

## **And they shall take for Me a terumah/tithing portion. (25:2)**

The command to build the Mishkan was not a one-time command, but rather, it is relevant to every Jew, every day of his life, at every juncture in history. The command begins with an ambiguous term, v'yikchu, "and they shall take," when the correct vernacular should have been v'nasnu, "and they shall give." Obviously, we can derive much from this. We will focus on the Midrash that equates the v'yikchu in this pasuk with the v'yikchu in the pasuk in Mishlei (4:2), Ki lekach tov nasati lachem, Torasi al taazovu, "For I have given you a good deal – My Torah; do not forsake it." Torah has every quality that man seeks. All the gold and silver is contained therein, for one who masters the Torah is truly in control of his destiny, to the point that he has all that he will ever need. Lastly, the Midrash concludes with an analogy regarding the Torah, the Mishkan and Hashem: "And do you find a mekach, purchase, that the one who sells it actually sells himself along with the purchase. Regarding the Torah, Hashem says, V'yikchu Li, "And take Me as terumah." This is similar (explain Chazal) to a king who had an only daughter, who was obviously very special to him. Another king came and took her as his wife. Her father (the first king) said, "I am very happy about the shidduch, marriage match, but the girl that you are marrying is my only daughter. I cannot separate myself from her. Yet, how can I deprive her of leaving? Please, do me a favor: make for me a small chamber, so that, wherever you go, I can live with you."

This Midrash teaches us a powerful lesson. The Eitz Yosef explains that (according to the Midrash) V'yikchu Li means v'yikchu Osi, and "you shall take Me" – not "for Me," but "take Me!" In the allegory, the Torah is Hashem's daughter, and Hashem is the king. He cannot separate Himself from the Torah. In other words, when we study Torah, we connect with Hashem.

Originally, we thought that the command to collect funds for the Mishkan was an enjoinder which would provide the means for building the Mishkan. We see now that the collection was a goal in and of itself. The Sefas Emes explains that giving terumah is, indeed, essential to bringing Hashem's Presence into our lives. The Torah is given to man to the degree that he desires it. It is all there for the taking – but one must want and be prepared to sacrifice for it. It depends upon one's level of emunah, faith. The deeper one's faith, the greater is his ability to comprehend the profundities of the Torah.

The Sefas Emes explains the pasuk, v'asu li Mikdash v'shochanti b'socham, "They shall make for Me a Mikdash/Sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them" (Ibid 25:8). At first glance, the two words, Mikdash and v'shochanti, are contradictory to one another. V'shochanti is related to shachin, neighbor, a term which indicates a personal bond. Mikdash is derived from kadosh, holy, which implies separation. How do the two work in tandem? The Sefas Emes explains that by our sanctifying, separating and distinguishing Hashem's domain from the rest of the world, we are able to gain an individual connection to Hashem, like a shachin. By recognizing Hashem's Presence within every aspect of Creation, we annul our own personal desires and vested interests, abdicating them for His will. We can then achieve the lofty plateau of v'shochanti b'socham, sort of being Hashem's neighbor. Thus, the individual who contributes towards /the Mishkan welcomes Hashem into his life: V'yikchu Osi – Take Me.

The plan for the building and its vessels was also not a one-time experience. The Torah enjoins, Es tavnis ha'Mishkan v'es tavnis kol keilav v'chein taasu; "The plan of the building and the plan of all

its vessels and so shall you do” (Ibid 25:9). This pasuk is a command for every ensuing generation. Simply, it means that when a vessel becomes lost or broken, it should be replaced. On a deeper level, explains Sefas Emes, it indicates that building a Mishkan is a constant mitzvah that is applicable at every point in history.

How do we do it? How does a contemporary Jew build a Mishkan? The Sefas Emes quotes the Zohar HaKadosh that relates the building of the Mishkan to our daily tefillos. This refers to that “little chamber,” that room set aside for the king, father of the bride, so that he can stay connected to his only daughter. As mentioned earlier, one builds his personal Mishkan through the vehicle of emunah – his emunah. The tefillah of Shemoneh Esrai is comprised of (actually) nineteen brachos; the first three are introductory, opening brachos, and the last are concluding brachos. The thirteen in-between represent the thirteen requests that man requires in order to live out his daily life. These bakashos, requests, allude to the thirteen various types of terumah that were contributed for the Mishkan. Now, there are two ways (or two reasons) that one asks for physical needs: to live, to subsist, to thrive physically; or to serve as gifts, so that he can devote these resources to serving Hashem. When one applies his material gifts toward serving Hashem, he is giving them as terumah to the Master of the universe. Thus, by abnegating our personal desires, transcending them, and cleaving to Hashem, we bring Hashem (V'yikcho Osi) into our lives. In such a manner, we “make room” in our hearts for the Almighty. V'asu Li Mikdash – by annulling our personal desires, the end result will be v'shochanti b'socham.