

Taxes

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"...Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely Hashem is Present in this place and I did not know!' And he became frightened and said, 'How Awesome is this place! This is none other than the Abode of G-d and this is the Gate of the heavens!' Jacob arose early in the morning and took the stone that he placed around his head and set it up as a pillar; and he poured oil on its top. And he named that place Beit-El; however, Luz was the city's name originally. Then Jacob took a vow, saying, 'If G-d will Be with me, will Guard me on this way that I am going; will Give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I return in peace to my father's house, and Hashem Will Be for me a Judge--then this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall become a House of G-d, and whatever You Will Give me, I shall repeatedly tithe to you.'" (Genesis 28:16-22).

Construction of the Temple:

"Moses said to the entire assembly of the children of Israel, saying: This is the Word that Hashem Has Commanded, Saying: Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem, everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as the gift for Hashem: gold, silver, copper; turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool; linen, goat hair; red-dyed ram skins, tachash skins, acacia wood; oil for illumination, spices for the anointment oil, and the aromatic incense; shoham stones and stones for the settings, for the Ephod and the Breastplate. Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that Hashem Has Commanded: The Tabernacle, its Tent, and its Cover... Every man whose heart inspired him came; and everyone whose spirit motivated him brought the portion of Hashem for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its labor and for the Sacred Vestments..." (Exodus 35:4-10,21).

Tribute to Hashem:

"It was on the day that Moses finished erecting the Tabernacle, that he anointed it, sanctified it and all its utensils, and the Altar and all its utensils, and he had anointed and sanctified them. The leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' household, brought offerings; they were the leaders of the tribes, they were those who stand at the countings. They brought their offering before Hashem: six covered wagons and twelve oxen--a wagon for each two leaders and an ox for each--and they brought them before the Tabernacle. Hashem Said to Moses, Saying, 'Take from them, and they shall be to perform the work of the Tent of Meeting; you shall give them to the Levites, each man according to his work..." (Numbers 7:1-5).

Consecrated items and tithes:

The valuation of consecrated items, including the vow of a person, a consecrated animal, house, or property, the redemption of consecrated items, and exchanges for tithes, are all Discussed in Leviticus 27. The gifts and tithes of the Kohanim and Levites are Described in Numbers 18. The tithe of the bread in Numbers 15:17-21, the tithe of the crops in Deuteronomy 14:22-27, the first fruits in Deuteronomy 26:1-15; in addition to the tithe of the animals and the firstborn of the livestock. The tithes that belong to G-d are brought to His Temple and used in His Service, to safeguard the Charge of His Covenant. This is the role of the government, and the taxes are used to fulfill the Word of Hashem, with all the expenses of governance.

System of taxation:

"Hashem Spoke to Moses, Saying: When you take a census of the children of Israel according to their numbers, every man shall give Hashem an atonement for his soul when counting them, so that there will not be a plague among them when counting them. This shall they give--everyone who passes through the census--a half shekel of the sacred shekel, the shekel is twenty gera, half a shekel as a portion to Hashem. Everyone who passes through the census, from twenty years of age and up, shall give the portion of Hashem... You shall take the silver of the atonement from the children of Israel and give it for the work of the Tent of Meeting; and it shall be a remembrance before Hashem for the children of Israel, to atone for your souls." (Exodus 30:11-14,16).

People cannot be counted like sheep, nor considered like property, for the worth of a person is his soul. The government cannot count bodies without considering their spirits, and it cannot tax people without considering their value. Taxation is not an empty thing--it must be done for a reason. The toil of spirits belongs to Hashem, for it is G-d Who Gave us life, and He is the length of our days. Our life belongs to G-d, and we are Redeemed in the Service of our Judge; for the Decrees of Hashem Benefit our spirits and Bless our existence. The government has no right to tax us, unless it is a representation of Hashem; for only to G-d do we pay tribute, as He is the only Spirit above us. No leader has a right to count his people and tax the hours of their lives, for himself; only for Hashem can this be done.

The tax of the government should be considered like a loan. Everything the government takes from its people, must be returned with interest, in the benefit of its investment. When the people offer from themselves to build and serve the House of G-d, they are Blessed with success and Sanctified with a Good life; the return is Tremendous, and it is Great, for they are Redeemed by their Creator and Guarded and Provided for by the Almighty. Such is the Role of the government, to provide atonement for the people through their taxes. The government provides Justice, Security, and Truth, to care for the people through success and hardship, for all Israel is responsible for one another, in the fulfillment of its Covenant. Whatever is invested in public works should be judged according to the benefit. The officials should be paid according to the value of their service, and all the responsibilities of government should be performed according to their benefit. Society should not pay for a service it doesn't need, and it is not a Commandment, lest the government be deemed a thief, and the spirits of the people serve its corruption.

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