

# SICHA SUMMARY

## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 26

*Vayakhel, Sicha 2*

### The Context:

Parshas Vayakhel narrates how Moshe and the Jewish people built the Mishkan according to the instructions G-d provided to Moshe in the readings of Terumah and Teztavah. This process began with the taking of donations: “Take from yourselves an offering for G-d; every generous hearted person shall bring it, [namely] G-d’s offering: gold, silver, and copper.” (Shemos 35:5)

The Kli Yakar points out that the two halves of the verse contradict each other. The verse begins with “take from yourselves an offering” which implies a mandatory offering, and then continues, “every generous hearted person shall bring it,” which implies a voluntary act of generosity. To resolve this, the commentators explain that the obligatory offering refers to the half-shekel donation that each person was mandated to give, while the second half of the verse refers to the voluntary donations

which were brought to furnish the Mishkan’s construction.

Both these offerings were alluded to in the original place of the command, in Terumah, where the verse mentions two offerings, “... Take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering.” (Shemos 25:2)

### The Question:

Yet an important distinction still remains between the command in Terumah and the execution in Vayakhel. In Terumah, even the voluntary offering is described in terms of a command, “from every person whose heart inspires him... take my offering.” In Vayakhel, the verse refers to this offering explicitly as voluntary, “every generous hearted person shall bring it.” In other words, in Terumah, the voluntary offering is taken from the donor by the officer, in Vayakhel, the voluntary offering is brought by the generous person.

What is the reason for this distinction?

### The Explanation:

The building of the Mishkan atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf. Specifically, the zeal

and passion with which the Jewish people donated to and built the Mishkan illustrated how they had repented of their passionate embrace of idolatry. In place of bringing their gold to fashion a calf, now they brought their gold to build a home for G-d.

The most important part of the repentance process is the voluntary, self-motivated act of coming closer to G-d. Giving in response to G-d's command is important, yet it is not the full arc of repentance because it is still only a reaction to a Divine command. When the Jewish people gave from their own hearts, that was the moment when they displayed their authentic repentance.

The main focus of parshas Terumah is G-d commanding the Jewish people how they were to build the Mishkan. Therefore, the voluntary offering recedes to the background and is only alluded to, not stated explicitly. The perspective is G-d's command, not the people's initiative. In Vayakhel, where the focus is on the people's execution, the voluntary offering is stated explicitly, because it is this offering that most expresses the people's role in achieving atonement and in building a home for G-d.

Furthermore, it is only through the self-motivated participation of the people

that G-d's presence is drawn into the Mishkan. When the revelation is initiated by G-d, it is temporary and does not transform the recipient, like at Sinai where the people turned to idolatry immediately after G-d's presence departed. In order for G-d to reside in the Mishkan, the people's voluntary offering was essential.

This explains another interesting anomaly. In Terumah, the verse is speaking only to the men, while in Vayakhel, Moshe addresses the entire assembly, men, women, and children. Why does the Torah only mention the women's presence in this parshah and not earlier? Women possess this quality of self-motivated participation more than men. This is why the commandment to "be fruitful and multiply" was given to men but not to women — since women naturally desire to perpetuate the Jewish family, while men need external motivation, a command.

In Terumah, where the focus is on G-d's command, only the men are mentioned for they respond to top-down commands. In Vayakhel, where the focus is on the people's eager participation in building the Mishkan, women are mentioned for they are the heart and soul of the people's self-motivated movement towards G-d.

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