

GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

8th Edition
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BS"D

PARSHAT TERUMAH

What's Behind the Gift

Imagine a couple celebrating their anniversary, and the husband pulls \$2 out of his pocket and hands it to his wife. "A rose costs about \$2, so what difference does it make if I just give you the monetary equivalent? Here, take it." It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the wife won't be so happy, and that the foolish husband had just cost himself an otherwise joyous occasion.

This week's Parshah starts with an apparent redundancy. "Tell Bnei Yisrael to take for Me gifts; every man whose heart is so moved shall take these gifts for Me" (Shemot 25:2). Why is the *pasuk* speaking repetitively?

Hashem is communicating here one of the most profound principles of life, especially as it relates to relationships. He first sets forth the command for the Jewish People to donate specific materials, as the Parshah goes on to enumerate in great detail: "Tell Bnei Yisrael to take for Me gifts." In order to build the home where G-d will rest His *Shechinah* and live with us, we need these basic resources, such as gold, silver, etc. However, continues Boreh Olam, *all this is worthless without the dedication of the people's hearts. What need is there for a home if there's no relationship between us to live together?* Therefore, the Torah adds the next, most critical line: "Every man whose heart is so moved shall take these gifts for Me." When a man buys his wife flowers or jewelry, it's not the monetary worth that makes her happy; it's the communication of love behind it. Ultimately, spouses don't crave one another's gifts; they pine for each other's love, time, and attention. Likewise, our Father in Heaven couldn't care for our gifts if they aren't accompanied with love and motivation. "I don't need your two dollars," the woman will likely scoff as she throws it back at him. "I want you..." Hashem, too, tells us, *All this gold and silver mean nothing; it's ultimately your heart and loving dedication that I really desire.* Thus, the *pasuk* is not repetitive at all; it is describing two essential parts to the donation. As beautiful as this is in thought, how can we apply this concept to practice?

There was a guy who, after going out on several dates with a specific girl, decided that he wanted to finally propose. The problem was that he wasn't romantic at all. Not by a long shot. He had no sense for this, but went ahead with his effort. As he sat across the girl, he pulled out a velvet box with a stunning ring inside. She could barely contain her excitement, and couldn't wait to hear what he would say. He took out a card that he had bought at the convenience store, and nonchalantly read aloud, "Roses are red and violets are blue." He squinted his eyes and continued reciting indifferently: "Um... oh yeah; I really love you..." He continued mumbling off the rest of the card before she interrupted him, "Can you put the card down and just tell me how you really feel?"

How does our davening look? Are our prayers passionate expressions of love towards our Creator, or just another few paragraphs to quickly mumble through as we uninterestedly flip through the pages...? Think of something you can do to personally transform your *tefillah* into a fervent conversation with your Father in Heaven.

(R' Zecharia Wallerstein)

Not Mine

R' Leeor Dahan recounted a beautiful thought. The *pasuk* says: "Make for Me a sanctuary and I will live in it." This doesn't just apply to the Mishkan; our Sages learn this to refer to every Jewish home today.

Rav David Jungreis, zt"l, the Av Bet Din of Yerushalayim, was an incredible Torah scholar, yet conducted himself with modesty and humility, hiding his genius. Another unique feature to R' Jungreis was the utmost respect and dignity that he had always showed when addressing his wife. It was akin to a young boy speaking to the gadol hador, as he would call her "kavod haRabbanit" with great awe. To outsiders, it appeared a little quirky, but those who knew him understood the great virtue and intent behind it. Once, the rabbi and his wife had to travel to Vienna for medical advice, and before the trip, his father called him over and requested: "My son, I have two things to ask of you during your stay in Vienna. One: I know you generally like concealing your wisdom from people, but please make an exception this once. Many wealthy people from Vienna support our kollel, and I want them to be able to see the greatness they are producing. As a rabbi in the kollel, show them your strength in the Torah, as both a way to show gratitude and as a display that their money is going to a good place. And second: drop your practice of speaking to your wife with extreme reverence while you're in Vienna. People here understand it, but over there it will likely come off as strange and unusual. Please, just act normal for that time..." R' David replied: "Abba, I can uphold your first request. But as for your second appeal, it is not my decision to be made. It's not the honor of my wife; it is the honor of the Shechinah, and that's not upon me to relinquish."

By building one's relationship with the clarity that it strengthens the *shechinah* in one's home and in one's life, we come to realize that it's not only about the other individual; it is Hashem's presence and glory that flourishes with *shalom bayit*.

"You may feel overlooked by others, but you are handpicked by Hashem."

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol Esther Bat Frida Chana Bat Malka
Yitzchak Ben Naama Zohar Shimon Ben Ruchama Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel
Rahamim Ben Shifra Noah Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa Yisrael Meir Ben Daphne Bruria