.

Jeffrey Tigay, “Exodus.” *Jewish Study Bible*

**8: Sanctuary:** The sanctuary is referred to by three main terms, each expressing different aspects of it: “mikdash” (“sanctuary”), lit. “holy place,” “sanctum,” referring to its sacred dimension; “mishkan” (“Tabernacle”), lit. “abode,” referring to it as God’s dwelling (v. 9 and frequently); and “’ohel mo’ed” (“Tent of Meeting”), referring to it as an oracle site, the place where God would communicate with Moses (29.42–43; 30.6, 36; cf. 33.7–11; 25.22 n.; cf. 29.45–46 n.). “Sanctuary” refers to the entire compound described below—the covered structure and the courtyard surrounding it. “Tabernacle” and “Tent of Meeting” sometimes refer to the entire compound and at other times only the covered structure (see also 26.1; 27.19). *That I may dwell among them*, rather, “that I may abide among them,” the same verb as that used in 24.16, “the Presence of the LORD abode on Mount Sinai.” This verb and the Heb word for Tabernacle (“mishkan”; see above) are from the same root, as is “Shekhinah,” a term for the divine Presence in later Jewish tradition.

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**25:8.** *I may tent.* LXX paraphrases “I will *appear*.” Presumably, the Diasporic translators were uncomfortable with God permanently residing in a single place (Wevers 1990: 395). We find the same trend in *Tgs. Ongelos* and *Ps.-Jonathan*, which paraphrase, “I will make my Presence settle among them.”

*in your midst.* Reading *btwkkm* ‘in your (pl.) midst’ with Sam, LXX and *Bib. Ant.* 11:15, against MT *btwkm* ‘in their midst.’ It is hard to judge which reading is more probable. My preference for the slightly difficult Sam assumes that MT has leveled the third person plural from earlier in the verse (*wəʿāsû*) and/or committed a simple haplography (*kk > k*).

#### Notes

**25:8.** *Sanctum.* *Miqdāš*, literally “holy place” (< *qdš* ‘to be holy’), denotes any place Y`hweh is wont to appear, most often the Temple.

*tent.* Not the ordinary verb for habitation, *yāšab*, but the more specialized *šākan*, associated with tent-dwelling (Cassuto 1967: 345–46; Cross 1961b: 225–27; Sarna 1986: 197).

*in your midst.* We would have expected “in *its* midst” i.e., within the Tabernacle (Sarna 1991: 158). For P, it is crucial that Y`hweh, despite his unapproachable holiness, should dwell in the middle of the camp, imparting some of his sanctity to Israel (Lev 15:31; 16:16; 22:32; 26:11–12; Num 16:3; 18:20; 35:34); see below, pp. 686–91.

**25:9.** *the Tabernacle’s.* While *miškān* at times metaphorically connotes any habitation, even a tomb (Isa 22:16; Ps 49:12) or an animal’s lair (Job 39:6), there is a clear association with tent-dwelling, hence the traditional rendering “Tabernacle” (< Latin *tabernaculum* ‘tent’). In general, the root *škn* connotes transitory encampment, as opposed to the more permanent *yšb* ‘sit, inhabit, reside (in one place)’ (Gen 9:27; Judg 8:11; Isa 13:20; Ps 78:55; Job 11:14; 18:15). *Miškān* often parallels *’ohel* ‘tent’ or *maḥāne(h)* ‘camp’ both in Hebrew (Num 16:24–27; 24:5; 2 Sam 7:6; Isa 54:2; Jer 30:18; Ps 15:1; 78:28; Job 21:28) and in Ugaritic (*KTU* 1.15.iii.18–19; 17.v.32–33). Both *’ohel* and *miškān* interchangeably denote the wilderness Tabernacle, and they may even stand together, as in 40:2, 6: *miškan ’ohel-môʿēd* ‘the Meeting Tent Tabernacle.’ For cognates, Akkadian *maškanu* and Aramaic *maškənā* can similarly denote a tent or canopy; compare also Arabic *maskan* ‘abode’ (< *sakana* ‘rest, be still’). Even Greek *skēnē* ‘tent’ may be a borrowing of this Semitic term (Homan 2002: 11–12 n. 23).

**RASHI [to 25:8]:** **Make Me a sanctuary.** Make a sanctified home for My Name.

**RASHBAM:** **A sanctuary.** The word implies a place set aside for meeting; “I will sanctify and prepare Myself for them, to speak from within it.” See 29:43, “There I will meet with the Israelites, and it shall be sanctified by My Presence.”

**GERSONIDES:** **Let them make Me a sanctuary.** It is called a sanctuary because it is a place sanctified to the service of God, and serves as proof of His reality.

Joshua Garroway, “Sukkot, the Festival of Future Redemption for Jews and Gentiles”

The Greek verb for “shelter,” *skēnoō*, is a version of the noun *skēnē*, the Septuagint’s translation for the Hebrew סוכה, *sukkah*.

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