

**Parashat Terumah - 'Heave Offering' (Exodus 25:1-27:19)**

The title for this week's Scripture portion comes from the second verse:

***Daber el-b'nei Yisra'el v'yikchu-li t'ruma me'et kol-ish asher yidvenu libo tikchu et-t'rumati.***

***Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.***

This week's portion is about preparing for the building of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle]. To provide for the materials, G-d told Moses to collect them from willing Israelites. Sadly, like many of our Bible words, the word "offering" has been so polluted with misapplication that we can easily miss what is happening in this week's parasha.

First, *t'rumah* does not mean "offering" in the sense of a sacrifice - nor does it mean "offering" in the sense of a collection plate being passed in front of people's noses. It is nothing like those things (the first being G-d mandated, the second a **horrible perversion**).

The abuse of this passage by countless church leaders is quite scandalous. In efforts to follow through on what "church growth" consultants have told them about the "build it and they will come" mentality of "seekers," they have manipulated this passage and others to hold over the heads of people. How ironic it is that the same church leaders who use "tithe and offerings" from the Hebrew Scriptures to promote their man-made building programs and agendas - also deny the continuity of other parts of the Torah that they declare "fulfilled." I call it selective "fulfillment." Ah, "fulfilled" - there is another horribly twisted word in religious circles - but that is for another discussion.

Beloved, *t'rumah* is about lifting up Messiah - and not building beautiful buildings that are **empty from the actual Presence of the Almighty**, as every church and synagogue building is. To understand this, we must dig deeper into this week's and next week's portions. So much about the *Mish'kan* has been confused by our theologies, that sometimes it is unrecognizable.

Before we look into this word *t'rumah*, that defines these chapters, let's consider the question, "Why build a Tabernacle?"

Was the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] to be "G-d's House" as buildings today are so often (incorrectly) referred? Is there any correlation? **Absolutely and unequivocally, NO.** Let the Almighty answer the question of why it was to be built:

***V'asu li Mik'dash v'shakhanti b'tokham.***

***And let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.***

Exodus 25:8

This *Mik'dash* [Sanctuary] is called the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] in the next verse. What was its purpose? Does the infinite G-d need a **house** made with human hands? **No.** Does there need to

be a structure built according to the pattern that HaShem showed Moses while on the Mountain in order for G-d's people to worship Him? **No**. Not then, not now. What then is the reason?

It is for this important reason: "...that I may dwell [*sh'kan* as in *Sh'kinah*] among [*in*] them." Read that again. "... among [*in*] them." Repeat it with me:

**b'tokham** [among them]

**b'tokham** [among them]

**b'tokham** [among them]

"Among them" or "in them." That is the reason for the *Mish'kan* and the Holy Temple - **not** for the "forgiveness" of sins. **Not** for the sacrifices. **Not** for teaching the Word to people. **Not** for a gathering space for the people. One reason **only**: **that the very Presence of the Almighty would be among us**. To be sure, it would be a place where offerings were made, cleansing occurred, and where the Torah was taught. It would be a place that the early followers of Messiah Yeshua would gather to worship the Almighty alongside all Israel - but all of those are the **effects** of HaShem dwelling among us - and therein lies the majority of misunderstandings regarding the Tabernacle and the offering system. G-d passionately wants to **dwell among His people**. It is about "getting back to the Garden" where G-d and man fellowshiped. It is why the imagery of the Way to the Tree of Life [*Derekh etz ha-Chaim*, Gen 3:24] was evident in both the *Mish'kan* and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. It is why the early followers of Messiah Yeshua referred to themselves as *Ha-Derekh* [the Way].

So why did the Sages name this portion *t'rumah*? What does *t'rumah* really mean?

The root of *t'rumah* is *rum* [*resh-vav-mem*]. This root verb means "to lift up." The first usage is found in Genesis 7:17:

*Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and **lifted up** the ark, and it rose high above the earth.*

Genesis 7:17

*T'rumah* is about "lifting up." That is why some translations render this "heave offering" instead of the theologically scrubbed "offering." It is speaking of what is done with the *t'rumah*. **It is lifted up**. Hold that thought for a moment as we explore how that word might be used in the Apostolic Scriptures. To do that, we need to take a brief excursion into our "Rosetta Stone" for moving between Greek and Hebrew – that is, the Septuagint [also known as LXX]. Since the LXX was translated 300 years before the Apostolic Scriptures, we can have confidence that it was not tainted with the biases between Judaism and Christianity as is evidenced in so many later works.

How does the LXX translate *t'rumah*? It uses the Greek word *aparche*. Some Greek dictionaries will translate this into English as "first fruits." There are other Hebrew words for the offering known as "first fruits," but the reason the Seventy sages of the Septuagint chose to translate *t'rumah* to *aparche* is not to denote what kind of offering it was - but what was done with it: **to lift it up**.

*Aparche* is a word used eight times in the Apostolic Scriptures, and usually translated into English as "first fruits" because the Greek construction of the word speaks of either chronology or hierarchy. It is this last meaning that our LXX translators honed in on - this *t'rumah* was to be **lifted up** and to be their **chief contribution**.

Beloved, *t'rumah*, *aparche*, is about **lifting up**, in order that we may experience the Presence of the Almighty **dwelling among us**. In those heady days at the foot of Mount Sinai, we **lifted up** the materials used to construct the *Mish'kan*, the Tabernacle. After we **lifted up**, Moses' faithfully recounted the pattern. Betzalel, filled with the Spirit of Wisdom, constructed the Ark and the furnishings. Aaron and his sons were anointed. The *Mish'kan* and all of its furnishings were anointed. And then... the Presence of the Almighty came down and filled that place.

The infinite G-d filled **a space**.

The Holy One, blessed is He, rested **among** men.

The Invisible, and Incomprehensible One - was "**seen**" and perceived.

His *Sh'kinah* physically **dwelt among us!**

What did we do? *T'rumah* - we **lifted up**. What did we lift up? The material, of what would be patterned after the immaterial shown to Moses while on the Mountain.

One day soon we may well see a Holy Temple constructed in Jerusalem. Count me as first in line to worship there. Unlike so many theologians, I am not bound by man-made dispensational theories or by man-made divisions of our G-d's Holy Torah. I know that in our present state, there can be nothing comparable to being in the Place where the very Presence of the Almighty dwells.

But there is something else that this week's portion points to. Something, or Someone else Who was *t'rumah*. It is our Master Yeshua. He is the *t'rumah* of HaShem. He was **lifted up**, so that the Holy One of Israel, blessed is He, could **dwelt among [in] us**. He is our present *Mish'kan*. And we ourselves must **lift Him up**.

Yeshua is the *t'rumah*. Yeshua is the *aparche* in the Apostolic Scriptures.

*But now Messiah is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits [aparche] of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.*

1Corinthians 15:20-21

We too are His *t'rumah*. We are His heave offering lifted up. We are His *aparche*.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits [aparche] of His creatures.*

James 1:17-18

Now aren't you glad we did not merely read the words, "...bring me an offering [t'rumah]" and leave it at that?

Beloved, as you read this week's Scripture portion don't play the usual game of spiritualizing everything about the *Mish'kan*. At the same time, try to wrap your mind around the concept of **v'shakhanti b'tokham** [that I may dwell among them].

And the Word was made flesh, and **tabernacled among us...**

John 1:14b

### **Haftarat Terumah - 'Heave Offering' (1Kings 5:26-6:13)**

Many Christian commentators have focused on the "spiritual" aspects of the Tabernacle (and the later Temple), and in the process missed the entire point. Let's not repeat the same mistake. The instructions concerning the *Mish'kan* were real; the *Mish'kan* was real; the purpose was real. Remember, beloved, Scripture is always about the "here and now." When it ceases to be something that you must apply in life, then you are in serious danger.

The *haftarah* portion from the Prophets is connected to the Torah portions because as the Torah portion details the *Mish'kan*, the *haftarah* portion details the building of the First Temple in Jerusalem. Of course, they go together.

Many believers have no concern for the *Mish'kan*, or the Temple. Sometimes we are too quick to quote 1Corinthians 3:16 ("... you are the Temple of G-d..."). A spiritualizing of faith practice seems to somehow negate the need for a Temple. **How wrong, and how misguided.** The zeal of our Messiah in this regard is sadly lacking in most believers today. You see, Messiah had a zeal for the Holy Temple. He had this zeal for one reason. It is the reason for the *Mish'kan* and the later Holy Temple. It was because of their very purpose. Remember the reason?

*V'asu li Mik'dash v'shakhanti b'tokham.*

*And let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

Exodus 25:8

No amount of human machinations in justifying cathedrals, vast "church buildings," or "Build the Vision" programs can manufacture that promise. Calling such buildings "G-d's house" is blasphemous, and comparing the instructions in this week's Torah portion for collecting for the *Mish'kan* to the man-centered fundraising of the American church is disgusting. No, the *Mish'kan* was different. The First and Second Temple were different. The difference is not some ethereal "the presence of the L-rd is here" – it is about a real *Sh'kinah*, a real Dwelling Presence of HaShem. **Really Him.** Really experienced by worshippers. No, we are not nearly zealous enough for the Holy Temple. If we were, we would pray daily for its rebuilding. Beloved, that site is the site where He has placed His Name... **forever.**

Here is how our *haftarah* ends, with the completion of the First Temple by Solomon.

*Concerning this Temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will*

*perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.*

1Kings 6:12-13

Of course replacement theology ignores the command to obey His commandments (all of them), and must make this into some sort of conditional promise, ignoring the parallel passage of 2Chronicles:

*Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that **My Name may be there forever**; and My eyes and My heart will be there **perpetually**.*

2Chronicles 7:15-16

Beloved, the *Mish'kan* and the First and Second Temples were His dwelling place. Make no mistake about it. **G-d was (is) there**. Our faith and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem are inextricably tied together. We should seek its rebuilding, and long for its times of offering - evening, morning, and afternoon. You see, our spiritual ancestors, the first *talmidim* [disciples] of Yeshua were dedicated to the Temple, and worshipping HaShem there. After Messiah's resurrection, it was the meeting place of His followers.

*And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing G-d. Amen.*

Luke 24:52-53

Beloved, as you read this week's Torah and *haftarah* portion, renew your zeal for the Holy Temple of HaShem. Pray for its rebuilding. Anticipate Messiah's rule from His Holy City Jerusalem.

### ***Prayer Focus for Terumah - 'Avodah' - [Temple Service]***

One of the blessings of the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, prayed daily by all Israel since ancient times, is the blessing entitled "Avodah."

*Be favorable, HaShem, our G-d and toward Your people Israel and their prayer and restore the service to the Holy of Holies of Your Temple. The fire-offerings of Israel and their prayer accept with love and favor, and may the service of Your people Israel always be favorable to You.*

*May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in compassion.  
Blessed are You, HaShem, Who restores His Presence to Zion.*

-- ArtScroll translation