

## Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem, everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as a gift for Hashem. (35:5)

In recognizing the contributions towards the *Mishkan* of the *dor ha'midbar*, generation of the wilderness, the *Torah* uses the phrase *nedivus ha'lev*, donations of the heart. What is a donation of the heart? *Ibn Ezra* notes two variances in the *Torah's* idiom regarding *Klal Yisrael's* contribution. Hashem commanded them, "*Kechu me'itchem*," "*Take from yourselves*." To "take" is the opposite of to "give." Placing the prefix "*mem*" (*meitchem*) before a word changes its meaning. Thus, "*Kechu me'itchem*" has the same meaning as "*Tenu*," give. Why did the *Torah* express this idea in such an awkward manner? Second, what is the meaning of "*nediv libo*"? Literally translated, it means, "donating the heart." Why does the *Torah* use a phrase that must be understood so differently than its literal meaning?

*Horav Chizkiyah Cohen, zl*, explains the ascending levels of giving. The *Mishkan* demanded the highest level, total selflessness in giving, in order that a contribution be deemed worthy of inclusion in Hashem's Sanctuary. A person has a conscious awareness and a subconscious inclination. One may believe that he is contributing wholeheartedly. His subconscious, however, may have a totally different perspective. Indeed, we find that the *Torah* excluded a letter from the name of the *Nesiim* because they were hesitant in responding to the call for contributions. The commentators explain that they were not really lazy; they had a good reason for being slow to contribute. They felt *Klal Yisrael* should be given the initial opportunity. They would be responsible for the short-fall. *Chazal*, however, attribute their rationale to a subconscious tendency towards indolence. Hashem's Sanctuary does not tolerate anything less than total commitment - even on a subconscious level.

*Horav Mordechai Miller, Shlita*, explains that this was the uniqueness of the *dor ha'midbar*, Hashem demanded of them a *nedivus ha'lev* in the literal sense - they contributed their heart! There was no conflict between their overt contribution and their instinctive obscure emotions. While some people overtly contribute magnanimously, all they really give is their material wealth. They do not give of themselves; they do not give their hearts. This is why the *Torah* insists that they take from themselves - not simply give a donation. To take is a stronger -- more aggressive -- form of contribution, one in which the contributor overcomes his inner emotions and marshals them to work towards a common community goal.