

Whose Money Is It?

"Secretary, with who is my next appointment?"

"The Head of the Department of Streets, Mr. Mayor."

"Please send him in."

"Yes sir, Mr. Mayor."

The head of the Street Department entered the Mayor's office and warmly shook his hand.

"Good to see you, Jack. To what do I know the honor of this visit?"

"The streets of our city are in a state of disrepair Mr. Mayor. Potholes abound, traffic lights need fixing, and street lines need repainting. We need an increase in our budget to pay for all of these repairs."

"How much, Jack?"

"Our estimate is about \$500,000."

The Mayor thought for a moment.

"I think we can accommodate that, Jack. Please fill out a formal request, accompanied by a detailed estimate of all expenses. At the next budget meeting, I will make sure that it gets approved."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor!"

"You're welcome and have a good day."

And so it went. Appointment after appointment, most of them requesting budget increases. The Mayor calmly answered all of them, saying that the city would find the money to meet their needs. Then his secretary entered with a piece of paper.

"What is this?"

"A bill from the electric company. They are increasing your rates 20%."

"What?!? 20%?!? That's highway robbery! They can't get away with this! I will fight them to the last penny!"

The secretary was astounded. The Mayor, who was normally cool, calm, and collected about money matters, was in a rage over this electric bill.

"Mr. Mayor, may I ask you something?"

"Yes."

"You are always so calm when people ask you for money. Why are you upset now?"

"When people ask for budget money I give it to them. Why not? I did not work hard to earn that money. This electric bill is different. I must pay it from **MY** pocket with **MY** money that I worked very hard for."

"I see."

The verse states, "Take from yourselves a *trumah* for Hashem, everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it" (Shemos 35:5). It presents an apparent contradiction. "Take from yourselves a *trumah* for Hashem," sounds

like the *trumah* is being taken forcibly from the people against their will. "Everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it," sounds as if they are bringing the *trumah* willfully from the generosity of their hearts. How is the *trumah* given? Willingly or forcibly? The Keli Yakar explains that the verse describes two types of people. The first type thinks that he is solely responsible for his wealth. As the verse states, "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth" (Devarim 8:17). He finds it very difficult to part with **"HIS"** money. Therefore, you must take the *trumah* from him. The second type of person realizes that everything is from the Almighty. As the verse states, "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold" (Chagai 2:8). He sees himself as only a treasurer (so to speak) of Hashem's budget. Therefore, he has no problem returning some of Hashem's money back to Him.



Kinderlach . . .

Many people collect *tsedaka* for many good causes. How do we react to their asking for a donation? Do we give begrudgingly, thinking to ourselves, "Why do I have to give **MY** money to this man? Can't he work for his money like I do?" Or, do we give with an open heart, thinking, "Hashem gave me a very big mitzvah of *tsedaka*, and He even gave me the money to fulfill this mitzvah. Now He brought a poor person right here in front of me. How wonderful! I hardly need to do anything to fulfill this important mitzvah. Thank you *tsedaka* collector for bringing me this mitzvah. And thank you Hashem for being so good to me!"

All the Way Back

Klal Yisrael had reached the pinnacle of human existence. Standing before Hashem at Har Sinai, "k'ish ehad b'lev

echad" (like one man with one heart) in perfect unity, they received the Torah. In order to make them fitting for this holy event, Hashem brought them to the spiritual level of Adam HaRishon before the *Chet Eitz Hadaas* (sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge). He removed the *zuhamah* (spiritual dirt) from them and they became pure. Only 39 days later, they turned away from the Almighty, and served the *Egel HaZahav* (Golden Calf). What a terrible shame! How could they ever recover from such a grievous sin?

"Moshe assembled the entire congregation of the Children of Israel" (Shemos 35:1). The Arizal explains that this was their *tikkun* (correction) for the *Chet Ha'egel*. They had sinned by gathering together for an evil purpose, as the verse states, "The people congregated around Aharon and said to him, 'Arise, make us a god who will lead us'" (Shemos 32:1). Therefore, they must now gather together to rectify that sin. They sinned with the word "*aileh*" (these), as the verse states, "These are your gods, Yisrael" (Shemos 32:4). Now they must correct their sin with the word "*aileh*," as the verse states, "These are the things that The Eternal has commanded you to do" (Shemos 35:1). They sinned by accepting *Avodah Zara* (worship of a foreign god). This is likened to denying the entire Torah. Therefore, the repentance came via two mitzvos that are weighed against the entire Torah: Shabbos and Mishkan. As the verse states, "Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be holy for you" (Shemos 35:2). Although they had fallen from a great height, they were able to come back. Moshe Rabbeinu showed them they way: realize their mistakes and correct them.

Kinderlach . . .

What a light of encouragement for us! The Jewish people were able to do teshuva from the *Chet Ha'egel*, one of the worst sins in history. When they corrected their ways, Hashem welcomed them back with open arms (so to speak). How much more so are we able to do teshuva from our *aveyros*. It just takes a realization of what we did wrong, and a firm resolve to correct it. When we succeed, with Hashem's help, we will also reach the level of having the Shechina (Divine Presence) dwell among us.

Parasha Questions

- Is it permitted to build the Mishkan on Shabbos? (Rashi 35:2)
- What did the princes bring for the Mishkan? (35:27-28)
- Who was the mother of Chur? (Rashi 35:30)
- How many clips of copper held the ohel together? (36:18)