

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XIX: Terumah (Ex. 25:1–27:19)

Essay 7. A gift offering, conditional vow, and strict vow

פסוק "דבר אל-בני ישראל ויקחו-לי תרומה" [מאת כל-איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את-תרומתי]. "וזאת התרומה" [אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת]. קשה למה הזכרו שלש תרומות, ולמה פעם אחת אמר תרומתי. ועוד קשה פעם ויקחו ופעם תקחו.

There are verse[s]: **“Tell the Israelite people they will take for Me offerings (תרומה) (*terumah*); from every person whose heart so moves him, you will take offerings for Me (תרומתי) (*terumati*). **And these are the offerings** (התרומה) (*ha teruma*) that you will take from them: gold, silver, and copper”** (Ex. 25:2–3). **It is difficult to understand why three “offerings” were mentioned,¹ and why one time out of those three it said “offerings for Me.”² It is also difficult to understand why one time it says “they will take” and one time “you will take.”³**

וגיש לומר דאיתא במסכת ראש השנה (דף ו') דנדר ונדבה נחלקו לשלש חלוקות, חד נדבה ואם מת או נגנב אינו חייב באחריותו, וחד נדר וכגון דאמר הרי עלי עולה על מנת שאין אני חייב באחריותו דדמי לנדבה, וחד נדר גמור שחייב בתשלומין.

It can be said that it’s brought in tractate Rosh HaShana (page 6a) that a vow and an offering were divided into three types. The first one, a gift offering, where he had specified a particular animal that he was bringing, and if it died or was stolen, he is not obligated in restitution for it. The second one, a vow, for example, where without specifying a particular animal, one said: **[It’s incumbent] upon me [to bring] a burnt-offering on the condition that after I set aside an animal in fulfillment of my vow, I will not be liable for its value, similar to the case discussed above for a gift offering if the animal should die or be stolen.** The third one, a strict vow [offering], where someone pledged to bring a burnt-offering without specifying a particular animal and without making the condition that when he does set aside a particular animal, he will not be liable for its value if it dies or is stolen. In this third case, if the animal does die or is stolen, he is obligated to pay restitution for it.

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¹ I.e., “*terumah*,” “*terumati*,” and “*ha terumah*.”

² I.e., “*terumati*.”

³ Which actually appears once in Ex. 25:2 and once in Ex. 25:3.

ובנה יובן הפסוק, "ויקחו־לי תְּרוּמָה" מדבר על הנדבה, ואמר "ויקחו" רצה לומר כרצונם, משום דבנדבה אין בית דין יכול לכפותם להנדב.

In this way, the verse will be understood, that “they will take for Me offerings” is speaking about the first case presented in this essay: the gift offering, and it said “they will take” as if to say “according to their will,” because with a gift offering, a court is not able to force them to volunteer to make a gift.

ואמר זה אמר "מאת כל־איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את־תְּרוּמָתי", דהיינו לאמר שהתנדב, אי נמי על מי שאמר הרי עלי עולה על מנת וכו'. ו-"תקחו" ענינו להזהיר לבית דין שיכפוהו להביא בעודו שלם, ולא אם מת או נאבד דהא פטור הוא מתשלומין. ולכן אמר תְּרוּמָתי, דוקא תְּרוּמָתי ולא תְּמוּרָתוֹ דלא נתחייב בה.

After this, it says, “from every person whose heart so moves him, you will take (תקחו) (*tikchu*) offerings for Me (תְּרוּמָתי) (*terumati*).” This is the second case presented in this essay: after he has volunteered; alternatively, for who says “[It’s incumbent] upon me [to bring] a burnt-offering on the condition that after I set aside an animal in fulfillment of my vow, I will not be liable for its value, similar to the case discussed above for a gift offering if the animal should die or be stolen.” Regarding “you will take,” the matter is to warn the court that they should force him to bring it when it’s still whole (i.e., it hasn’t died or been stolen), but not if it dies or if it’s lost, in which [case] he’ll be exempt from payment. Therefore, it says “offerings for Me”—it is precisely offerings for Me, and not something in which he was obligated.

ואמר זה מדבר על הנדר דחייב באחריותו, והזהיר לבית דין לכפותו, ולכן אמר "וזהאת התְּרוּמָה", אפילו אם נאבד חייב, ולכן אמר "תקחו".

After this, it speaks of the third case presented in this essay: the vow for which he is responsible, and warned the court to compel him, and therefore it said “and this is the offering,” i.e., even if it is lost, he is obligated, and therefore it said “you will take.”

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