



Parshas Terumah 2021, the heart that gives

Our Parsha begins with G-d telling Moshe to solicit donations from the Jewish people to construct the Mishkan, a sanctuary and home in this world. They were asked to donate precious stones, gold, silver, and copper. Specialty red, blue, and purple wool, linen, animal skins, and acacia wood.

On the summit of Mt. Sinai, G-d gave Moshe the exact instructions on how the Mishkan was built. It was made to be readily disassembled and transportable to accompany the Jewish nation during their journey. The second half of the Parsha and the following few Torah portions go through the design and construction of the Mishkan. This takes up the last third of the book of Shemos.

However, a question comes to mind: G-d asked the Jewish nation to donate their gold, silver, and diamonds, and yet He did not say what it was for. Why didn't the Parsha first begin with the Mishkan dimensions and then ask for donations to build it?!

The Chizkuni (*Rav Chezekiah ben Manoah*) answers this question by quoting the well-known opinion that the Torah is **NOT** written in chronological order. This view was first brought down in the Mechilta and used extensively in the Talmud and Midrash. The Chizkuni writes that Moshe was told to ask for donations before he went down the mountain for the third time following the sin of the Golden Calf. Moshe went up Mt. Sinai for forty days and nights three separate times.

His first time was after the giving of the Torah to learn with G-d. His second time was to ask forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf. The third time, G-d pardoned and forgave the Jewish people and told Moshe to build a Mishkan.

The Chizkuni explains that the people already knew what the donations and contributions were for; they were to redeem and atone for the Golden Calf. This is why the Pasuk says (25:2), *“take for Me gifts from all those whose heart moves them to give.”* Since the Mishkan was one of the ways they atoned, the contribution had to stem from their heart.

However, the Or Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that the Jewish people just finished telling G-d, *“Naseh Ve'nishma - first, we will do and then we will listen.”* The Midrash writes that G-d rewarded the nation with two crowns for their complete faith in Him and His Torah. G-d was now putting their dedication to the test. Will they follow their words and give because G-d asked? Or will they want to know what it is before contributing?

Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory wrote that the very act of giving flows from the understanding that what you give is part of what you were given. -Especially when you contribute for no particular reason. **Giving is an act of gratitude to G-d for the blessings He bestowed upon you and your family!**

In our daily life, we must be kind and compassionate towards each other, even if they do not deserve such kindness. Just one seemingly small act of kindness or a smile and a good morning may drastically affect that person's life.

It is imperative that you know that you gain **MOST** from that interaction, not only because of the reward you may receive from G-d. But also because giving allows you to show appreciation to G-d for what you have.

“Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting.”

Have a meaningful Shabbos, Rabbi Sholom Yemini