

Introduction to Parsha #19: Terumah¹

READINGS: ***Torah Terumah:*** **Exodus 25:1 – 27:20**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 5:1² – 6:13**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Matthew 5:17-35**



Have them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in them.
 [Exodus 25:8]

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *Sim Shalom*, the Prayer for Peace

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor – and the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ...
Daber el-b'nei Yisra'el – speak to B'nei Yisrael ***veyikchu-li t'rumah*** – and have them
take in hand for Me instrumentalities of elevation/ascent/transcendence **Exodus 25:1-2a.**

It is time for the next phase of the Great Sinai Initiative – the BEAUTY REALM DOWNLOAD! This, too, is a part of the Holy One's strategy for renewing our minds and preparing us to act as royal ambassadors of a Glorious, Heavenly Courts-Headquartered Kingdom rather than just another religious movement full of blind, deaf, and leprous men presuming to judge other people for being blind, deaf, and leprous. The Holy One knows that, just like the rest of fallen humanity, we have been eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *tov v'ra* [KJV 'good' and 'evil'] all our lives. He knows that, as a result of this lifelong binge on narcissistic toxicity, our eyes tend to look everyone and everything we see through the cynical lenses of *ra* [KJV 'evil'], *shachat* [KJV 'corruption'], and *chamas* [KJV 'violence', 'cruelty'], that our ears tend to filter everything we hear through a defensive 'moat'

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² In Hebrew-oriented texts such as the TaNaKh and the Complete Jewish Bible the numbering is slightly different. In such versions the verse with which the haftarah begins is called I Kings 5:15.

of *critical, skeptical, and pessimistic-bordering-on paranoid thought and theory*. He knows that we – like the mixed multitudes of people from the raging nations that we are called to serve as light bearers and salt spreaders - have become far too desensitized to *folly, to vanity, to uncleanness, to depravity, to ethnic-hate* disguised as *ethnic ‘pride’, to perversion* dressed up as *‘progressivism’, to oppression* masquerading as *‘leadership’, and to shallow, judgmental religiosity* parading around as *spirituality*. He knows that we have seen so many of these things, so often, and have been wounded so often and so deeply by them, that we have become guarded, defensive, suspicious, pessimistic, and thick-skinned. We have seen so much depravity -and been hurt so many times – that childlike wonder has escaped us. Absent a radical intervention wrought by Creator-Speak we will never be able to see beauty, recognize potential, or actually expect redemption, restoration, and renewal. Since the Holy One wants us, as HIS PEOPLE, to be people of awestruck hearts, people of unshakeable hope, people of delicious wonder, people of glorious vision, and people of unflinching *emunah*. In order for that to happen we have to see beauty where others see ashes; see potential where others see develop a sharp eye for, and become masters of beauty, splendor, and majesty. His plan does not just involve dazzle us with Heaven’s beauty through inspired literature, however; He wants us to actively engage every man, woman, and child among us in the great enterprise of bringing Heaven’s beauty, splendor, and majesty back to the earth – first to bring healing, shalom, and vision for redemption and restoration to us and our families, and then, in time, as He instructs and leads, to share this precious treasure with the nations.

With the Psalmist may we declare: ***One thing have I desired of the Holy One – that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Holy One all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Holy One, and to inquire in His Temple!*** Psalm 27:4. Another destiny-awakening Torah adventure is beckoning to us. Ready! Set! GO!

How The Waters Of Revelation Were Brought to the Present Level

Shortly after we arrived at Sinai our Bridegroom-King invited us to come under the shade of His *chuppah*. Once we gathered there He spoke ten words of radical re-creation directly over our hearts. Then the Bridegroom-King began *teaching us to actually start to think like He thinks about real life issues and situations*. This was the *Mishpatim Discourse [Exodus 20:21 – 23:33]*. The mind-blowing hypotheticals and priority-reordering instructions He released over us in that discourse brought us forward to the place where the waters of revelation covered our knees. It did not stop there. The Bridegroom-King then invited a firstfruits company to actually ascend into His Heavenly Courts to join Him for what I like to call *dinner and a show*. ***And they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a***

paved work of safire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. Exodus 24:10-11. It was with this *Heavenly Courts Narrative* [Exodus 24:1-14] that parsha *Mishpatim* concluded. We are slowly becoming convinced that these waters of revelation are good. We are suddenly realizing that our deliverance from bondage was not the endgame, but was only the beginning of good things for us – *i.e.* the starting gate for a great adventure with our Glorious King.

What we read about this week will take place far ‘beyond the veil’ of ordinary human vision. In this parsha our Bridegroom-King is going to introduce us to – and initiate a lengthy protocol designed to impress upon our individual and collective souls – the height and depth and width and breadth [not to mention the spiritual essence] of that mysterious physical structure the theological world calls ‘*the Tabernacle in the Wilderness*’. We are about to find out what it is like where our Bridegroom-King lives - and where He wants us to get comfortable walking and communing with Him. There is so much more here than meets the eye. The protocols of this parsha are indeed designed to take us to *a new and higher level*. This structure is destined to become our *spiritual center of gravity, the focus of all of our meditations, and our inspirational home base and operational center*. As it is built in physical form on this mountain, it will be constructed in spiritual form in the fabric of our souls forever. A vision of holiness embodied, it will become part of our DNA, a tent-maker’s dream that we will pass down from generation to generation ... until He comes!

Some Things We Simply Cannot Unsee

Our Bridegroom-King wants to make the amazing experience of the Heavenly Courts Narrative open to all men. He is about to give us all a taste of what it is looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels like in *His Courts*, near His Throne. He is about to bombard our imaginations and physical senses with a download of visual, auditory, olfactory³, gustatory, and somatosensory⁴ stimuli that is designed to awaken both our creative impulses and every human being’s desire for a taste of ‘heaven’. He is going to introduce us to an explosion of amazing colors! He is going to put on a show of stunning fabrics! There will be outrageous quantities of shining gold, silver, and bronze. There will be a collection of exquisite precious stones such has never before been seen in one place. There will be pools of living water! Amazing patterns and grains of highly fragrant wood will exhilarate us! The first banqueting table we have seen since the evening of the Great Passover will be introduced – and we will almost be able to taste loaves of freshly baked bread and

³ *Gustatory* refers to the sense of taste.

⁴ *Somatosensory* refers to the sense of touch.

smell the sprinkles of frankincense. Cloven tongues of fire will issue forth from seven lamps atop a stunning, never before seen shimmering gold *menorah*! The smell of sweet incense will fill the air. The cherubim theme will permeate everything – wonderfully accented by bright scarlet pomegranates and golden bells. Beautifully uniformed attendants will walk in our midst. We will hear sounds, voices, songs, and blessings! And at the Center of it all will be our Bridegroom-King's Glorious Throne!

Whew! Talk about your Magical Mystery Tour! Oh what a journey! Oh what a Kingdom! Oh what a King!

The Sinaitic Revelation Stream Just Keeps Flowing

At Sinai our Divine Bridegroom has stepped delicately out of eternity into time and out of invisibility into corporeality. He made Himself visible, His Voice audible, and His Presence tangible. He made His Words understandable. And He made His Glorious Plan of Redemption for Mankind and Restoration for Creation comprehensible. The rivers of revelation that are being released over us at this remote location are going to impact – and offer hope to - all *people*, all *nations*, all *tribes*, all *cultures*, all *continents*, and all *islands*, in all *generations*. Our experiences at this mountain are destined to change everything - about us, about our children and children's children, about mankind as a species, and about earth as an ecosystem. Sinai is where deep will call unto deep - where our Bridegroom-King's waves and billows will wash over us. It is where wave after wave of strategically timed downloads, each designed to introduce another facet of His Plan to make us over and plug us into His Grand Redemptive Plan, will bombard us. Even as a broad stream of living water cascades through our camp, a corresponding river of creative, prophetic words and visions is flowing through our hearts and minds. It was these words and visions He will use to transform us anyone who will *sh'ma* into a *kingdom of priests* and a *holy nation*.

Dor v'dor – Generation By Generation

Because the Holy One spends this quality time and will do these amazing things with, in, and through our ancestors at this mountain, we know with complete confidence that He wants to do the same – nay, even more incredible - things with, in, and through us. We are not relegated by fate, or the generation of our birth, to being mere students of a dry ancient text. We are not *creatures out of time, born too late* to experience the exquisite majesty of His Presence. The prophetic words spoken by the Holy One at the portal known as Sinai are *more alive and powerful now than ever*. Moreover, for passionate lovers of the Bridegroom-King the Divine-encounter experience of Sinai has the potential to be even more transformative for us than it was for our ancestors. The Bridegroom-King Himself waits for us patiently *in the beautiful Hebrew words of the ancient scroll*. He longs

to meet us in the Hebrew letters. He offers to commune with us in the marks and indentations. *Many, O Holy One my God, are Your wonderful works that You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. And I say 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me'. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your Torah is within my heart.*" Psalm 40:5-8.

Our Bridegroom-King wants our time spent meditating upon the *Sinai Chronicles texts* each year to result in a reproduction – indeed an explosion - of the Sinai experience in us. We have a tremendous advantage over our ancestors, you see. A great cloud of witnesses is cheering us on. Mashiach Himself goes before us, serving as our Faithful Shepherd, Nurturing Rabbi, and All-Knowing Guide. The ten mighty rivers of revelation the Holy One sent cascading forth from the Great Cloud and rushing down the cliffs of Sinai toward our ancestors – who along with the angelic hosts of Heaven make up the great cloud of witnesses - are now headed in *our direction*, Dear Reader. Of course, we can escape if we want to. We can stay dry and unaffected if we desire. But why on earth would we want to? These are the living waters that our Bridegroom-King has provided for us. Will we not drink of His Cup? He calls us to *make mikveh* in these waters. He wants us to wade out into these living waters with Him, immerse ourselves in them, and let them wash away all the serpentine viruses we have carried in our DNA since the days of Adam and Chava. He wants us to allow these flowing waters to cleanse from our minds all the layers of toxic uncleanness that have been dumped upon us in our various places of exile. He sends these waters in carefully timed waves, each one strategically designed to deposit another layer of the good soil of the Kingdom of Heaven into our souls. He intends to inspire us to declare: “*Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me. The Holy One will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me.*” Psalm 42:7-8[a].

Our Divine Bridegroom has a plan to sanctify and cleanse His Bride with the *washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious called-out company having neither spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she should be holy and without blemish.* See Ezekiel 16:4-9 and Ephesians 5:26-27. So far the water of Sinaitic Revelation is only up to our waist. But another wave is coming. Welcome to *T'rumah* – the *parsha that introduces us to the new and higher level* of consciousness we will come to call ‘the House of the Holy One’.

A New and Higher Level

T'rumah, the third parsha in the Sinai Chronicles, constitutes the opening segment

of the *Mish'kan Discourse* – i.e. the ‘Terumah Protocols’. It is through these protocols that the Holy One intends to empower every man, woman, and child into the Camp of the Redeemed to follow in the footsteps of the 74 forerunners who ***saw God and ate and drank*** back to their fill in the Heavenly Courts Narrative. It is our destiny to live in such a state of intimate fellowship with the Bridegroom-King. This parsha is going to give us both the vision and vocabulary to proclaim with the sons of Korach: ***My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Holy One. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young— even Your altars, O Holy One of hosts, My King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house.*** Psalm 84:1-4[a]. Heavenly Courts here we come. But first our Divine Bridegroom has some lingering questions He knows we really need to answer before we can feel comfortable in taking these next steps.

Things Our Bridegroom Really Wants to Know

In the course of the recently concluded *Mishpatim Discourse* [i.e. Exodus 21-23] the Holy One often *offended our minds* in order to reveal our hearts. Over and over again the Divine Bridegroom *challenged us*. With each of the hypothetical cases He threw out for us to deal with in parsha *Mishpatim* it seemed He was asking us:

Do you really trust Me?

Do you completely trust My Wisdom? Do you fully trust My Compassion?

Do you trust My Perspective?

Do you trust My Timing?

Do you trust My Plan for You as a unique individual?

Do you trust My Dream for your bloodline – and for the bloodlines of others?

... and are you willing to trust all these things MORE than you trust your own human sense of ‘right and wrong’, ‘good and evil’ ‘fair and unfair’, ‘just and unjust’, and ‘moral and immoral’?

Over and over as we read the *Mishpatim Discourse* last week it seemed to me that the Holy One was basically asking us:

Do you really want a face-to-Face level of intimate relationship with Me – or do you just want Me to perform miracles on demand for you like some kind of genie out of a bottle?

Do you want to be a full-fledged Partner in My Covenant with Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'akov?

Or do you want to put Me in a theological box of your own making so you can manipulate Me, control Me, and use Me to get your will and your way?

*Do you want to become **the bride to Me that I created you to be** -
or do you just want Me to kiss your boo-boos,
fund the lifestyle of your choice, and shoo away your enemies?*

How will you answer these questions? As you are probably discovering about now, the call to the Torah is an invitation to a betrothal covenant, not just to participate in a Bible Study. Ah, but if you thought the *Mishpatim Discourse* we studied last week presented challenges, **JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU READ THIS WEEK'S PARSHA!** In this week's parsha our Divine Bridegroom is going to come at us from a *totally different direction*. If we are to walk with Him on this part of the journey we will have to let Him open up our *spiritual eyes* ... and prepare ourselves for a *visual experience that is literally out of this world!* Let me explain.

Welcome to a Season of Divinely Enhanced Vision

The preceding parsha was all about the Holy One teaching us to *think like He thinks* and to *approach and deal with real life* situations guided by the mix of wisdom and compassion that will characterize the Messiah. Last week our Divine Bridegroom's focus was upon *renewing our minds* to the point we could begin to *think like He thinks*. This week His focus will shift to *opening our eyes* to the point we actually begin to *see what He sees*. He sees *eternal things* that ordinary *human beings cannot see*. And even when He looks upon temporal things that mere mortals like us - *can see*, *He sees them from an entirely different perspective*. With regard to every *thing*, every *person*, every *nation*, and every *situation* we encounter we can only see a brief snapshot of what is right in front of our face; He, however, sees far, far beyond what presents itself to our natural eyes. He sees all the way from the beginning to the end – and is intimately familiar with all the factors and stages that led up to what appears before our eyes as well as all the things that will flow therefrom.

Our Bridegroom sees potential testimonies of His Greatness and Redemptive Power in every trauma and drama of life. He sees opportunities for restoration where we see only disasters in the making. Does He really expect to be able to *train a bunch of ordinary Joes and Janes like us to see those things as well?* Does He really expect to be able to *teach self-obsessed, easily offended flesh and blood like ours to see all things - and all people - from His point of view?* The answer is 'yes'. He fully intends to make those things happen. Our job is just to go along with His training program – wherever it may take us. This week it is going to take us into the Heavenlies.

Are Your Hearts Prepared for the Journey? Do You Have Your Instrumentalities of Elevation?

I am your flight attendant. Before we get our supernatural lift-off however it is my

assigned task to prepare your hearts for what we are going to experience on this journey by reminding you of what happened in II Kings 6. At that time the prophet Elisha and his servant Gehazi were running for their lives from the hostile army of the king of Syria. The Syrian forces caught up with the fugitives at the city of Dotan. It looked as if the hostile Syrians finally had the prophet exactly where they wanted him. But the Biblical account tells a different story. Let's read it together:

*... they [i.e. the Syrian forces] came by night and surrounded the city.
And when the servant of the man of the Holy One arose early and went out,
there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots.
And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" So he answered,
"Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."
And Elisha prayed, and said, "**Holy One, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.**"
Then the Holy One opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw.
And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

As it was for Gehazi, may it be for you. As we begin this week's studies my prayer over you is the prayer Elisha prayed:

Holy One, I pray – open their eyes ... that they may see!

Our Bridegroom-King is *about to* bedazzle us with stunning *visual imagery*. He is about to regale us with *colors*, and *textures*, and *fabrics*, and *precious metals* the beauty of which will take our breath away. He is about to amaze us with *wood* that seems to ooze the blood of the covenant, with *geometric shapes* that seem to dance, with *curtains* that seem to speak, *with stunning garments* that seem to transcend the human beings that are called upon to wear them, and with *pulsating 3-dimensional images* that seem to fly back-and-forth, before our eyes, across the great chasm separating Heaven and Earth.

The auditory experience of the *Mish'patim Discourse* is about to give way to *the visual and kinetic experience* of the *Mish'kan Download*. And it is all just one more part of His ongoing plan for *preparing us to function in the earth as Full Partners with Him in the Most Impactful Level of Covenant relationship the world has ever known*.

The Ongoing Transformation Process

As we have discussed, though we have been redeemed from Egypt, we are by *no means a 'finished work'*. We are in the early stages of a transition from a *slavish orientation to life* to a *'bridal' orientation to life*. What does that *mean*, you ask? It means that we are being challenged by the Holy One to shed the 'snakeskin' of the slavish lifestyle we led in Egypt - a *one-step-ahead-of-the-whip* lifestyle of fearfully hoping to avoid the displeasure of, and therefore escape the wrath of, the cruel taskmaster – and to take up instead a lifestyle of *confidently and enthusiastically moving and flowing in response to and rhythm with the words and*

silent movements of a loving and nurturing Bridegroom.

We are in this regard still very much a *work-in-progress*. The transformation the Holy One is bringing about is not going to occur *quickly*. Nor is it going to be *easy*. The process will be *long*, the obstacles *daunting*, and the discipline *painful*. *But it will be worth it, Dear Reader. It will be MORE THAN worth it. It will in fact be to die for.*

Come Up Here!

Are you ready to explore – and find a new secret place of communion and sabbath rest in - the courts of our King? Good! From deep within the ancient scroll the Bridegroom-King’s beautiful Voice is calling – so off into the Realm of Beauty, Majesty, and Delight we go! We are not told just how much of the Holy One’s glorious dwelling place the 74 *forerunners* were privileged to gaze upon during the events of parsha *Mishpatim*’s *Heavenly Courts Narrative*. Elsewhere in Torah we will be told a man cannot - in *this* world - look upon the Holy One and live. So we have to consider the possibility that the place to which the 70 *zakenim*, Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu were ‘called up’ by the Holy One was not ‘in this world’. Their expedition started out on Mount Sinai, true. But once they stepped into the Cloud of the Holy One’s Presence ... well just read Revelation 4 and perhaps you will understand.

Then at the end of *Mishpatim* the Holy One issued yet another ‘upward call’ invitation. This one was for Moshe alone. Wherever he, Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu and the 70 *zakenim* of Israel were when they saw God of Israel and ate and drank, the Holy One wanted to take Moshe even *higher*. In Exodus 24:12 therefore the Holy One said to Moshe:

Come up [Hebrew *alah*⁵] ***to Me on the mountain***
and be [Hebrew *hayah*];
and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law [Hebrew *torah*⁶]
and commandments [Hebrew *mitzvot*] ***that I have written,***
that you may teach [Hebrew *yarah*] ***them.***

So Moshe started ascending. At some point, as the Cloud of the Holy One’s Presence became thicker and more intense, Moshe bid Y’hoshua farewell - and plodded on alone. For 6 days Moshe was completely engulfed in thickest part of the Radiant Cloud of His Presence. Then on the seventh day, right before the eyes of the Redeemed Community, the Cloud became a raging fire - a blazing inferno in which, they reasoned, no flesh could survive.

⁵ First usage Genesis 2:6 - “*a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground*”

⁶ First usage Genesis 26:5 – “... *because Avraham obeyed [Heb. sh’ma-ed] My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.*”

Are you ready to explore – and find a new secret place of communion and sabbath rest in - the courts of our King? Good! From deep within the ancient scroll the Bridegroom-King’s beautiful Voice is calling – so off into the Realm of Beauty, Majesty, and Delight we go!

All-Points Bulletin for Moshe!

For 40 days and 40 nights the inferno on the mountain blazed on. During that entire time there was no sign of Moshe. Because Moshe *wasn't there*. He was *somewhere else*. He was in *another world* - a world *where fire burns but does not consume*. He was transported ... translated ... transformed ... indeed *transfigured*. And he was shown things only a very, very few other human beings in history⁷ have ever seen. This week’s parsha is going to be about what Moshe saw in this fiery ‘other world’. The Holy One is going to show Moshe something absolutely marvelous that exists in this fiery ‘other world’ realm. Welcome to the second semester of the Holy One’s class in ‘*How to Think Like the Bride 101*’. If you thought the first semester, with all the *mishpatim*, was a lot to deal with, just wait ‘til you read what comes next! The Holy One has taught us of earthly things in the first half of the course. Now He will teach us of the heavenly realities underlying *those earthly things*. The message the Holy One is going to be communicating to his Bride-to-be is not going to change – but the language and imagery will be OUT OF THIS WORLD!

Sinai is aglow, pulsing with Divine Energy. Flashes of light and gusts of wind coming from that cloud tell those of us waiting in the camp all we need to know - the Creator of the Universe is speaking with Moshe – for *our sakes*, and for the sakes of our children and children’s children – once again! Divine Sparks that have lain dormant for centuries are awakening in us. We are feeling a call to shake off our slumber, arise from our ashes, and *be made over into the glorious kingdom of priests and holy nation* He created us to be. But ... why do we suddenly feel this urge to build something? All in good time, Beloved; all in good time.

So What Is A Terumah?

With that introduction out of the way we can now finally proceed to discuss in a meaningful way what in the world a *Terumah* might be. *Terumah* is of course the name of this week’s parsha. The name is derived from Exodus 25:2, where we are told that the Holy One instructed Moshe: ***v'yikchu-li T'rumah*** [*and take for Me a T'rumah*]. A *T'rumah*? What is that? Whatever a *T'rumah* is, however, all of a

⁷ Who else saw these things? Certainly Messiah did. Beyond that it appears some of these things were shown to Daniel [see Daniel 7], and to Yochanan, the writer of the book of Revelation. To some degree Stephen, at the moment of his martyrdom, saw into this realm, as perhaps did Shaul when he was, as he reports, caught up into the ‘Third Heaven’. One suspects *Chanoch* [Enoch] and *Eliyahu* [Elijah], as well as Avraham, were privileged to see the things that Moshe saw – or at least some of them.

sudden our Divine Bridegroom wants us *to take one* – and He wants us to take it *for Him*. Hmmm. We who have been studying the text of Torah carefully for some time now know that, though Torah has been going on for over 70 chapters at this point, we have not heretofore ever read a word about a *T'rumah*. The term has never once been mentioned – even in passing – anywhere in the accounts we have read. Why are we suddenly being called upon by the Holy One to start plowing ‘new ground’ linguistically and spiritually? Is it possible that now that Moshe is engulfed in the Radiant Cloud hovering over Mount Sinai our new Covenant Partner wants us to experience Him *in a different realm* – a realm in which the language and imagery with which we are familiar are simply inadequate media of communication? If so it is all going to start, it appears, with *T'rumah* – whatever that is. A *T'rumah* it seems, is *a portal into a new level of revelation*. Did you catch that, Dear Reader? I said a portal. A portal – an instrumentality of elevation - that *leads us to another realm* - a realm having more to do *with eternal things than temporal things*.

Are you *interested* in such a portal, Dear Reader? Then let's try to get our minds around the Hebrew term *T'rumah*, in order that we can move on into the brave new world of spiritual vocabulary, inspiring visual imagery, and Heavenly sound and scent, that the Holy One is opening up to us.

Lessons from the Hebrew Word Itself

The Hebrew word *T'rumah* has no acceptable English equivalent. But that makes perfect sense if you consider the ‘other worldly’ subject matter of this week's parsha. Moshe is in a realm beyond the boundaries of the English or Greek languages⁸. He is far beyond the limits of the Western mindset. Only Hebrew – a language focused upon the Holy One instead of man and which describes everything from the Holy One's ‘outside of time’ and ‘outside of space’ perspective - exists in and can be used to describe the realm to which the Holy One has taken Moshe. Do not therefore even try to translate *T'rumah* into English. This parsha is all about VISION. So instead of translating or interpreting the term *T'rumah* linguistically, try instead to *see it – and watch it unfold before your eyes* like a drama or play.

According to *Rashi* the word *T'rumah* implies a *process - specifically a process of separating out a portion of one's resources from the rest*, for a higher, more lofty purpose than consumption or investment. The verb root of this word means to *raise high*, or *lift up*, or *exalt*. Are you getting the picture yet? *T'rumah* has something to do with the upward journey we are about to take. *T'rumah* is the key to our ‘lift-off’.

⁸ Or in any other earthly language for that matter.

Climbing Into the Hebrew Pictograph

Let us deal first with the prefix. In this case the prefix of the word is the letter *tav* [i.e. one of the two Hebrew letters which we associate with the ‘t’ sound]. The *tav* prefix represents a contraction of the word *atah* [the Hebrew second person pronoun pronounced in English as ‘you’]. In Hebrew this particular prefix identifies the verb phrase that follows it as a one-on-one directive.

Now let us look at the verb at the root of the phrase. The verb in question is *rum* [*resh, vav, mem*]. It is pronounced like the English word ‘room’. The action this verb pictures is of something *rising to a higher level – i.e. achieving buoyancy*.

The Hebraic word picture/hieroglyphic of the Hebrew verb *rum* is that of the head (*resh*) of a man (*vav*) atop a stream of waters (*mem*). In other words, what *rum* describes is the process of a person achieving *buoyancy*⁹ – i.e. getting one’s head above the water. This involves both *rising above* and *seeing beyond* the immediate demands of the environment one finds himself.

Stare with me a little more intensely into this Hebraic hieroglyphic. Imagine you have been swept into a raging river at 100-year flood stage. The overpowering current immediately pulls you under, and you go with the flow, wherever the current takes you. It is all you can do just to stay alive. Your energies, your thoughts, your actions, are totally focused upon survival. You hold your breath and try to keep your body in position for a lunge. Then you suddenly see light ... and you decide to *go for it*. Your head bursts through the surface tension of the flowing water, and for a few moments you bob along like a fishing bobber. What do you do the instant you get your head above the water? First, you will breathe in the air that you so desperately need. Second, you *look around* and *try to get perspective on your surroundings*. After all *the water is foreign to you*. You are a land creature, not a water creature like a fish. The stream in which you find yourself being carried along is not your home. With effort you can *survive* in its watery environment for a period of time. But it is not your destiny. It is merely transitioning you from one place on land [let’s say Egypt] to another place on land [let’s say *Eretz Yisrael*]. So you look for a landmark – a piece of driftwood to grasp hold of, a log to cling to – or, perhaps, even better, a limb from a tree dangling near the water, a protruding root, a rescue-worker’s helping hand, a lifeline thrown by a friend – something – *anything* - which offers hope of *staying* above the waters that surround you, and perhaps escaping them. You are still focused on surviving in the raging river. You are treading water with all your might. But you have risen above the current. A part of you is aiming higher than merely survival. Now you are

⁹ Hence, it was a form of this verb that Torah used to describe what Noach’s ark did when the waters of the flood brought it to the point of buoyancy.

looking for *higher ground*.

Do you have the picture now? Is it *real* enough for you? Good. Let's apply that picture to where we are in Torah. We whom the Holy One delivered out of Pharaoh's slave camps in connection with the first Passover have been caught up in a raging river at flood-stage for months. Ever since the day we walked out of Egypt we have been totally *immersed in* and are being *swept along by* a virtual *river of amazing grace*. Manna has dropped from heaven day-by-day for us to eat, and streams of pure, sweet water have poured out of rock formations and followed us wherever we have gone to make sure we had plenty to drink. We have been floating along – barely conscious of where we were or what was happening to us – *until* the raging floodwaters of the Holy One brought us to Mount Sinai. At this mountain however our heads have finally burst through the surface tension of the waters that have engulfed us. We are finally able to breathe. And we are able to focus, at long last, on *higher ground*.

Defining 'Higher Ground'

When I use the term *higher ground* I am not just talking about the sheer rock outcropping upon which the Holy One spoke to Moshe in the form of a burning bush. I am not referring merely to geography or topography. The elevation of which I speak – the ultimate *higher ground* – is far higher than the summit of *Sineh* or of McKinley or Fujiyama or even Everest¹⁰. The higher elevation about which I am now speaking and which those of us in the Community of the Redeemed are now seeking is none other than *the courts of the Holy One*. And that introduces us to something theologians call the '*Tabernacle in the Wilderness*' - an exciting, somewhat mystical facet of a living, breathing relationship with the Holy One that we have not heretofore encountered.

It is going to be an interesting week to say the least. I dare say we will not understand one tenth of what we read. But that is to be expected. We have *never passed this way before*.

The things we will read about this week will challenge us in realms of logic, reason, dogma, and doctrine. That is the whole idea. The Holy One wants to teach us to interact with Him in - and flow with Him into and out of - realms beyond our human level of 'understanding'. He wants us to see in realms in which ordinary human eyes cannot see. It is up to us to embrace the mystery. It is up to us to decide how we will respond to the incomprehensibility of it all. Will we humbly receive the wisdom of the Holy One - even if we cannot comprehend it? Will we

¹⁰ The Psalmist said: *I lift my eyes up to the mountains, from whence does my help come? My help comes from The Holy One, the Maker of Heaven and Earth!* **Psalm 121:1-2.**

ask Him to reveal to us what we need to know – and no more? And will we trust Him to know what He is doing - and why He is doing it – and what it all has to do with us, and for His Divine calling upon and purpose for our life?

A T'rumah Travelogue

How will this new level of revelation unfold for us, you ask?

1. *The Holy One's Commissioning of a T'rumah.* The parsha will begin with the Holy One instructing Moshe to take from every man willing to give vast quantities of eight different categories of very *precious materials*. Among these materials will be *3 kinds of metals, 3 colors of dyes, 4 kinds of fabric, an exotic form of wood, pure olive oil, spices, incense and all kinds of precious stones.* **Vezot ha-T'rumah** - And these will be [for us] *instrumentalities of elevation.* Exodus 25:3a.

2. *The Introduction of the Mish'kan.* Are you wondering perhaps what are all these expensive and in some cases exotic materials are going to be used for? Moshe will find out – and tell us - soon enough. The Holy One will declare to him:

"Have them *asah* [build] for me a *mik'dash* [i.e. a sanctuary, consecrated place] that I may *shakan* [i.e. tabernacle, abide] in/amongst them".
[Exodus 25:8]

The precious materials on the Holy One's 'treasure list' are to be used for the construction of a very special structure - a structure heretofore unknown in the world. This structure will be patterned after something otherworldly, which the Holy One will show to Moshe while the two are conversing in the glory cloud on top of the Mountain.

3. *The Design and Specifications of the Mish'kan.* The special the people of the Redeemed Community are to build at Sinai is designed to contain *three distinct areas separated by cloth 'veils'*. Each of these three distinct areas is to have its own unique level of *kedusha* [holiness].

The *focal point of the entire structure* will be a special gold-over-acacia wood box, which will house the stone tablets of Torah that Moshe is destined to receive. This treasure chest is to have a special cover made of one huge nugget of pure hammered gold. The gold is to be fashioned into the shape of two gold cherubim, facing each other, wings outstretched. The wings of the *cherubim* are to touch in such a way as to form an earthly Throne for the Holy One.

Though the ark will be the spiritual epicenter of the structure the Redeemed Community is to construct, it is but the first of six *furnishings*. There will also be three special 'veils' to fabricate, as well as four special tent-coverings to piece together. There will also be structural components that have to be built, priestly garments that have to be sewn and decorated, and special oil and incense blends

that have to be apothecated.

The second furnishing we are to make for the structure will be a uniquely designed gold-over-acacia wood *shulchan* (i.e. table) complete with special utensils such as pans, jars, and bowls.

The third furnishing we are to construct is to be a seven-branched *menorah* [i.e. a candelabra], fueled by the purest of olive oil.

Before moving on to the fourth furnishing we are to build, the Holy One will give Moshe the specifications for *the structure itself*. First, *the outer curtains*, then *framing boards, sockets and rings*, and finally, the veil-like partitions that will mark off the chambers.

The Holy One will then conclude the parsha by giving Moshe instructions concerning the all-important *altar of bronze* which He wants constructed in the outer court area of the sanctuary and the special way He wants that courtyard area and its gate to be formed. Yitro's altar of pagan sacrifice will not 'cut' it. Since the lives of precious creatures He has created are at stake the Holy One will insist that we *sh'ma* His Voice and Protocols - not the voice of a Midyani sheik - in relation to how approaches are to be made to His earthly Throne.

Haftarah Terumah

I Kings 5:1 – 6:13

As we read about the *sanctuary* the Holy One directed Moshe to build at *Sinai* in this week's Torah parsha we will simultaneously read about the Temple *Sh'lomo* [Solomon] undertook to build in Jerusalem in the year 966 BCE. Sh'lomo will spend *seven long years* building this Temple. It will be inaugurated in 960 BCE. Try as we might however, we will not, anywhere in Torah or TaNaKh, find any directions from the Holy One to build a *permanent structure* – a Temple – to replace the *mish'kan*. While the Holy One painstakingly defined every material and dimension of the *mish'kan* built on Mount Sinai and lovingly showed Moshe the pattern he was to follow in building it, walking him through it for 40 days, *no such instruction was ever given by the Holy One regarding the Temple Sh'lomo built*.

In other words, the *Mish'kan* was the Holy One's idea – a picture on earth of something that had existed from before the foundation of the world in Heaven. The Temples built by Sh'lomo and Zerubbabel on the other hand represented – and still represent – the *aspirations of man*. David, of course, among other desires that got him in trouble, wanted *desperately* to build a Temple. It was his chief aspiration in his latter years. The Holy One would have none of it. **II Samuel 7:5-7**. David was however succeeded by Sh'lomo – a man who did pretty much what he

wanted, when he wanted it. Sh'lomo had a good start – requesting wisdom [more precisely, what he asked for was a *sh'ma*-ing heart] from the Holy One the day he was anointed king. He started with high hopes and a sense of destiny. He knew that the Holy One had told David a son/descendant of his would build a Temple. Shlomo did not consider the possibility that when the Holy One spoke of a descendant of David building a Temple, He was speaking of Messiah – not Sh'lomo.

The confusion on Sh'lomo's part is certainly understandable. While Sh'lomo started off his reign by asking for and receiving a *sh'ma*-ing heart [I Kings 3], he most definitely did not respond by living a *sh'ma* lifestyle [i.e. by doing only what He saw the Father doing, and responding only to the Holy One's voice]. How could he have a *sh'ma*-ing heart and not live a *sh'ma* lifestyle, you ask? Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that Sh'lomo it appears did not have the kind of prayer and devotional life his father, the 'sweet psalmist of Israel', enjoyed. Shlomo did not realize, however, that the only *Mik'dash* [Temple] that will endure will be *Messiah's*. Shlomo assumed, without confirming with the Holy One, that he had to be 'the one' to build an earthly Temple for the Holy One. So he became 'the one' - without ever receiving a Divine mandate to do so. That is not the kind of thing a person who lives a *sh'ma*-lifestyle would do.

And, alas, the Temple Shlomo built – though a thing of beauty in the eyes of human beings - was not even close to being in accordance with the design the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain. What Sh'lomo had built was not a reproduction of the *Mish'kan*; it was instead an ornate structure strongly influenced by the architecture of the pagan nations that surrounded Israel. Sh'lomo's Temple reflected Shlomo's own personality and tastes rather than the Father's will, ways, pattern, and design. For this reason the Holy One only accepted the edifice Sh'lomo built **CONDITIONALLY**. *If*, the Holy One said, Sh'lomo and his people ever turned away from [Him] and did not *sh'mar* [treasure and cherish, and carefully guard, protect, and observe to do] all that was written in the Torah, and went off and worshipped and served other gods, *THEN* He said He would reject the Temple Shlomo built and would cause all those who pass by it to be appalled and say “*Why has the Holy One done such a thing to this land and to this Temple?*”. **I Kings 9:6-8.**

Sh'lomo himself started the downhill slide, offering sacrifices on pagan high places, marrying foreign wives, and worshipping other gods. The slide continued with brief respites until 586 BCE, when the Holy One brought about the rejection and devastation of Shlomo's Temple exactly as He had promised. When it was all said and done the Temple Shlomo built at such tremendous cost and with such flash and fanfare stood a mere 374 years. It was sacked, burned, and destroyed, along with the entire city of Jerusalem, by the army of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

in the month of *Av* [late Summer] in 586 BCE. There is no point in having a Temple in the absence of a Torah-submissive nation.

The point is that our idea of what a temple should look like and the Holy One's idea of what a temple should look like are vastly different things. Structures men think of and label temples all too often tend to become a '*den of thieves*' instead of the *house of prayer for all peoples* the Holy One envisions His Temple to be. The redeeming power and the inspiring majesty has always been in the Words of the Holy One - not in the furnishings, structures, ecclesiastical hierarchies men build or in the religious services men conduct.

Corresponding Reading from the Apostolic Writings

Matthew 5:17-35

This week in the apostolic Scriptures we will be examining the opening lines of Messiah Yeshua's initial self-revelation – the teaching with which He began His public ministry. Some call it the *Sermon on the Mount*. We will study it in the account written by *Mattityahu* [the former tax collector known to most of us by the Anglicized name “Matthew”]. Right out of the box Yeshua makes it clear where He stands *vis-à-vis* the Torah. The Holy One gave the Torah - and He doesn't make mistakes. The Holy One *never changes His mind*. If therefore Torah was good when the Holy One gave it to Moshe, it is *still* good. It will *always* be good. But don't take my word for it – let Yeshua of Natzret tell you Himself. Here are His words on the subject:

***Do not think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets.
I have not come to abolish them but to make them full and meaningful.***

***I tell you the Truth: until Heaven and Earth disappear,
not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen,
will by any means disappear from the Torah until everything is accomplished.***

***Anyone who breaks one of the least
of these commandments [of Torah] and teaches others to do the same
will be called least in the kingdom of Heaven.***

***But whoever practices and teaches these commandments [of Torah]
will be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.***

[Matthew 5:17-19]

***Be Great in the Kingdom of Heaven, Dear Reader –
Practice and Teach the Torah - primarily by modeling it to the world!***

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week

Petition #16: Sim Shalom [Establish wholeness/peace]

Sim shalom tovah uv'rachah

Establish wholeness, good, and blessing

Chen v'chesed v'rachamim

Grace, and covenant faithfulness and compassion

Aleinu v'al kol Yisrael ameicha

Upon us and upon all your people Israel

Bar'cheinu avinu, koleinu k'echad

Bless us, our Father, one and all,

B'ohr paneicha

With the Light of Your Countenance.

Ki b'ohr paneicha natatah lanu Adonai Eloheinu

For with the Light of Your Countenance, Holy One our God, You gave

Torat Chayim v'ahavat, chesed,

Instructions for living, and love, covenant faithfulness

u'tzdakah, uv'racha, v'rachamim

and righteousness, and blessing, and compassions

v'tov b'eyneicha l'varech et am'cha Yisrael

and may it be good in Your eyes to bless your people Israel

v'kol et uv'kol sha'ah b'sh'lomeicha

at every time and every hour with Your Peace/Wholeness/Wellness

Baruch atah Adonai

Blessed are You, O Holy One our God,

Ha-m'varech et amo Yisrael b'shalom

Who blesses His People Israel With Wholeness/Wellness/Security/Peace.