

"Speak unto the Bnei Yisroel and they shall take for Me an offering from every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My offering." (25:2)

From this *parasha*, where for the first time the Jewish people are requested to donate of themselves and their possessions, many of the commentators derive insights into the nature of the *mitzvah* of *Tzedaka* (charity). Various interpretations are given to the unusual wording of the *posuk*. One "gives" charity, therefore it should have said "and they shall give" rather than "and they shall take". *Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried Zt"l* remarks that "they should take" connotes the very essence of the *mitzvah*. One who gives charity is really taking for himself, since he himself gains as a result of the performance of the *mitzvah*. *rag, rag - You shall surely tithe* (*Devorim 14:22*) to which the *Talmud* remarks, "*khcac rag*" - *rag,,a - give a tenth so that you shall increase your wealth.*" (*Taanis 9a*). When one gives charity he is in reality "taking" for himself, and the one who receives in turn becomes the "giver", since he is the vehicle through which this reciprocal support system takes place.

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin Zt"l infers from the difference in the wording, that the hardships associated with raising funds for private and public purposes, is not in finding "donors" but rather in finding those individuals who are willing, able, and properly suited to dedicate themselves to the difficult and thankless task of fund-raising.

The word *Trumah* is mentioned three times in the opening verses of this *parsha*. The *Talmud* explains that there were three different offerings, one was a half-shekel for every person from which the sockets of the beams of the *Mishkan* were made, the other offering was a half-shekel from which to purchase communal offerings, and the third was the free-will offering which was used to build the *Mishkan*.

While traveling throughout Europe, seeking funds to ease the plight of the various *Yeshivos*, *Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin Zt"l* remarked on the inconsistency in the three offerings. Why is there a specific tariff on two of the offerings, while the offering for the building of the *Mishkan* is according to one's free-will? He responded that the *Torah* understood one's attitude when making a charitable donation. It is common to give for a building while at the same time to withhold support for the maintenance and actual purpose of the institution. The building of the *Mishkan* does not take precedence over the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos*, while offering sacrifices does. There were sufficient funds for the building of the *Mishkan*, but for the communal sacrifices, which are the purpose of the *Mishkan*, a specific tariff was imposed. This also applies to the half-shekel imposed for the sockets holding the beams of the *Mishkan*. People tend to give support only after a strong foundation has been established. Therefore, it was necessary to impose a set amount for the sockets, which were the foundation of the *Mishkan*.