Parashat Terumah: The Missing Ingredient

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Shemot 25:1-2	
וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ־לִי תְּרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְּבֶנּוּ לִבּוֹ תִּקְחוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמָתִי:	God spoke to Moshe saying: Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart is so moved.

1. **The Missing Ingredient**

Midrash Tanhuma, Terumah 2:1	
וְיִקְחוּ לִי תְּרוּמָה. זֶה שֶׁאָמַר הַכָּתוּב כִּי לֶקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם (משלי ד, ב). אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן לָקִישׁ: שְׁנֵי פְּרַקְמָטוֹטִין עוֹמְדִין זֶה עִם זֶה, אֶחָד בְּיָדוֹ מְטַכְסָא וְאֶחָד בְּיָדוֹ פִּלְפְּלִין. אָמְרוּ זֶה לָזֶה: בֹּא וְנַחֲלִיף בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ. נָטַל זֶה אֶת הַפִּלְפְּלִין, וְזֶה הַמְּטַכְסָא. מַה שֶּׁבְּיַד זֶה אֵין בְּיַד זֶה, וּמַה שֶּׁבְּיַד זֶה אֵין בְּיַד זֶה. אֲבָל הַתּוֹרָה אֵינָהּ כֵּן, זֶה שׁוֹנֶה סֵדֶר זְרָעִים וְזֶה שׁוֹנֶה סֵדֶר מוֹעֵד, הִשְׁנוּ זֶה לָזֶה, נִמְצָא בְּיַד זֶה שְׁנַיִם וּבְיַד זֶה שְׁנַיִם, יֵשׁ פְּרַקְמַטְיָא יָפָה מִזּוֹ. הֱוֵי: כִּי לֶקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם.	**That they take for Me an offering (Exod. 25:2).** Scripture says elsewhere in allusion to this verse: *For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My teaching* (Prov. 4:2). R. Simeon the son of Lakish explained this verse as follows: Once there were two merchants who were traveling together. One of them held a bolt of silk material in his hand, while the other held some pepper. They said to each other: “Let us exchange our merchandise.” One took the pepper and the other took the silk. What one of them had previously owned was no longer his, and that which the other had owned was, likewise, no longer his. With the law, however, this is not so. If one man studies Tractate Ze’raim, and another Tractate Mo’ed, and they instruct each other, each possesses knowledge of both. Truly, is there any merchandise more valuable than this? Therefore, *For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My teaching*.

Or Ha-Hayyim on Shemot 25:2	
עוד ירצה לומר שאינה חשובה ליקראות תרומתי אלא המובא מנדבת לב האדם, והוא אומרו **מאת אשר** וגו' **תקחו את תרומתי**, אבל המעושה לא קראה תרומתי אלא תרומה דכתיב ויקחו לי תרומה.	The Torah also may wish to teach that the term "my gift," cannot be used except when the donor has donated it willingly, generously, with all his heart. This is why the Torah wrote: מאת אשר. If the donor had to be coerced into giving such a gift it does not qualify for the description תרומתי, [a gift truly meant for God] but is merely referred to as תרומה, "a gift." The Torah alludes to this by writing ויקחו לי תרומה, "they will take a gift for Me."

[1] All translations are from Sefaria, unless otherwise noted.

Ramban on Shemot 25:2	
וסוד המשכן הוא, שיהיה הכבוד אשר שכן על הר סיני שוכן עליו בנסתר…והיה במשכן תמיד עם ישראל הכבוד שנראה להם בהר סיני. ובבא משה היה אליו הדבור אשר נדבר לו בהר סיני.	The secret of the Tabernacle is that the Glory which abode upon Mount Sinai [openly] should abide upon it in a concealed manner…Thus, Israel always had with them in the Tabernacle the Glory that appeared to them on Mount Sinai. And when Moses went into the Tabernacle, he would hear the Divine utterance being spoken to him like on Mount Sinai.

Rabbi Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*
…we must realize that the children of Israel after they have been privileged to witness the Revelation of God on Mount Sinai, were about to journey from there and thus draw away from the site of the theophany. So long as they were encamped in the palace, they were conscious of God's nearness; but once they set out on their journey, it seemed to them as though the link had been broken unless there were in their midst a tangible symbol of God's presence among them. It was the function of the Tabernacle to serve as such a symbol.

1 Chronicles 29:5	
לַזָּהָב לַזָּהָב֙ וְלַכֶּ֣סֶף לַכֶּ֔סֶף וּלְכָל־מְלָאכָ֖ה בְּיַ֣ד חָרָשִׁ֑ים וּמִ֤י מִתְנַדֵּב֙ לְמַלֵּ֣את יָד֔וֹ הַיּ֖וֹם לַיהוָֽה׃	(gold for golden objects, silver for silver for all the work)—into the hands of craftsmen. Now who will make a voluntary offering to God?

Malbim on 1 Chronicles 29:5	
לזהב לזהב. ר"ל אמנם הגם שהכינותי כל הצורך בחיצוניות הבנין, הן בענין החומריים הצריכים, מה שצריך לזהב הוא לזהב, ומה שצריך בענין הפועלים לכל מלאכה הוא ביד חרשים, וזה מוכן הכל, אבל הלא לתנאי המקדש שתחול בו קדושה צריך עוד דבר אחד והוא נדבת לב העם והכנתם, שע"ז תחול הקדושה, כמ"ש (שמות כה, ב) מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי, שעקר תרומת ה' היא נדבת הלב, וע"ז תחול הקדושה והרצון מאת ה', וא"כ **מי מתנדב למלאות ידו היום לה',** שבנדבת לבו ימלא ידו לה' כי זה הוא הנרצה בעיניו:	Gold for golden objects" – Meaning, while I have prepared everything necessary for the external aspect of the building, both in the matter of the necessary materials, i.e. gold for the golden objects, and everything the laborers need for every craft in the hands of the artisans, and everything prepared – but for sanctity to be present in the Temple, one more thing is necessary, and that is the open-hearted donation of the people and their preparation, through which sanctity will be come to be present, as it is written, **"as his heart may urge him you shall take my donation,"** for the essence of the donation to God is the urging of the heart, through which sanctity and God's comes to be present, and therefore, whosoever volunteers to fill his hand today to God – if the urgings of his heart will fill his hand for God, he shall be desirable in His eye.

2. Makers of the World

Aviva Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus*
The aim of Exodus is to help its participants to take apart a private world that has held them captive. In the end, after their physical release from slavery, a new recognition of inner conflict, even of potentially tragic inner conflict, will be the key to experiencing themselves as active "makers" of the world.