

# IF PROPERLY PREPARED

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*G-d spoke to Moshe saying; "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him, shall you take My portion. (Shemos 25:1-2)*

Take for Me...: For Me, for My sake. (Rashi)

*They shall make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them. (Shemos 25:8)*

Make for Me a sanctuary...: Make for My sake a house of holiness. (Rashi)

"Mine is the silver and mine is the gold", so says G-d. (The Prophet Chagai)

G-d wants the heart! (Talmud-Sanhedrin)

If the major requirement to participate in the building of the Tabernacle was a generous heart then why is the language of "take" the chosen verb to express the activity? Is the act compulsory or voluntary? Why is the promised reward that "I Shall dwell among them" and not "in it", the Tabernacle? What kind of exercise is this for us mere mortals to make a house for The A-lmighty? He owns everything! What is there for us to really do or contribute?

A fund-raiser was hired to help the synagogue with its building fund and various expenses. The board of directors was anxious to hear some of his original ideas about how to get the financial side of the synagogue's activities back to working order. At the first meeting he told them about the importance of completing the building, what it would mean for them and the whole community. They all nodded in total agreement and acknowledged his skill at making the case for a new synagogue..

They were convinced by his oratory skills that they had hired the right man, until he finished his presentation. At the conclusion he demanded that half the money for the building be pledged and collected from those people present in the room or he would not go out and collect from others. Everyone was shocked, dismayed, and outraged. They had hired him to collect for them not from them. That was not the point of their contractual agreement.

He argued that he could not go out and collect from others as their agent until they had done absolutely everything they could, first. He as their agent could not replace them. He could only represent their best intentions. If they were mostly interested in relieving some financial pain the project would be limited by the smallness of their agenda. Genuine dedication was required in order to make it and make it last. A project dies not for a lack of money or imagination but for a lack of

heart, a lack of will. His logic prevailed and the project succeeded.

Rabbi Dessler explains that we tend to love the ones to whom we give more than we tend to give to the ones we love. When one plants a garden, makes a mortgage payment, teaches a student, invests love of any form in anything or anyone, then one's interest in the well-being of that project is significantly amplified. The "first-time giving" may require leveraging but a heart of caring can begin to be awakened. One becomes concerned eventually about the progress of their investment.

The Sanctuary is not just a building and neither is it "Moshe the fundraiser's project". The focus needs to be on the One Whose Presence is to be found there, exclusively with no other agendas. The Tower of Babel's head was to be stoically and statically stuck in the heavens, fulfilling "the edifice complex", as if the building is doing all the work. The Sanctuary of G-d had to be more like Jacob's ladder whose head strove dynamically and constantly for the heavens. True, no building is big enough or strong enough to contain G-d, but no heart is too feeble not to, if properly prepared.

Good Shabbos!

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