

They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, then I will dwell in their midst. (25:8)

Parashas Terumah, which details the construction of the *Mishkan* is the logical sequel to *Parashas Mishpatim*, which contains the principal features of the Code of Law and of the *Bris*, Covenant, built upon the foundations of that Law. The symbolic function of the *Mishkan/Mikdash* is to express the collective task upon whose fulfillment the Presence of the *Shechinah* in *Klal Yisrael* depends. The two accompany one another. If we do not uphold our end of the Covenant, the *Mishkan* and Hashem's Presence within the Jewish People will not occur.

The construction of the *Mishkan*, which is the external Temple, is for us to facilitate: *V'asu li Mishkan*, "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary." As **Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl**, writes, however, the true *Mishkan* is in the heart of man; *V'shachanti b'socham*, "Then I will dwell in their midst." The *Bais Hamikdash* which was built in Yerushalayim was only an instrument serving the inner-temple of the heart. Therefore, explains *Rav Chaim*, when the inner-temple became corrupt, the outer temple was no longer of any use, so it was destroyed.

The outer temple depends upon the inner temple, which is the sanctity of the heart. What is the sanctity of the heart? **Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl**, explains that this is the *ratzon ha'lev*, will of the heart or complete self-sacrifice, expressed by offering one's entire ego to Hashem. This, explains *Rav Dessler*, is the meaning of sacrifice and *tefillah*, prayer, whereby one nullifies his will in the service of Hashem. *Chazal* teach, *Bateil rezoncha mipnei Ritsono*, "Nullify your will before His Will." It does not say to "bend" your will, but to "nullify" it. This means that a person should exert so much control over himself that he does not want anything that does not coincide with Hashem's Will. When a person distances himself greatly from his desires, eventually, he will no longer feel desire for them anymore.

Rav Dessler cites the well-known commentary of *Ibn Ezra*, who writes concerning the tenth commandment, *Lo Sachmod*, 'Do not covet.' How does one not covet? How can he be enjoined not to want something that he wants? He can be told not to take it, but can he be told not to want it? Is this possible?

Ibn Ezra explains that Hashem is teaching us that the prohibition against taking someone else's property should be so lucid that the very idea becomes an impossibility. He analogizes this to a coarse villager who sees the king's daughter. He has no desire to wed her, because he knows that she is unattainable; she is totally inaccessible. Likewise, one's heart is so focused on Hashem and what He expects of us that he has no room for his own desires. Anything that is not in sync with what Hashem wants of us – is so remote that he does not even think of it.

The Torah describes the *nidvas ha'lev*, heartfelt contributions, of the various materials which were given toward the *Mishkan*. It is certain that these voluntary gifts were enthusiastically given with

complete goodwill. We have no idea of the excitement generated within each and every Jew who was about to donate towards the construction of the *Mishkan*. The intensity, enthusiasm, desire and sublime devotion that motivated each donation is beyond our grasp; nor can we imagine the joy inherent in the heart of each individual when he knew that his money or property had reached the hands of the *gizbar*, treasurer, which signaled to him that his silver or gold would be built into the *Mishkan*. He would actually have a share in the House of

G-d, and the Divine Presence would actually rest upon his voluntary gift. This is how one gives *tzedakah*, charity, and this is the emotion that should be engendered thereby.

In reality, however, the Torah alludes to the idea that this was not how the *Mishkan* was constructed. Apparently, an even higher spiritual plateau was demanded of the people. The Torah says, *V'yikchu Li Terumah*, "And let them take for Me a gift." What is the meaning of "taking" from oneself? Indeed, *Ibn Ezra* remarks that "take" is usually the opposite of "give," but "taking for someone else" is the equivalent of giving. *Rav Dessler* explains that, while a person may indeed give for the right reasons – his motives noble; his giving completely unselfish – this may not be considered "taking." He may not be "taking from himself"; he is not overcoming resistance in order to give. Why is this? It almost sounds self-defeating. The greater the motivation, the loftier the enthusiasm and fervor, the less one seems to be "taking from himself."

The problem is that when a person reaches the level of *lishmah*, of unselfish giving purely for the sake of the *mitzvah*, his actual service of Hashem decreases. Why? Because, ironically he is doing what he enjoys, what he likes, whereas service means bending one's will to do what Hashem likes. If so, how is a person acting as a servant of Hashem, if, in fact, he is no longer "serving" Him in this sense? Indeed, **Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, teaches that the purpose of free will is to "outgrow" free will to the point that one feels "compelled" to do what is right. How does one who attains such a spiritual plateau "serve" Hashem?

Rav Dessler explains that essentially everyone – even the greatest *tzaddik*, righteous person – since he is alive in this *olam ha'gashmi*, physical world – still has within him something, however miniscule, of this world. It, therefore, follows that, even when giving with great emotion and enthusiasm, somewhere in the deep recesses of the heart a fine point of real resistance still exists on the part of the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. Even if it is only in the nature of a "shadow," it still constitutes an element of opposition to the good that we are doing.

With this premise in mind, *Rav Dessler* explains how the great *tzaddik* is able to "serve" Hashem. These great *tzaddikim*, who always acted out of love, in what area lay their toil, their onerous service of the Almighty? Let's face it: they loved what they were doing. It was their penultimate experience. The answer is: Their dealing with the very fine points of resistance is concealed deep within their subconscious minds. These immeasurable vestiges of resistance are ingredients which are extremely difficult to detect. All of the greatness of these unique men is required in order to ferret out, fight and eventually destroy them – wherever they may be.

This is why the Torah instructs the people to “take’ from themselves for Me.” This was a generation that had been exposed to the greatest Revelation of all time, the most seminal Jewish experience: the Giving of the Torah. The members of this generation had reached an unparalleled plateau in their spiritual journey. Now, they were to look deep within the innermost recesses of their hearts to find that fine point of *yetzer hora*, evil resistance, which actually does not want to give to the *Mishkan*. Once they find that point, they must “take” from themselves – overcome its gravitational pull away from the *Mishkan* – and then take the materials and contribute to the *Mishkan*. This was their service. This was the foundation upon which the *Mishkan* was built.