

## And let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion. (25:2)

The *Bais Yisrael* of *Gur* offers a homiletic rendering of this *pasuk* that has practical application, especially for those who devote themselves to Jewish outreach. An issue that concerns one who spends most of his time teaching *Aleph Bais*, the Hebrew alphabet, to those who are returning to Judaism, is that perhaps he might stunt **his own** personal growth. In addition, such people spend much of their time in environments that are, at best, quite distant from the milieu of a Torah way of life. Thus, this phenomenon has negatively impacted the ranks of those who might otherwise have chosen to devote themselves to this form of *harbotzas Torah*, Torah dissemination

The *Gerrer Rebbe* interprets the *pasuk* in the following manner: *V'yikchu Li terumah*, "If it is your desire to elevate yourself – to ascend the ladder of spiritual ascendancy" – then *mei'eis kol ish*, "from every man", by infusing **all** Jews with Torah and *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, and by bringing all Jews closer to Hashem and the Torah way of life," *tikchu es terumasi*, "you will thus elevate yourself and thereby bring yourself closer to Hashem." The *Rebbe* says that this path is *ba'duk u'menusah*, "tried and proven," to succeed. One who devotes himself **sincerely** to the fields of *kiruv* and *chinuch*, outreach and education, will ultimately enhance his own spiritual development.

I offer the following addition to this idea: One who teaches – learns. The preparation involved, coupled with the communication skills one develops, enhances one's own understanding of the material by granting him deeper insight. When one has the responsibility of explaining a Torah concept to an individual who has little or no knowledge, he must be prepared. If one takes his work seriously, he himself will benefit immeasurably.

Furthermore, one cannot possibly infuse another Jew with a passion for *Yiddishkeit*, unless he himself has it. *Kiruv* and *chinuch* work is quite similar to lighting one candle from another. If the first one is not properly lit, the second one cannot obtain its flame. The unaffiliated are infused with the passion they observe and sense in those trying to inspire/educate them. The flip-side, of course, is that if we are deficient, we can be a detriment to the development of others.

Last, if we seek to be a *terumah*, to elevate ourselves, we must reach out to *kol ish*, **all** Jews – regardless of background, ethics, social grounding and credentials. Not all individuals are *geshmak*, "pleasant," to work with. Some have "pathologies," histories that are far from agreeable or sympathetic. In fact, some have downright unseemly backgrounds. There are those who were born Jewish, but that is as far as their heritage extends; they neither have a clue as to the meaning of Judaism, nor do they have a desire to find out. His façade might appear unsavory, but beneath it all he may possess a warm, sensitive heart, just waiting to be spiritually resuscitated. It is a tall order, but, at the end of the day, it can bring us the greatest satisfaction – both emotionally and spiritually.