

# Parshat Terumah: Give From the Heart

written by Chaya Rivka Zwolinski

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*The Lord spoke to Moses saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and have them take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart compels him to give generously, you shall take My offering. And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper; blue, purple, and crimson wool; linen and goat hair; ram skins dyed red, tachash skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the incense; shoham stones and filling stones for the ephod and for the choshen. And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst, according to all that I show you, the pattern of the Mishkan and the pattern of all its vessels; and so shall you do.  
Exodus 25:1-9*

In Parshat Terumah, Hashem explains to Moshe Rabbeinu how to build the mishkan (the sanctuary) in the desert. He instructs Moshe to collect *terumah* offerings from the people. These were offerings of items needed to build the unique and holy sanctuary, and included valuable metals, precious gems, rare dyed fabrics, animal skins, oil, wood, and so on. Hashem directs Moshe to take from those whose hearts compel them to give generously.

Rebbe Nachman explains the special nature of giving generously with all your heart. In Likutey Moharan II, Lesson 71, he teaches that when you open your heart to give, it remains open to receive from above. And what you receive in return is something more precious than metals, gems and the other offerings. When you open your heart to give, what you receive comes from the “Supernal Heart”, which is an aspect of Hashem called the *Noam HaElyon*, the Divine Pleasantness.

Giving is good even if you give because it's a mitzvah, but you don't really “feel” it. You do the right thing, but your heart isn't in it. But there is something so much more about giving with all your heart. Not only do you receive blessings and bounty in the material sense, but you also receive inner joy.

In recent years, research has been done on the traits of generosity and altruism. Two hundred plus years after Rebbe Nachman, research has shown that people who give generously experience a far greater joy than people who take. It's literally an exciting, exhilarating joy, a joy that takes your mind off your worries and troubles – a healing joy.\* When we give with heart, the Supernal Heart gives joy to us.

*May you have a day in which you give and get blessings, bounty, and joy.*

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\*Recent studies describe the effects of two primary types of happiness: hedonic happiness (pleasure-seeking) and eudaimonic (happiness from a nobler cause, particularly generosity/giving).

Compelling findings show that eudaimonic happiness significantly decreases stress-related responses in human immune cells, while hedonic happiness leads to a significant increase in stress-related responses. In other words, selfish happiness might weaken your immune system, while giving wholeheartedly heals you.