

HOLY MEALS / GIVE AND GET

by Rabbi Dovid Green

1. They shall make a Temple / make an Ark / make a Table / Make a Menorah / an Altar. (25:8 - 26:1)

The Temple. A place for serving G-d.

In it - the things we'd expect to find in a Temple.

An Ark. A Menorah. An Altar.

But a table? With loaves of bread (see 25:30) on it?

There's a powerful message here.

That Jewish spirituality is not just about prayers. About religious service.

It's about sanctifying our lives. Our physical lives.

An everyday example? Eating.

Everyone eats. Animals eat.

But Judaism says: Don't just eat.

Eat in a Jewish way. And use it as an opportunity to connect to G-d.

Say a blessing first.

Thank Him for all you have. Discuss Torah thoughts at your meals.

And have guests at your table.

Because these are some of the ways we can make eating a spiritual experience

2. Speak to the children of Israel and have them take for Me a gift offering. (25:2)

An interesting choice of words. It really means, they should give a gift to the Temple.

But instead it says they should take.

... There's a cute Jewish story about 'Yankel the Cheapskate'.

It didn't matter how important the cause. No one could crack him. He just wouldn't contribute.

... One day, Yankel was crossing the river in a small boat. Suddenly, a huge storm breaks out.

And his boat capsizes.

Luckily, another boat approaches.

The guy calls out to him: 'Give me your hand. Give me your hand.'

Yankel can barely hear him over the strong winds and the roaring waves.

He hears only one word. Over and over.

'Give.' 'Give.'

And good old Yankel can't help himself.

He yells back: 'No. I don't give. I don't give.'
Again: 'Yankel. Give me your hand! Give me your hand.'
And again Yankel screams: 'Never. I don't give.'
Finally, in desperation, the rescuer yells: 'Yankel. Take my hand.'
And Yankel says: 'Oh, take? Sure.'
... There's an important Jewish perspective about charity.
That the opportunity to help others ... is just that.
An opportunity. A privilege.
And that every time we give - we are really getting.

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Good Shabbos.

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