✡Shabbat Shalom.✡

 My Torah portion is Naso. It is found in Numbers 4:21-7:89. I will be discussing the function of the tabernacle, a portable sanctuary built by the Israelites, who were nomadic at the time. The Israelites were wandering the desert because they had recently escaped from slavery in the land of Egypt and had not yet reached The Promised Land.

Earlier in the Torah, G-d instructed the Israelites to build a sanctuary. The Torah states that G-d said to Moses, “And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” I believe that the sanctuary was not required for G-d to dwell among humans because G-d is everywhere. Instead, the sanctuary was required for the Israelites, so that they would have a more central place of worship.

Often, humans have a need for a building in order to worship. Humans also tend to find an importance in ordinary buildings. For example, my house is just an ordinary building, but my family finds it to be an important place because it is what we consider home. Similarly, we place significance on structures like capitals, museums, concert halls, and schools. Sometimes we even name them after popular people. For example, Temple David just named a religious school classroom after Arnold Blum, an important person in the forming of Temple David. Like capitals, museums, concert halls, and schools, a sanctuary serves a purpose, but it is not the only place where we can worship G-d. Just as we can observe music and art outside of concert halls and museums, we can pray in many different places. The reason we build sanctuaries is because we need an inspiring environment to pray, learn, and find comfort in. Sanctuaries also give us a place to share life cycle events with our community and give support to others within it.

I also believe that the sanctuary symbolizes the relationship between the Jews and G-d. The Jews had a very strong relationship with G-d at Mount Sinai. When they left Mount Sinai, they became lost in their lives, much like people do today. The Jews created the sanctuary, seeking to live their lives by the commandments of Torah. When the Jews followed the commandments, they experienced G-d’s protecting presence symbolized by the eternal light. The sanctuary is more than just a building. It symbolizes the covenant between G-d and the Jews. The Jews were rewarded for observing the mitzvot of their contract with G-d, by knowing that G-d dwells among them. What has kept the Jews together throughout all of this time is a common history, culture, and hope.

In conclusion, the sanctuary can function as a house of prayer, a house of study, and a house of assembly. It is the place where Jews meet to celebrate and worship together and it is the place where Jews educate themselves, their children and their children’s children. It is also the meeting place between G-d and the Jewish people. The sanctuary is the most significant building of Jewish tradition.

Temple David is a great place, but we can improve it while making ourselves better people. One way we can improve our temple is by devoting our time and ideas and by attending services. Other ways we can better ourselves and temple is by helping out in the community. If Temple David congregants do good deeds in the community, it will give the temple a good reputation. Also, like the Tabernacle, we can make temple portable by carrying its principles with us and setting a good example for those around us. No one can be perfect, but things can always be made better. That is why we need to support Temple David for both our own benefit and the benefit of the community.

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I would like to acknowledge the people that have given me support throughout this past year. I would like to thank my Hebrew tutor, Mrs. Bortz, Rabbi Symons, and all of my religious school teachers for teaching me Hebrew, helping me learn my Torah portion and the prayers, and advising me on any other things that I needed help with. I would like to thank my parents and family members, too, for supporting me while I studied and worked toward this opportunity. Also, I would like to thank Sisterhood for supplying the wonderful food we are about to eat. Finally, I would like to t**h**ank the choir, my friends, and all congregants for coming here. I appreciate all of you coming to our place of worship, Temple David, to join in community as I become a Bar Mitzvah.

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