



**Parashat Terumah**  
**1 Kings 5:26-6:13**  
**February 21, 2015 / 2 Adar 5775**

One would think if someone was planning on building a house, or an office or a Temple, they would go through a process before they began the work in order to insure they could afford the project. I know when I did some work on my home, an architect was engaged, bids from construction companies were solicited and a plan was created in line with my budget. Not so Solomon.

While one can easily discern the reasons for this text being chosen, if one looks a little deeper, at the beginning and the end of the haftarah, a different lesson can be learned. The text begins by informing us that God has given Solomon the wisdom he had been promised; a wisdom which must not have been fully engaged when he embarked upon a building project that would bankrupt his nation, forcing him to cede villages and trade routes to Hiram of Tyre. The text doesn't address the forced labor issue, the feelings families must have been when they were separated from one another, though the population shifts indicated in the text could have been an example of the wisdom of a progressive ruler. This could be an indication that "wisdom" needs to be understood in the context of the time.

The haftarah concludes, after the Temple had been completed, a process of years, at which point God once again speaks to Solomon. This is what he says, if you follow my ways, observe my rules, and faithfully keep my commandments, I will live with you and won't forsake my people.

Interesting, after years of construction, after accumulating serious debts, the work is still incomplete. In order for the Temple, the symbol of the Man/God relationship, to remain and for God to continue to dwell within it and protect his people, appropriate behavior is demanded. Perhaps the Temple, a building which must have been the centerpiece of the city, was needed to serve as an inspiration and a constant reminder to the people and its leadership how they should behave. And perhaps, like most symbols, it was too distant. Too easy to view it as just another building.

Perhaps the lesson to be learned is that symbols, reminders, must be presented in a different, more intimate way if they are to achieve the desired effect.

*This week's Haftarah commentary was written by Rabbi Simon, Executive Director of the FJMC and author of numerous books, including "Understanding the Haftarot. An Everyperson's Guide"*

*and "The Non-Jewish Spouse: Strategies for Clergy and Lay Leadership". [Both of these books are available in the FJMC on-line store]*