

## **Parashat Vayakhel – Pekudei: Money and Religion – March 9, 2013**

Vayakhel, the first of the two Parashot we read this week, reminds us that Moses requested free will offerings from the people for the construction of the tabernacle, something that we already studied in Parshat Terumah. This was probably the first fundraising campaign for a sanctuary in history.

*The Torah says: "And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing and brought the Lord's offering, for the work of the tent of meeting, and for all the service thereof, and for the holy garments."*

It is obvious that Jewish institutions require the support of their members. However there are some of those members to whom the only mention of funds in connection with Judaism makes them think money and spirituality can't go together. But for Judaism, in opposition to other traditions, money is not inherently bad; it can be used at the service of spiritual purposes.

Money can become our master or our slave. If we allow it to become our master, we make it our idol. If we control it, using our resources in a wise way and we give with generosity to good causes, money can be a source of blessing.

The more we involve ourselves contributing in a cause the more the cause elevates us. So it is with Jewish institutions: We must not "starve" our institutions and Jewish causes if we wish to prevent "spiritual starvation" for ourselves and our future.

Shabbat Shalom!