

TAKING IN THE MOST GENEROUS WAY

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)

The classic question on this opening verse is focused on the verb "take". Why was Moshe told by HASHEM to request of the Children of Israel to "take" rather than "give" Terumah- communal gifts. Also one might legitimately ask about the relevance of learning about the instructions to build the Tabernacle. How do we live up to this mandate even now?

The Baal HaTurim breaks the word Terumah into two. In the spelling of Terumah in Hebrew the letters are same as Torah with the addition of the letter "MEM". He explains cleverly and artfully that Terumah stands for the Torah that was given in 40 days. (MEM is the numerical value of 40). "This is what it means, 'And they should take for me'...Anyone who is busy with Torah is as if he has taken (for) Me!" He goes on to quote the Talmud (Brochos 8A) "Since the destruction of the Temple the only thing that HASHEM has in this world is only the four cubit of Hallacha!"

Here we have a simple formula for fulfilling the concept of what Terumah is all about! Learn Torah and perform Mitzvos with precision and proper intention and that is considered as if he has actually taken (for) HASHEM by having created a miniature but not less grandiose place for the Divine presence to fittingly reside in the this world.

It is as if he has, so to speak, grabbed the attention of the Holy one blessed be He! Now combine one more ingredient and we have a super recipe for success.

An older fellow once asked me what he could do to improve his Hebrew language skills. He also confided in me that he had little patience for studying grammar and boring memorization and that study habits were none too good either. I could seriously identify with his situation so I gave the advice that has worked best for me for many years. I recommended strongly that he teach someone else how to read Hebrew with fluency.

Right away I got the reaction I expected. The fellow responded to me as if I had not heard his

problem at all. "You don't get it! I don't know how to read Hebrew well! How can I teach it to someone else?" I insisted, "That's the point!" If you want to learn it, then teach it to someone else! The pressure of blessed coercion will motivate you, one lesson at a time, and you will become the biggest beneficiary!"

How did I know this to be true? Not just because the Talmud says, "I learned a lot from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and from my students the most!" This has been my experience and maybe my major motivation for teaching. It forces me to prepare with proper concentration. When I sit down and write Divre' Torah each week my mind is blank like a broken computer screen. When I consider that perhaps thousands of people are subscribing and even a few are actually reading them carefully, I am suddenly embarrassed into action and induced to find something print-worthy.

In the final analysis I end up producing more than I thought possible and learning more than I had initially intended. It rings more and more clearly as time goes those sagely words, "and from my students I learned the most!" So if one can possibly teach or share some Torah on whatever scale, then there is a double benefit. By giving, you're getting. By teaching Torah, then you are your actually **taking in the most generous way!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).