

Harav Yisrael Apelbaum Shlitah
Rosh Yeshiva - Yeshiva Tiferes Chaim
Parshas Teruma 5778



”וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹי” (שמות כה, ב)

When Klal Yisroel was told to donate money to help build the Mishkan, there was one condition attached. Only someone who had good will, who desired to donate voluntarily, was told to donate.

Why was this one of the conditions for giving to the Mishkan? Shouldn't everybody have been commanded to donate no matter what their motives were? Why was this mitzvah specifically given to be fulfilled voluntarily? We find in other places as well, that there are voluntary mitzvos, for example, a korban nedava (voluntary). The Steipler (Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky) in Birchas Peretz Vayikra asks, if a voluntary mitzvah is important for a person's avodas Hashem, then why is it voluntary? If it's not important, then why should we do it?

The answer can be, that when a person desires to do something for Hashem on his own accord, it shows that he has a tremendous love for Hashem. When someone isn't required to do something for someone, yet he does it anyway, it demonstrates a true love for the recipient. Giving for the sake of giving is the definition of true and sincere giving. Not only does this come from an existing love, but it actually can create and develop love, and a bonding relationship. Ahava comes from the word “hav” which means to give. Thus, the whole purpose of building the Mishkan was in order to create within us a love for Hashem, as the passuk states in Shir Hashirim 3:10 “תֹּכֹוּ רְצוּף אֶהְבֶּה” (its interior inlaid with love). The Kruvim in the Mishkan represented our loving relationship with Hkb”h, and that love starts through giving to Hkb”h. These donations were only going to the base of the Mishkan, but the Mishkan had to be built on a foundation of love and giving to Hashem. This can explain why Hashem wanted that the donations for the Mishkan should be voluntary.

We say in Sh'ma, “וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֵת ד' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ”. One must sacrifice in every possible way, with his heart, soul, and money, in order to develop a love for Hashem. The purpose of sacrificing a korban to Hashem is to develop a closeness with Hashem. Korban comes from the word “karov” (close), the only way to come close to Hashem is to sacrifice. This is the way to build a relationship with Hashem, and it's the way to build a relationship with anybody in life. Just like the Mishkan which is a home for Hashem can only be built on giving, so too every home which is a place for the Shechina has to be built on giving. Everybody is seeking the secret to a happy home, a peaceful home. The way to attain that, is to build the home on the foundation of loving others, thinking about others, and giving to others. A husband has to do for his wife, the wife for the husband, and parents for their children. In that home they can be guaranteed tranquility and happiness.

Hashem says “build for me a Mishkan and I will dwell in them”. What does it mean that He will “dwell in them”? There is only one Mishkan! The answer can be, that when a person has a giving heart, and he sacrifices for Hashem, his heart has now developed a true appreciation of giving, and a dedication to Hkb”h. When a person gives of his heart for Hashem, his heart is now a different heart, his heart is now a fitting place for the Shechina to dwell. With this we can explain the words “וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה” (and have them take for Me). How are we taking if we are giving? The answer is, that when we dedicate our heart to give to Hashem, and make it a place where the Shechina can dwell, we are in essence taking. We are taking the Shechina in to us. We are giving for the purpose of building Hashem a home, but we are taking Hashem in to our hearts. When we develop a heart of chesed, we never lose. We only gain, for when we bring Hashem into our lives, we develop a lasting relationship with Him.