

INVESTING IN G-D

by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

"The men came [with] the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, body ornaments - all sorts of gold ornaments - every man who raised up an offering of gold to G-d." (Shemos/Exodus 35:22) Targum Onkelos (1) comments that the jewelry was on the women, that they came to contribute their valuables wearing them and they removed them on site to donate them to the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (2) explains that the women strove to demonstrate that they were not donating the jewelry because they had no need for it. To the contrary, the ornaments were very much appreciated, but with a full heart they gladly parted with them because their participation in the construction of G-d's earthly abode brought them greater joy.

Further, notes Rabbi Feinstein, the Torah's inclusion of these details teaches us of G-d's great appreciation of their fulfillment. The women did not give because they had no value for their possessions; rather, they gave because they had more value for their relationship with the Divine and chose to invest in it. G-d has no less appreciation for our fulfillment of mitzvos (Divine commands), whether acts of charity and kindness or Torah learning. G-d understands well the lure to utilize our time for activities that are financially beneficial - buying and selling and amassing more wealth - and the depth of conviction needed to choose to fortify the relationship.

Why is the profundity of the giving so essential? As Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (3) taught, giving inspires love, not the reverse. Contrary to instinct, I love that into which I invest myself, the child I raise, the animal I care for, even the inanimate house I build. I love that in which I toiled with my own hands because I see it as a part of me, as it says in chapter 2 of Tractate Derech Eretz Zuta, "If you desire to cling with love to your friend, toil for his benefit."

How much more so when we toil for G-d.

Have a Good Shabbos!

(1) authoritative Aramaic interpretive translation by the Tannaic-era proselytee Onkelos, c.90

(2) 1895-1986; Rosh Yeshiva/Dean of Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem in New York City; the leading Halachic/Jewish legal decisor of his time and one of the principal leaders of Torah Jewry through much of the last century

(3) 1891-1954; in Michtav Me'Eliyahu, his collected writings and discourses; from England and, later,

B'nai Brak, he was one of the outstanding personalities and thinkers of the Mussar movement; see ([Kol HaKollel - Parshas Shoftim 5765](#)).

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