

out in such a manner that it ignores the welfare and emotions of others is missing a vital ingredient that renders it spiritually flawed.

What is the cause of such spiritual discrepancy? Why do some people perform *chesed* successfully, earning the accolades not only of the beneficiaries of their good work, but also of the entire community? Others, however, try and simply do not realize the fruition of their wonderful work. It all depends on the acceptance and integration of a *pasuk* in our *parshah*. *V'asu li Mikdash v'shochanti b'socham*, "And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall repose among them" (*Shemos* 25:15). What is the true purpose of my endeavor? Am I doing it for Hashem, or to garner attention for myself? When I seek the limelight, I have no reason, no desire, to share my time with anyone else. I am too busy promoting myself. If, however, I am acting Li, "for Me"/Hashem, then I act no differently than He would act. When Hashem provides *chesed*, or asks for us to do something for Him, He always takes into consideration the emotions and sensitivities of the little "guy." Someone who is all filled with himself has no room for Hashem.

An American Jew decided to take a "spiritual" vacation together with his wife. What better and more inspirational place is there than *Eretz Yisrael*? He figured that if he were to imbibe all the *ruchiniyos*, spirituality, that the Holy Land has to offer, he should first arrange to have all of his materialistic needs addressed. He wanted to remain focused on spirituality and sanctity – nothing else.

He called a real estate broker and gave him his "order": a five-room apartment, with air conditioning; religious neighbors – but not too *frum*, observant; a parking garage; a *shul* nearby; and, of course, a supermarket that carries all of the American products. The real estate agent immediately went to work and located the perfect apartment in the perfect neighborhood with all the necessary accretions. Everything seemed perfect – until the day of arrival.

Mr. & Mrs. Ploni landed in Ben Gurion Airport and immediately took a *monit*, taxi, to their destination. They walked into their apartment and were surprised that it was "lived" in. There were people there – specifically, a young mother and her three children, who had just finished lunch. "Why are you here?" the man asked the young mother. "I live here," she replied. "Why are you here?" she asked. "I rented this apartment for two months! That is why I am here!" he responded somewhat emphatically.

The American tourist called the real estate agent, and, before he could issue a word of complaint, the agent asked, "So, how is the apartment? Is it not exactly what you asked for? Five rooms, great view, wonderful neighborhood. What more can a person want?"

The American was dumbfounded, but he was able to blurt out, "But there is a family living here!" The agent was taken aback. "One second, you never mentioned that the apartment had to be empty!"

V'asu li Mikdash v'shochanti b'socham: Anyone

can build a Sanctuary for Hashem – and he sincerely thinks that he has prepared a wonderful abode for the Almighty. The problem is that the sanctuary that he has created within himself is not empty. It is filled with his *Ani*, "I," "me". He is filled with himself – his anger, arrogance, unwarranted hatred for others, all of the flawed character traits that represent him. If we want Hashem to repose in our *Mishkan*, we must clear "ourselves" from it, to make room for Him.

Va'ani Tefillah

מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל – **Mekabeitz nidchei amo Yisrael. Who gathers together the dispersed of His nation Yisrael?**

Each and every Jew has spiritual potential. These spiritual energies or sparks of holiness, *nitzozos*, are *mischanelled* when we do not use our spiritual potential properly. Thus, we are unable to experience the full experience of life due to a limited supply of spiritual energy. We pray to Hashem that He gathers our personal sparks and brings back all of the spiritual energies to their proper potential.

Similarly, when Adam *HaRishon* sinned, he caused the *tzinoros hashpaah*, Heavenly channels of holiness, to shatter, thereby spreading sparks of holiness throughout the world, where they are not imprisoned inside *klipos ha'tumah*, shells of impurity. *Yaaros Devash* explains that when we perform *mitzvos*, we extract the sparks of holiness from captivity. The Final Redemption will occur when all of the sparks of holiness have been released.

In memory of
our parents, grandparents
and great-grandparents

ר' נפתלי מכאל בן נתנאל ז"ל
מרת שרה ריבע בת ר' יעקב מאיר הכהן ע"ה

The Rothner Family

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Parashas Terumah

תשע"ה

פרשת תרומה

ויקחו לי תרומה

And they shall take for Me a *terumah*/tithing portion.

(25:2)

The command to build the *Mishkan* was not a one-time command, but rather, it is relevant to every Jew, every day of his life, at every juncture in history. The command begins with an ambiguous term, *v'yikchu*, "and they shall take," when the correct vernacular should have been *v'nasnu*, "and they shall give." Obviously, we can derive much from this. We will focus on the *Midrash* that equates the *v'yikchu* in this *pasuk* with the *v'yikchu* in the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (4:2), *Ki lekach tov nasati lachem, Torasi al taazovu*, "For I have given you a good deal – My Torah; do not forsake it."

Torah has every quality that man seeks. All the gold and silver is contained therein, for one who masters the Torah is truly in control of his destiny, to the point that he has all that he will ever need. Lastly, the *Midrash* concludes with an analogy regarding the Torah, the *Mishkan* and Hashem: "And do you find a *mekach*, purchase, that the one who sells it actually sells himself along with the purchase. Regarding the Torah, Hashem says, *V'yikchu Li*, "And take Me as *terumah*." This is similar (explain *Chazal*) to a king who had an only daughter, who was obviously very special to him. Another king came and took her as his wife. Her father (the first king) said, "I am very happy about the *shidduch*, marriage match, but the girl that you are marrying is my only daughter. I cannot separate myself from her. Yet, how can I deprive her of leaving? Please, do me a favor: make for me a small chamber, so that, wherever you go, I can live with you."

This *Midrash* teaches us a powerful lesson. The *Eitz Yosef* explains that (according to the *Midrash*) *V'yikchu Li* means *v'yikchu Osi*, and "you shall take Me" – not "for Me," but "take Me!" In the allegory, the Torah is Hashem's daughter, and Hashem is the king. He cannot separate Himself from the Torah. In other words, when we study Torah, we connect with Hashem.

Originally, we thought that the command to collect funds for the *Mishkan* was an injunction which would provide the means for building the *Mishkan*. We see now that the collection was a goal in and of itself. The *Sefas Emes* explains that giving *terumah* is, indeed, essential to bringing Hashem's Presence into our lives. The Torah is given to man to the degree that he desires it. It is all there for the taking – but one must want and be prepared to sacrifice for

it. It depends upon one's level of *emunah*, faith. The deeper one's faith, the greater is his ability to comprehend the profundities of the Torah.

The *Sefas Emes* explains the *pasuk*, *v'asu li Mikdash v'shochanti b'socham*, "They shall make for Me a *Mikdash*/Sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them" (Ibid 25:8). At first glance, the two words, *Mikdash* and *v'shochanti*, are contradictory to one another. *V'shochanti* is related to *shachain*, neighbor, a term which indicates a personal bond. *Mikdash* is derived from *kadosh*, holy, which implies separation. How do the two work in tandem? The *Sefas Emes* explains that by our sanctifying, separating and distinguishing Hashem's domain from the rest of the world, we are able to gain an individual connection to Hashem, like a *shachain*. By recognizing Hashem's Presence within every aspect of Creation, we annul our own personal desires and vested interests, abdicating them for His will. We can then achieve the lofty plateau of *v'shochanti b'socham*, sort of being Hashem's neighbor. Thus, the individual who contributes towards /the *Mishkan* welcomes Hashem into his life: *V'yikchu Osi* – Take Me.

The plan for the building and its vessels was also not a one-time experience. The Torah enjoins, *Es tavnis ha'Mishkan v'es tavnis kol keilav v'chein taasu*; "The plan of the building and the plan of all its vessels and so shall you do" (Ibid 25:9). This *pasuk* is a command for every ensuing generation. Simply, it means that when a vessel becomes lost or broken, it should be replaced. On a deeper level, explains *Sefas Emes*, it indicates that building a *Mishkan* is a constant *mitzvah* that is applicable at every point in history.

How do we do it? How does a contemporary Jew build a *Mishkan*? The *Sefas Emes* quotes the *Zohar HaKadosh* that relates the building of the *Mishkan* to our daily *tefillos*. This refers to that "little chamber," that room set aside for the king, father of the bride, so that he can stay connected to his only daughter. As mentioned earlier, one builds his personal *Mishkan* through the vehicle of *emunah* – his *emunah*. The *tefillah* of *Shemoneh Esrai* is comprised of (actually) nineteen *brachos*; the first three are introductory, opening *brachos*, and the last are concluding *brachos*. The thirteen in-between represent the thirteen requests that man requires in order to live out his daily life. These *bakashos*, requests, allude to the thirteen various types of *terumah* that were contributed for the *Mishkan*. Now, there are two ways (or two reasons) that one asks for physical needs: to live, to subsist, to thrive physically; or to serve as gifts, so that he can devote these resources to serving Hashem. When one applies his material gifts toward serving Hashem, he is giving them as *terumah* to the Master of the universe. Thus, by abnegating our personal

desires, transcending them, and cleaving to Hashem, we bring Hashem (*V'yikcho Osi*) into our lives. In such a manner, we “make room” in our hearts for the Almighty. *V'asu Li Mikdash* – by annulling our personal desires, the end result will be *v'shochanti b'socham*.

**דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לכו
Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them take for Me a
terumah/tithing/portion, from every man whose heart
motivates him. (25:2)**

Nedivas ha'lev, a donation from the sincerity of one's heart, is the loftiest level of generosity. It is easy to write a check – if one has the money to back it. Easy come – easy go. Generosity of the heart demands sincerity; it is not about the amount of money that one gives. It is how much of himself he gives with that money. The purity of money is based upon the sincerity behind it. When one seeks to establish an abode for Hashem, a place where the Divine Presence will repose, it must be the result of funds that are spiritually and ethically pure, that emanate from an individual whose desire to participate in this *davar she'bikedushah*, holy endeavor, is sincere. The following story underscores this idea.

Horav Avraham Yaakov, zl, m'Sadiger, was one of the nineteenth centuries' *chassidic Rebbe's*. *Chassidim* flocked to him from all over Europe. His *shul* was a majestic edifice which looked like the palace of a king. Its entrance way was flanked by two large pillars. Its windows were colorful works of art in stained glass. One ascended wide marble steps on the outside of the *shul* prior to entering the cavernous sanctuary in which 3,000 people were able to sit. Its walls were hand - painted with artwork that was surrounded by the finest wood. Hundreds of candelabras, which illuminated the *shul*, provided a well-lit and relaxed backdrop for prayer.

The *Sadigerer Rebbe* was the son of the *Rizhiner Rebbe*, who felt that his son possessed the *neshamah*, soul, of the *Baal Shem Tov HaKadosh*. The *Rebbe* was challenged by much adversity, emerging each time stronger and holier. Indeed, following each challenge, his *chassidic* following would increase and expand. *Tzaddikim* would comment that the very holiness of the *Rebbe* was contagious.

Now, for the story behind the magnificent *shul* of *Sadiger*. Amongst the *Rebbe's* thousands of *chassidim* was a poverty - stricken *melamed*, Torah teacher. He lived in a tiny village far from the beaten path of mainstream *chassidim*. He had heard so much about the *Rebbe* that it became his dream, his obsession, that he must travel there to give the *Rebbe* a *kvitel*, written petition, accompanied by his *pidyon*, donation. Unfortunately, it was easier said than done. Since the man was so poor, it took an entire year until he had saved up one ruble (a small, almost insignificant sum) to bring to the *Rebbe*.

The man left for his trip, which took quite some time, considering that his two legs were his only means of conveyance. After he finally arrived at the *Rebbe's* house, the *gabbai*, *Rebbe's* secretary, told him that the earliest possible time to meet with the *Rebbe* was Friday night following *davening*, when the *Rebbe* greeted all the guests who had come for *Shabbos*. The *melamed* was grief-stricken.

After saving and scrounging for a year, he finally had a *pidyon*, money. This was followed by a long, difficult and tiring journey. All of that for what? To be told that he should wait in line Friday night with all the guests.

Our *melamed* had reached his breaking point. He felt that had he had money or had been dressed in more impressive attire, he might have been welcomed by the *gabbai* in a more embracing manner. This is life, and the movers and the shakers are treated differently. The *melamed*, however, just could not wait any longer. He had a meltdown. Tears streamed down his cheeks, as he began to relate his tale of woe to the *gabbai*. Sadly, the *gabbai* heard such stories a few times each day. People came from all over to petition the *Rebbe's* blessing. Everyone was experiencing some form of adversity; everyone was in need of a *yeshuah*, some form of salvation.

The *melamed* would not be stilled, to the point that his incessant weeping reached the *Rebbe's* ears. After inquiring of his *gabbai* concerning the source of commotion, he instructed the *gabbai* to show the *melamed* into his study. When the *melamed* entered the room and gazed upon the *Rebbe's* holy countenance, he almost passed out. Finally, he gathered up his courage and related to the *Rebbe* that he had saved all year to bring his one ruble *pidyon* to the *Rebbe*. He then asked the *Rebbe* for his blessing:

The *Rebbe* accepted the man's coin, held it for a moment, then said, “You may have this coin back. Use it however you want. It will bring blessing and success to anyone who will use it.” The *melamed* graciously thanked the *Rebbe* and left. When word got out that the *Rebbe* had blessed the man's coin, everyone wanted to purchase it. Soon, a public auction was held during which the one - ruble coin blessed by the *Rebbe* sold for 10,000 ruble! The *Rebbe's* blessing had achieved fruition. That is not, however, the end of the story.

The *melamed* immediately returned to the *Rebbe's* home. This time he was not asked to wait. He was now a member of the elite. Although still attired in his beggar's garb, the money jingling in his pocket more than made up for his lack of impressive attire. The *gabbai* ushered him in as soon as the *Rebbe* was available.

“*Rebbe!*” the *melamed* said excitedly. “The *Rebbe's brachah* materialized! I immediately was able to sell my ruble for more money than I ever dreamed of. Now, I would like to give the *Rebbe maaser*, one tenth (tithe) of my earnings. I am overjoyed to do this!”

The *Rebbe* looked at the *melamed* and was silent for a moment. Finally, he spoke, “For a while now I have been thinking of building a new, large *bais hamedrash* to glorify Hashem. This should be a *bais hamedrash* that would inspire prayer, where people would feel comfortable to spend time. I wanted the money that would pay for this edifice to be the result of *ahavas Hashem*, love of the Almighty, and from the generosity of one's heart. The money that you have given me serves as the perfect donation for this cause.” This is how the magnificent *shul* came into being.

ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לכו תקחו את תרומתי

And they shall take for Me a *terumah/tithing/portion* from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My portion. (25:2)

As mentioned earlier, the question on this *pasuk* is: Why does the Torah use the word *v'yikchu*, rather than *v'yitnu*? Would it not have been more correct had the Torah asked them to give a donation? After all, is this not what they were being asked to do? *Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl*, explains this by applying the well-known *Chazal* in *Meseches Kiddushin (7a)* concerning the obligation that (in order to make a *kinyan*, *halachic* acquisition) the man must give the woman either a *perutah*, penny, or *shavah perutah*, value of a penny. By accepting the money, she becomes *makneh*, gives herself in “purchase,” to the man. Under normal circumstances, the man gives, and the woman accepts. There is, however, one instance in which the *kiddushin* can be achieved by means of the woman being the giver and the man accepting her gift. This is in the event that the man, by accepting a gift from the woman (being that he is very distinguished, and his acceptance of her gift is a great honor) gives her great pleasure. That pleasure is considered to have monetary value, such that it fulfills the Torah's requirement of performing *kiddushin* with something of value. Likewise, the Torah implies that when one gives a donation and it is accepted by Hashem, the real recipient is the donor. Thus, he (although he also has given) has indeed “taken” a donation!

Rav Wolbe observes that when we *daven* to Hashem, learn His Torah, perform His mitzvos, we tend to think that we are doing Hashem a favor – when, in fact, it is ourselves whom we benefit. It is so easy to pat oneself on the back and claim greatness – when all we are doing is carrying out our obligations. Hashem neither requires our *mitzvos*, nor does He need our *davening* and learning; rather, He gave us these *mitzvos*, commanded us to study Torah and *daven* to Him – for our benefit. Hashem is perfect. He needs nothing. In *Sefer Tehillim 5:8*, *David Hamelech* declares: *Va'ani b'rov chasdecha, avo veisecha*; “And I, in Your abundant kindness, will enter Your Sanctuary.” Our ability to serve Hashem, thereby benefitting spiritually from this experience, is another one of Hashem's many kindnesses.

A powerful lesson may be derived from here. Many of us pray, learn, perform *mitzvos*. Yet, at the end of the day, are we able to say that we benefitted from the experience, or do we feel spent, no change, no gain? Perhaps the key to understanding our lack of spiritual ascendance is our attitude. Certainly, if we think that we are doing Hashem a favor by *davening* and learning, we will gain little to nothing from the experience, because this is not what *davening* and learning are about. One who is fortunate serves Hashem. One who understands that Hashem is doing him an enormous favor by allowing him to pray to Him will approach a prayer with reverence, gratitude and humility. Such a person will gain immensely from this experience.

ועשית את הקרשים למשכן עצי שטים עמדיים
You shall make the planks of the *Mishkan of shittim*
(Acacia) wood, standing erect. (26:15)

The *Midrash* observes that *atzei shittim* refers to wood derived from a tree that does not bear fruit. *Chazal* explain that, if in the future, a person would want to build a house of wood from a fruit-bearing tree, he would be prevented from doing so by applying a simple logic. If the King of Kings, Hashem, to Whom everything in this world belongs, said that His *Mishkan* should only be built from wood from a type that does not bear fruit, how can a human being make a different decision? We derive from here that whatever we do, regardless of its simplicity or mundane nature, we may not ever do anything, whether it is person or communal, in such a manner that it might adversely affect another person – financially, emotionally, socially. Going forward by stepping on the shoulders of our fellow is not the Torah's idea of progress.

No one will disagree that mundane endeavors may not infringe on the sensitivities of our fellow man, but does it apply as well with regard to *devarim she'b'kedushah*, endeavors of a consecrated, spiritual nature? There really is nothing holier than the *Mishkan/Bais Hamikdash*. Yet, we may not use wood from a fruit-bearing tree. Every step of the way, we must be certain that our sensitivity toward our fellow is not diminished.

One who takes it upon himself to establish a *makom Torah* that will educate, inspire, and change the lives of many might feel that his goals take precedence over the needs and feelings of the few individuals who stand in the way of progress. He may feel that all *tzedakos*, communal charity funds, should be refocused toward his endeavor. If, as a result, a few people might have it rough – well, everybody has to sacrifice for the betterment of the *klal*.

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, presents a scenario which we cannot dispute. Imagine that our generation has been handed the unparalleled mission to build the *Bais Hamikdash*. Certainly, we would all throw ourselves into the work: from the planning stages until the moment of fruition. By the way, what will happen to the “lesser” *mitzvos*, such as *gemillas chasadim*, acts of lovingkindness, charity, visiting the sick and elderly, looking out for the orphaned children – both physically and spiritually? We all know the answer to that question, and we surely have a rational excuse to validate our indifference. It is not that we do not care. It is just that we have to address something of “greater” importance.

The next scenario: We have just been informed (over our cell phones, of course) that *Moshiach Tziddkeinu* is about to arrive shortly. How would we react? We would run! We would push our way forward, each one vying for the first look, to be seen and blessed. What about the old man whose cane can take him only so fast? Or the fellow in the wheelchair whose pusher leaves him, so that he can run and greet *Moshiach*? Will any of the younger generation, the stronger generation, notice that they are lagging behind, or will they be too busy stepping over them?

This is why Hashem told us not to use wood from a fruit-bearing tree. When doing a *mitzvah*, take everything and everyone into consideration. A *mitzvah* that is carried