

“And they shall take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him.” (25:2)

Horav Menachem Mendel, z.l., m’Kotzk and *Horav Yitzchak, z.l., m’Vorke* were both great *tzaddikim* and *chassidishe Rebbeim* of distinction. They differed, however, in their approach towards serving the Almighty. The *Kotzker* isolated himself from people, having very little patience for common talk, for mundane relationships. *Rav Yitzchak*, in contrast, was very much involved with his *chassidim*, more than once imbibing a *l’chaim* and dancing joyfully with them. It happened once that these two great *rebbeim* met on *Parashas Terumah*. *Rav Yitzchak* asked the *Kotzker*, “*Rav Mendel*, why do you choose to seclude yourself, to run away from your *chassidim*?”

Rav Mendel answered, “My *derech*, way of serving *Hashem*, is alluded to in this week’s *parsha*, where it says, “*And they shall take for Me.*” *Chazal* infer from here that one must act solely for *Hashem*’s sake. If one seeks to serve *Hashem* correctly, he must make a *terumah*, uplifting and raising himself above and out of the community, “*from every man whose heart motivates him.*” He must separate himself even from the finest, most virtuous and generous people. Only then can he serve “*li*” – “*Me.*”

Rav Yitzchak countered, “My *derech* is also implied by the same *pasuk*: ‘If you want to serve *li*, *Me*, then you should bring a *terumah*, a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him.’ Take the good from all men. Every person has a positive aspect. For some, it is a character trait, while for others, it is a special act of kindness. The only way to garner this good is by being among the people, talking to them, listening to them, and interacting with them.” Two diverse approaches – two great men. Who is right? It depends on the individual.