



## A Little Give and Take

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTOR: RABBI DANI SCHON

THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION BEGINS WITH instructions to collect the materials necessary to build the *Mishkan* (the Tabernacle).

Speak to the children of Israel. They should take a portion for Me; from every man whose heart motivates him, take My portion. (25:2)

One question the commentaries ask on this verse is: Why does it say “take a portion for Me?” Seemingly it would have been more appropriate to write “give Me a portion.” After all, the Children of Israel were *donating* materials here, for the construction of the *Mishkan*.

On a simple level, *S'forno* answers that the Torah is actually instructing Israel to appoint treasurers (*gizbarim*, in Hebrew) to collect the donations being offered by the people. So the directive in the verse, “take an offering for Me,” is actually telling those treasurers to take the materials from the Jews. *S'forno* points out that later in Sh'mos (35: 4–5) when the Torah itemizes the donations to the *Mishkan*, it is more clear that the Torah is addressing the treasurers.

(Also see Onkelos and Alshich, who address this question and discuss why the Torah changes from the third person—“they should take”—to the second person—“take”.)

On a more figurative level, Alshich explains that the word “take” is, in fact, the correct word to use, because anyone who gave materials for the

*Mishkan* actually received something in return. The fact that Hashem accepted a donation caused its donor to feel joy, so it is accurate to say that the donors “took” an offering.

Alshich proves this point from the Talmud (Kiddushin 7a). We know that one of the ways a man can betrothe a woman is by giving her something with monetary value. The Talmud explains that if a woman gives a present to a prominent man and he accepts it willingly, that man can in return betrothe the woman with the enjoyment that she felt when he accepted the present. That enjoyment, while intangible, has monetary value.

Alshich continues: If, when a woman gives a present to an important person, she derives pleasure, it's even more likely that the Jews must have felt an immense pleasure with Hashem accepting their donations toward the construction of the *Mishkan*. Hashem, who spans the entire world, was willing to constrict His presence so He could dwell in the *Mishkan*, which was built with Israel's donations. What could be better?

This idea is true not only of the Jews who donated to the *Mishkan*. It is applicable to us today, as well. Often we are called upon to give—of ourselves, of our resources, of our time. Sometimes, or perhaps often, it may feel annoying. If we can internalize the idea that, although it may sometimes be inconvenient, it is for our own good—in the long term, and in the short term, as well—it will allow

us to feel much more passion and fulfillment in our service of Hashem.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik develops a similar idea from different words in the same verse. *S'forno* learns from the words “from every man whose heart motivates him,” that the treasurers were only supposed to accept donations from those who willingly volunteered them; they were not to force people to donate to the *Mishkan*.

Rabbi Soloveitchik asks: We know from the Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch* (Y. D. 248) that there is a concept of *m'mashkenin al tzedaka*—those in charge of collecting charity are sometimes allowed to confiscate the property of someone who refuses to pay his charitable obligations. We see from this that the Torah views *tzedaka* not as an act of charity, per sé, but rather as an act of *justice*. What could be a better cause than donating towards the building of the *Mishkan*? This would seem to be a prime example where the treasurers should be able to force those who are unwilling to give!

Rabbi Soloveitchik answers that the mitzvah to donate to the *Mishkan* was intrinsically different than the normal mitzvah of charity. Normally, *tzedaka* has a dual purpose—firstly, for the recipient to receive that which he was lacking; secondly, *for the giver to elevate himself by giving of his resources*. As the Midrash says (*Vayikra Rabba* 34:8), even more than a host does for a pauper, the pauper does for his host.

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# At the Kollel

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**Looking for a chavrusa?** See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!  
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

## Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**  
(Jewish Law & Parasha)  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM  
*Grand Deluxe breakfast served*

## Tuesday

🚺🚻 **Partners in Torah  
at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

## Wednesday

🚺🚻 **Torah Treasures for  
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻 **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn  
at Strauss & Troy**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

## Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM  
*Homemade refreshments served.*

## Minyanim for Standard Time

**Shacharis**  
Sunday.....8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday.....7:20 AM

**Mincha**  
Sunday.....1:15 PM  
Mon.–Thurs. thru January.....2:35 PM  
Sun.–Thurs., Feb.–Mar.....5:45 PM  
Shabbos.....2:40 PM

**Ma'ariv**  
In the Beis Midrash:  
Sunday–Wednesday.....9:45 PM  
Thursday.....10 PM

## Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**  
(Maseches B'choros)  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....  
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**  
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....  
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**  
Live video conference!  
Rabbi Dani Schon.....  
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**  
Rabbi Meir Minster.....  
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM  
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
& Binyamin Teitelbaum.....  
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

**Chavrusa Learning**  
(private & small groups).....times vary

## A Little Give and Take CONT'D

Normally, when collecting for a poor person, even if a potential donor is not interested in giving—in elevating himself—the poor person is lacking money. So we force a wealthy person to give. Even though that donor may not elevate himself in the process (because he did not give of his funds willingly), we are accomplishing the other purpose: The poor fellow will receive that which he was lacking.

However, it was entirely different when it came to donations to the *Mishkan*. Hashem, the recipient, does not lack anything which He might need a donor to give him. Hashem fills the entire world, and He certainly does not need a small place to call home. The children of Israel wanted to build a

*Mishkan* not to give Hashem a home, but rather so there would be a place where they could feel close to Him, a place where they could feel protected by Him. Hashem did us a favor by allowing us to build a *Mishkan*. Therefore, to call the *Mishkan* (or, later, the Temple) “the house of Hashem” may be a misnomer. In essence, it was not really a house for Hashem, but rather a house for us, where we could get close to Hashem.

Therefore, since the recipient of the *Mishkan* (Hashem) did not need a home, it would be of no value to force an individual to contribute. Here the donation was solely for the benefit of the giver, to allow him to have a special place to connect to Hashem. If a person was not interested in having that special place,

there was no reason to force him to.

The same is really true of all *mitzvos* between man and Hashem. Hashem does not need us to perform *mitzvos*, since He lacks nothing. Therefore, we should not look at those *mitzvos* as obligations which we must do for Hashem. Rather, we should see them as opportunities to draw close to Hashem, to improve ourselves, and to make the world a better place. 🙏