

**Parshat Terumah:
Commitment to the Cause: How to Inspire People to Work Together**
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The construction of the mishkan, which begins this week and spans a few parshiot, is a surprisingly smooth process. Initially, it is a process of which we should be wary. God commands Moshe to command the people to build the mishkan without providing much of a plan. Yes, we know the materials that need to be used, but there is no specific plan to gather the materials or execute the construction. Instead of relying on planning and strategizing, the construction of the mishkan relies simply on the *nedivat lev*, or generosity of the heart, in order to be built.

Viewed cynically, we would expect this process to fail. Why would a group of recently freed slaves want to part with their new material possessions? How could a group of low-skill workers be able to complete complicated tasks that required special skills? Are the Israelites going to be capable of working together to build this structure?

The cynic is quickly proven wrong. The Israelites rush to give their possessions to serve as the building materials. They work together, under Betzalel's supervision, and the construction seems to go smoothly. There isn't a single recorded incident of disagreement, of anything going wrong.

Because this is such a special moment, it behooves us to ask - what went right? So many times in the Torah, things have gone wrong - Moshe gives the people instructions, and they refuse to listen. Or they do listen, but they do so begrudgingly. What happened here that made a group of people known to their own God as being an *am k'shei oref*, a stubborn-necked nation, accept these instructions without any hesitation or pushback? How did that happen?

An answer to this question lies in an examination of the terminology used to refer to the workers, and the leaders of the project. In Terumah this week, God commands the people that all of them who have *nedivat lev*, or generosity of heart, should come give materials, and build the mishkan. And then in Vayakhel, this is fulfilled when the people who come to give all of their materials and participate in the building are described as as being *nedivat lev*. The phrase itself is a bit odd, and is usually understood to describe someone whose heart moved them to give. Rav Hirsch adds that *nadav* means to flow from an inner source, and *lev* is to emphasize that it is internal to that person - in other words, as he says, the phrase *nedivat lev* is in the Torah to show us that each person felt this generosity in their core, and gave exclusively out of their own desire to do so, with no element of coercion, or peer pressure. Everyone who contributed did so because they really truly wanted to help.

This term appears in partnership with the words *chacham lev*, which the Torah uses to describe the people who led the project, particularly Betzalel.

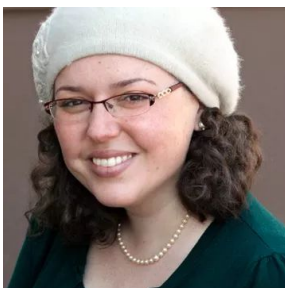
Chacham lev is a difficult term to translate coherently - literally, it means wise in the heart. It indicates a wisdom necessary to perform the actual work, but also a genuine *desire* to be doing it, and real *love* for what

one is doing. We often think of our minds and our hearts to be two opposing entities, pulling us in two different directions - logic, versus emotion. But here, the two are united, and the leaders had both wisdom but also a real emotional connection to their work. They were talented and able to do the work - that's *chacham*, and they also really loved what they were doing - that's *lev*.

In 1960 Douglas McGregor, who was a management professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management, published a book called "The Human Side of Enterprise". In this book Professor McGregor offered a strong critique of standard management practices at companies. He argued that current models of management failed to speak to and satisfy employees because managers were operating under the assumption that they had to strongly regulate an employee's expected output, or else the employee would be lazy and not complete his or her task. McGregor argued that this model was incorrect, because, with proper motivation, human beings enjoy working, and will work hard to complete a task if they are properly managed and feel that their work is appreciated.

I believe that this is what the wording of *chacham lev* is here to teach us. Not only were the leaders of the construction of the mishkan both smart (*chacham*) and and passionate about their work (*lev*), but they were also wise in the matter of hearts. They understood their workers' emotions. Their leadership in this project succeeded because they not only were they good at what they did, and not only did they love what they did, but they understood what it takes to motivate and inspire people to work together in a common project. And it is this characteristic of being a *chacham lev* that inspired in the people the trait of *nedivut lev*, of wanting to give as much of themselves as possible to the project. The brilliance of the task to build the mishkan and the way that they carried it out was that it made every person feel valuable, and that they had something to contribute. It's the most perfect working model imaginable - everyone can contribute their own unique talents to one single project. This stands in stark contrast to the construction of the beit ha mikdash that we read about in haftorah, which relied on imported materials and conscripted laborers.

This teaches us an important lesson. Work that is done with love and excitement is eternal. Work that is done by people who don't feel valued will eventually crumble. We will all find ourselves as the leaders in certain projects, whether they are at work, at shul, or at home. As we see in this week's parsha, our biggest challenges is not just to get the work done, but to figure out how to lead and inspire along the way. It takes a lot more energy, but the effects are eternal.



Maharat Ruth Balinsky Friedman is a member of the inaugural class of Maharat. She serves as Maharat at Ohev Sholom - The National Synagogue in Washington DC. Maharat Ruth is deeply committed to working to ensure that Jewish communal structures provide sensitivity and support to individuals and couples struggling with fertility challenges, and she is honored to serve on The Red Stone Advisory Committee. She is a proud member of both the Chicago and Washington Boards of Rabbis, and she sits on the Executive Committee of the board of the International Rabbinic Fellowship, of which she is also a member. Maharat Ruth is also a founding member of the Beltway VAAD.