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Parshat Terumah, in accordance with its name, speaks about Bnei Yisrael's donations to the building of the Mishkan. Hashem commanded Moshe to speak to Bnei Yisrael, "and they will take for me a donation from every person whose heart is so moved (25:2)." I found the phrasing of this request to be quite intriguing. Hashem could have commanded Moshe to collect donations for the Mishkan and allocate a certain sum for every individual depending on their economic status; however, Hashem gives over complete responsibility to Moshe and the klal.

Sforno explains that "from every person" does not have the same connotation as does the general principle of tzedakah, where someone pledges a certain amount or gives what he can afford (within reason); this is a unique request that requires each person to decide for themselves "what they're moved to give" at the moment. They are not being forced to pay an exorbitant fee for a shul membership where they're unsure where their money is going towards. Rather, they have the choice to

give what their hearts desire in a momentous gift to Hashem.

They know exactly where their money is going and the amount they choose to give is being evaluated solely by the One above. Furthermore, if any member of Bnei Yisrael makes the executive decision not to donate, there "just" won't be a Mishkan, as the *Eimek Davar* so aptly states. *Bnei Yisrael's actions are directly influencing the next steps of their journey, resulting in spiritual consequences, both for themselves and their future children.* The phrasing of Hashem's request for donations is done in a non-pressure, individualized manner to give room to the individual to do as he sees fit, but in the context of shared, mutual responsibility. As we see fairly quickly, Bnei Yisrael does not hesitate for a moment in donating to the Mishkan and quickly goes above and beyond.

There is something beautiful and uplifting in the fact that the start of the commandment of the Mishkan was done

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through complete selfless action -individualized philanthropy- allowing for each person to serve a greater, communal cause while also staying true to their own heart. ■

The OU's Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC) is creating and nurturing vibrant religious communities in Israel to support English-speaking college students and young professionals. JLIC Israel's goals include: building a warm and welcoming Jewish community for students and young professionals; providing engaging and dynamic Jewish education; providing a supportive home environment for Olim; providing resources for personal and religious growth, including personal mentoring, Aliyah support, religious guidance and leadership development. Current JLIC programs in Israel include: Reichman University - Herzliya; Bar Ilan University - Givat Shmuel; Tel Aviv University; Tel Aviv for Young Professionals; and Jerusalem. Contact: Rabbi Jonathan Shulman, Director of OU-JLIC in Israel shulmanj@ou.org



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