

And have them take for Me a terumah offering. From every man whose heart impels him to generosity, you shall take My terumah offering. (25:2)

Rashi writes that the words, *v'yikchu li*, "and take for Me," indicate that the contributors for the *Mishkan* must be dedicated *lishmah*, exclusively for Hashem's Name. From the fact that the Torah follows up the *v'yikchu li* with *asher yidvenu libo*, whose heart impels him to generosity, we may suggest that the determining factor in *li*, "for me," is that it is motivated by the heart. The heart is the seat of one's emotions and, thus, expresses his truthful feelings. *Nidvas ha'lev*, a contribution from the bottom of one's heart, is an honest contribution.

The concept of *lishmah* was a requirement in the building of the *Mishkan*, because an edifice that serves as the resting place for the *Shechinah* may not have any personal admixture. It must be solely for Hashem. Thus, *Chazal* (*Tosefta*, *Megillah* 2:10, cited by *Horav Shimon Schwab*, *zl*) say that *keilim*, vessels, that were made for everyday use cannot subsequently be used in the *Bais HaMikdash* (since they were not made expressly for use in the Temple). Likewise, precious stones or beams cut for personal use may not be incorporated into the building of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Even the *Mizbayach*, Altar, must be made *lishmah*. *Mizbayach adamah taaseh Li*, "An Altar of earth shall you make for Me" (*Shemos* 25:8). It is all about *Li*, making an edifice purely *l'Shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven. Personal interests preclude the *l'Shem Shomayim* factor and impugn the purity of the Sanctuary.

Rav Schwab observes that this stands in stark contrast to a statement made by *Chazal* concerning *limud haTorah* study. They say (*Nazir* 23b), *L'olam yaasok adam b'Torah u'b'mitzvos shelo lishmah. She'mitoch shelo lishmah ba lishmah*; "A person should forever occupy himself with Torah study and *mitzvah* fulfillment, even with ulterior motives, for this will eventually bring him to do the *lishmah*, purely for Hashem's sake". The standard of spiritual integrity required for the construction of the *Bais HaMikdash* does not apply to Torah study. Why?

Perhaps we might say that Torah study is our contribution; it represents man. Thus, it does not require such perfection. It is hopeful that, by consistent attachment with the Torah, a person's learning will ultimately achieve perfection, *lishmah*, learning solely for Hashem. The *Bais HaMikdash* represents Hashem. It is His home where His Divine Presence reposes. It must be perfect. Near perfect does not suffice. "Almost" and "ultimately" are terms that are not consistent with the need for the *Bais HaMikdash* to be spiritually flawless. A higher standard is required for the *Bais HaMikdash* – and for anything that is to serve as an abode for Hashem.

In his collection of *Rav Schwab's* Torah thoughts on the *parsha*, *Rav Meir Schwab* relates that, speaking at a *Bris Milah*, his father cited the story of *Elisha ben Avuya*, who at one time was a distinguished sage, *Rebbe* to *Rabbi Meir*, but, sadly, ended his life as a heretic. What went wrong in his life to drive him *meigra rama l'bira amikah*, from a high position to a deep pit, from the apex

of spirituality to the nadir of depravity? The *Rav* begins with the premise that while one may perform *mitzvos* for ulterior motives, this approach applies neither to the building of the *Mishkan*, nor to a parent's obligation to educate his children. Nothing less than flawless motive suffices. A Jew is a mini-*Mishkan*, a place in which the *Shechinah* may reside within the heart. Nothing less than pure motivation will work.

Chazal (*Yerushalmi Chagigah* 2:1) relate that Elisha's father, Avuya, invited many of Yerushalayim's greatest scholars to his *Bris*. The scholars spoke *divrei Torah* among themselves with such fervor and intensity that a Heavenly fire enveloped them, to separate them from the rest of the guests. Seeing this remarkable Heavenly acknowledgement of their distinguished nature, Avuya said, "My son (Elisha), whose *Bris* is being performed today, will also become a Torah scholar (and I will enable him to do so). While Avuya wished for his son to achieve distinction in Torah learning, it was not for the correct reason – *lishmah*. Instead, he wanted his son to advance in Torah learning for the honor that comes with erudition. As a result, Elisha became a heretic. His Torah education was built on a faulty and misconceived foundation.

What did Avuya do wrong? What is wrong with wanting one's son to achieve distinction as a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar? Would it have been better if the father wanted the son to excel in secular disciplines? Furthermore, *Chazal* permit us to learn Torah and perform *mitzvos shelo lishmah*, for ulterior motives, in order to achieve a personal goal. Why is this different? The answer is (as mentioned above) that a human being is a *mikdash me'at*, a miniature sanctuary. Thus, at the beginning of life, the human being must be consecrated solely for Hashem. This is probably difficult for parents to accept, since they feel that they own their child's life, that they are in charge of their child's destiny.

This idea applies equally to those well-meaning -- but no-less mistaken -- parents who simply want to have *nachas* from their child. When parents raise a child their sole intention should be that their child grow up to be a *nachas* for Hashem, that he increase Hashem's glory in the world. There can be no personally vested reasons. If the child makes it and just happens to give his parents *nachas*, this is a fringe benefit, but may not be a goal. One must never raise children for the purpose of achieving personal glory.

This concept also applies to those who do everything possible in order to have their child enrolled in the finest schools – for the wrong reason. In some cases, the child lacks the ability and acumen to excel in such schools. The pressure to achieve is overwhelming and may be beyond his ability. The parents do not seem to care. It is all about self-advancement. If my son studies at a certain *yeshiva*, if my daughter is accepted to a top seminary – I look better. This certainly is not an example of *v'yikchu li*. They are focusing in on the wrong *li*.