

February 18, 2010

Shabbat Shalom!

Giving is an act that can be selfless, anonymous and purposeful, or touched by personal motives to make a public statement. It can be voluntary or required, with both resulting in providing much needed assistance or support. Giving can be in the form of money, items, time or an act of kindness. The reward for giving may be a name on a list or a deep and private feeling of satisfaction or fulfillment.

In the Torah reading for this week, T'rumah, the Israelites were commanded to give, "as their hearts moved them," personal items of value that could be used in the building of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, the Israelites' portable house of worship. The root for T'rumah means to "raise up" or to be at a high level. Our contributions or donations to worthy causes do have the potential to raise us up – to enhance our integrity, to exalt our character, and to take us to a place where we have a divine perspective of the equality of all people and the importance of fulfilling their needs as much as we are able.

Giving can begin in our own community, and then extend to the entire human family. What we contribute can demonstrate our awareness regarding the needs of people around the world as well and reflect the empathy that can move us to acts of generosity. May all that we give serve to exalt our vision and raise our hopes for a better world.

-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry