



# True Value

Dear Parents,

The ability to make an accurate evaluation of the value of an item or service is a greatly sought-after expertise that can earn someone a very fine living. The ability to properly evaluate the value of what path to take in life and the methods by which to achieve it, can earn one a very fine life! Understanding what is truly valuable is a key to success in living a life of Avodas Hashem and to a life of happiness.

Our Parasha begins with a listing of the items that Klal Yisrael donated at the time of the construction of the Mishkan. They included the precious stones - the Avnei Shoham and the Avnei Miluim. (Shemos 25:7) The Ohr HaChaim asks why were these very valuable stones listed at the end of the eleven items - surely they were more valuable than even the gold and silver?

In his third answer, the Ohr HaChaim, quoting the Gemora in Yoma 75a, explains that these stones were brought by the clouds (of Glory) and came directly from heaven. This means that they came without effort or expense on the part of Klal Yisrael. Therefore, concludes the Ohr HaChaim, they are only listed after the other items, for the other items required effort and expense for them to be brought as gifts to the Mishkan.

In considering what is truly valuable and worthwhile, we learn a clear lesson from the Ohr HaChaim. As the resting place for the Shechina, one would expect that the appearance of the Mishkan and all parts of the Avoda, would prioritize being an embodiment of the greatest value and beauty. Its grandeur and magnificence would seemingly arouse great emotion and passion and draw people to Hashem. What is more special and more awe inspiring than a precious gem with its many splended sparkle and radiance?

Yet, these easy to come by items of great physical and natural beauty pale in comparison to items of lesser value, that were acquired through greater effort. Hashem finds greater value in something produced through effort, than something that radiates physical beauty, now matter how stunningly gorgeous it appears.

This understanding can illuminate our way in raising and educating our children. What matters most is not what looks good for the moment, or will generate compliments from well meaning relatives and friends. We must not dwell on how good our children look, how perfect their art creations appear or how well-mannered they can (pretend to) be at someone's Shabbos table. Rather, we want them to try to improve, and not for them to appear perfect.

The messes and bumps and scrapes and screams along the way are not a stumbling block preventing children from being beautiful and successful - they are the way to achieve those goals! A child will achieve success if he or she is used to stretching and making efforts, to figuring it out. They cannot have parents doing for them, smoothing the path for them and acquiescing to their every want with gifts falling from heaven. Children who never make an effort and yet are gifted with many things, will have a hard life.

Our role is to ensure our children go through the proper training for a life filled with challenges big and small, and the occasional disasters that everyone encounters at one time or another. Building resilience, grit and the fortitude to not be overly fazed by difficulties are the greatest gift of true value we can give them. Hashem preferred lesser beauty and greater effort for His house - we can strive for no less for our house - our children.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos*,



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