

And let them take for Me a portion. (25:2)

The *Mishkan* was the embodiment of *kedushah*, holiness, in this world. It teaches us that the mundane can – and should – be elevated. This is the concept of Judaism – elevating the mundane, sanctifying the physical. Whatever Hashem created can be used for a sublime purpose. If this attitude can be applied to simple, physical matters, then surely we can apply it to people. Regardless of one's background or religious affiliation, one can become holy. The spark within him is a living potential. It only has to be stoked, and the flame will rise.

When the Torah commands us to perform a *mitzvah*, it first relates the concept of the *mitzvah* before discussing the “how to” aspect of it. Therefore, it is surprising that concerning the construction of the *Mishkan*, the Torah immediately presents the “how to” aspect: “Take for Me” – first the fundraising, and later the purpose of the funds is elaborated. Should it not have been the other way around? I want you to construct a *Mishkan* for Me, where My Presence will repose; **then**, the fund-raising component is detailed. Construction needs financing. In order to perform this *mitzvah*, the people have to open their wallets and part with some money.

Applying the earlier idea concerning the underlying concept of the *Mishkan*, *Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl*, explains what appears to be the reversed sequence in the *mitzvah* of building Hashem's *Mishkan*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that financing the construction of the *Mishkan* was not merely a preliminary stage. Rather, it was actually the first step in the building process. Giving of one's possessions to make the *Mishkan* meant elevating mundane matter and sanctifying it. This is the concept of the *Mishkan*. The Torah, therefore, instructs us to take *terumah* **before** the actual command to construct the *Mishkan* is conveyed, because doing so embodies the very essence of the *Mishkan*.

I think we can extend this idea further. What is the difference between donors? Why is it that, for some, parting with their possessions for charity is a breeze, while for others, it is traumatic. When one views *tzedakah* giving as elevating his material possessions, granting them consecrated status, contributing becomes an uplifting experience. For those who view it as a “pulling teeth” experience, it becomes somewhat of an ordeal – both for the donor and for the beneficiary.