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FEAST AND FORGIVE

Parshas Terumah describes the magnificent items housed in the *Mishkan*, such as the *Aron*, the *Mizbeach*, and others. Each one was crafted with awe and reverence, as every vessel had a special and specific purpose in the *Mishkan*. Not only did they have their outward functions, but they also affected the spiritual realms as well.

The *Mizbeach*, for example, was a source of forgiveness. When one would sin, they would bring their *korban* before Hashem. By going through the process of bringing a sacrifice, one would reflect on their misdeeds, repent, and this process would culminate with the burning of the sacrifice, and their absolution.

This raises the question, now that we no longer have the *Mishkan*, the *Beis Hamikdash*, and these important vessels, what conduit do we have to bring blessing into the world? What do we have that will help us receive forgiveness from Hashem?

The *Gemara*¹ explains that every one of us has something that mimics the *Mizbeach*. In our homes we have a table, a place where we sit down to eat. The *Gemara* states that if we specifically design our meals to be able to include those who are less fortunate, our own table has the same effect as the *Mizbeach* in the *Beis Hamikdash*!

The *Ben Yehoyada*² elaborates on this — if, because of our desire to supply the poor with food, we elongate our meals just to have something immediately available in cases someone shows up, we merit this special forgiveness.

The *mitzvah* of *hachnasos orchim*, inviting guests, may often be overlooked. At best, one may think it's a 'nice thing to do,' and at worst, one may feel it's a cumbersome burden. However, the reality is totally different. Helping the less fortunate with food connects one to Hashem in the same manner as the *Mizbeach* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Is there anything more worthwhile or valuable?

¹ Berachos 55a

² *ibid.*, s.v. דילמא אתי

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

A familiar thought that may prevent one from helping others is, "What if I don't leave enough for myself?" This thinking is common enough amongst adults, but is readily seen among children. Between siblings or friends, it can be very difficult to share a favored toy.

What can we do to inspire ourselves to give of our belongings to others?

It is important to note and remember that Hashem is the Source of all wealth, and He can replenish any cost associated with helping others.¹

In fact, not only does Hashem compensate one for their kindness, but He gives more than one spent in the first place!²

Dwelling on these thoughts can instill confidence and even excitement at the prospect of being able to share our prosperity with others.

¹ *Derech Eretz Zutah*, Chap. 4

² *Ahavas Chessed*, *Chelek 2*, Chap. 8

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**The part of Torah that is considered
the 'light' that returns people to
Hashem is the study of Mussar. - R'
Shmuel Topalinsky, Kuntres HaTzava'ah,
Chap. 6, Note 2**

ON THE HOUSE

Though they had never met, it was of utmost importance to Reb Avraham Krohn* that he have the great tzaddik Reb Sholom Shwadron lodge at his home, when he visits from *Eretz Yisrael*. With some work, he had successfully secured R' Sholom Shwadron's acceptance of his invitation, and anticipated the day of his arrival. With his family in tow, R' Avraham met R' Sholom at the airport, and the two hit it off immediately.

After arriving at the Krohn household and settling in, R' Sholom insisted that he be allowed to pay rent for his extended stay. Though Reb Avraham adamantly refused, Reb Sholom stood firm, explaining that he would rather find another place to stay if he were not allowed to pay for his lodgings. Reluctantly, R' Avraham agreed and sat down to determine what a fair fee would be.

When Reb Avraham told Reb Sholom the cost, though Reb Sholom was privately surprised by the expense, he heartily agreed, knowing that there really was nowhere else where he would feel as comfortable as the Krohn household.

The months passed, and their friendship grew. Sadly, the time had come for Reb Sholom to head back home to Eretz Yisrael. This time, he chose to return home by boat. The Krohns accompanied Reb Sholom to the dock, to say their goodbyes.

In the privacy of R' Sholom's cabin, Reb Avraham handed him a large envelope. "This is your rent money of the last five months." Before Reb Sholom could utter a startled word, he continued, "I never even *considered* that I would take a penny for your being at our home. If anything, we should have been paying you. These are the exact bills you gave me. I never used them, they went straight into the envelope."

R' Sholom was taken aback by this sudden revelation. "Tell me," he laughed, "if this was your intent all along, why did you quote such a high price for the rent?"

Reb Avraham smiled and said, "I wanted you to feel as free as possible in our home. If you felt you weren't paying enough, you might have hesitated to take advantage of the phones, the electricity, and the food. But if you were paying a good price, you would feel free to do as you pleased."

With tears in their eyes, the two men embraced as they bid each other farewell.

*Adapted from The Maggid Speaks by Rabbi Paysach Krohn.

DID YOU KNOW?

- One can fulfill the *mitzvah* of *hachnasos orchim* with one who does not need the food by graciously hosting and properly honoring the guest.¹
- The righteous of France had a magnificent custom, where they would make a coffin out of the deceased's dining room table. This was to signify that the only thing one takes with them when they pass is their good deeds and charity done for others.²

¹ *Sefer Yesh Nochlin*, Chap. 2, Note 7

² *Rabbeinua Bachya* on *Shemos* 25:23, s.v. ועשית שלחן