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Posted July 30, 2009, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

WHEN GIVING A LITTLE IS A LOT, AND GIVING A LOT IS A LITTLE IN THE YERUSHALMI

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Fundraising has always been a difficult business, apparently. This week's passage isn't just for study; it's for real. Unfortunately, Maqom has been affected by the economic downturn to the point that it will have to close within a few months if things don't change. So I'm asking you, if you've ever benefited from Maqom's presence on the web, please make a donation now, either by using the link below or by sending a tax-deductible check to Maqom, POB 323, 5300 N. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, TX 77096.

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Two more things: (1) If your community brings scholars-in-residence, please consider bringing me. (2) If you enjoy this learning, please buy my books, new. They're all over the internet. Maqom makes no royalties if you buy them used. In both cases, all proceeds go to Maqom.

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Said R. Yehudah: Why must a home baker separate 1/24 of his dough as challah offering? Because he generous with his dough.

And why must a professional baker separate 1/48 of his dough? Because he is stingy with his dough.

[Why the different proportions?]

The home baker's amount of dough is small in volume and would not contain an adequate gift to the priest [if it were only 1/48 of the total].

But the baker's dough is large in volume and contains an adequate gift for the priest [even if only 1/48 is separated]. (Y Challah 2:3)

This text is discussing how much dough must be taken from a batch and given as a gift to the priests. (Or, in these days, burned.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Here we have a classic problem in fund raising. Some people give less proportionally, but it's more in actual amount. Others give more proportionally, but it's smaller in actual amount. Is the Yerushalmi's solution a good one, demanding relatively more from the home baker?
2. This could also be seen as the difference between personal and corporate givers. In that case, what is the Yerushalmi telling us?

Please think, and act, generously. It is truly needed.