



## TERUMAH

A TREE OF HOPE GROWS IN THE DESERT

*There's tangible promise for a better tomorrow*

# PARSHAH OVERVIEW

## *Terumah*

The people of Israel are called upon to contribute thirteen materials—gold, silver, and copper; blue-, purple-, and red-dyed wool; flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices, and gems—out of which, G-d says to Moses, “They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I shall dwell amid them.”

On the summit of Mount Sinai, Moses was given detailed instructions on how to construct this dwelling for G-d so that it could be readily dismantled, transported, and reassembled as the people journeyed in the desert.

In the sanctuary’s inner chamber, behind an artistically woven curtain, was the ark containing the Tablets of Testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; on the ark’s cover stood two winged cherubim hammered out of pure gold. In the outer chamber stood the seven-branched menorah and the table upon which the “showbread” was arranged.

The sanctuary’s three walls were fitted together from forty-eight upright wooden boards, each of which was overlaid with gold and held

up by a pair of silver foundation sockets. The roof was formed of three layers of coverings: (a) tapestries of multicolored wool and linen, (b) a covering made of goat hair, and (c) a covering of ram and *tachash* skins. Across the front of the sanctuary was an embroidered screen held up by five posts.

Surrounding the sanctuary and the copper-plated altar that stood before it was an enclosure of linen hangings, supported by sixty wooden posts with silver hooks and trimmings, and reinforced by copper stakes.

Do you sometimes find yourself wishing that G-d would give us a concrete sign that He is here for us and that relief and Redemption are on the way?



## RASHI RULES

- Rashi always opts for the simplest explanation.
- Rashi assumes that you remember his earlier commentary, and he builds on that.
- Rashi only cites his source when it resolves a problem in the text.

# TEXT 1A

*Exodus 25:3-5*

א. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.

ב. דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ  
לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר  
יִדְּבֶנּוּ לְבָבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת תְּרוּמָתִי.

ג. וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִקְחוּ  
מֵאֲתָם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנֹחֶשֶׁת.

ד. וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת  
שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים.

ה. וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאָדָּמִים  
וְעֹרֹת תַּחְשִׁים וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים.

1. G-d spoke to Moses saying:

2. "Speak to the Children of Israel,  
and have them take for Me an  
offering; from every person whose  
heart inspires him to generosity, you  
shall take My offering.

3. "You will collect the following  
offering from them: gold, silver, and  
copper.

4. "Blue, purple, and crimson wool;  
linen and goat hair.

5. "And ram skins dyed red, tachash  
skins, and acacia wood."



Where did Jews  
find acacia wood  
in the desert?

# TEXT 1B

*Rashi, ad loc.*

## THE RASHI

"ועצי שטים":

ומאין היו להם במדבר?

פירש רבי תנחומא: יעקב  
אבינו צפה ברוח הקודש  
שעתידין ישראל לבנות  
משכן במדבר, והביא  
ארזים למצרים, ונטעם.  
וצוה לבניו ליטלם עמהם  
כשיצאו ממצרים.

"Acacia Wood":

Where did they get these trees in the desert?

Rabbi Tanchuma explained that our father Jacob foresaw prophetically that the Jews would build a Tabernacle in the desert, so he brought trees to Egypt and planted them. He instructed his children to take them along when they would leave Egypt.

## QUESTIONS ON RASHI

1. Why did Rashi provide his source?
2. Why does Rashi pretend this is a literal explanation (using the words, “Rabbi Tanchuma explained”) when it is a homily at best?
3. Why does the literalist Rashi opt for such a complex explanation?



# TEXT 2

*Rabbi Avraham ibn  
Ezra, ad loc.*

יש מקדמונינו שאמרו שיעקב נטען וישראל  
הוציאם ממצרים במצות משה . . .

והנה לא ידענו: אם קבלה היתה ביד  
אבותינו שממצרים הוציאום, גם אנחנו נסור  
אל משמשתם. ואם סברא היא, יש לבקש  
דרך אחרת.

ונאמר כי היה סמוך אל הר סיני יער עצי  
שיטים. ובבאם שם, אמר להם שיתעכבו  
הרבה . . . אז עשה כל אחד סוכה,  
והנשיאים עשו כדמות חצירות, כל אחד כפי  
מעלתו. וכרתו כל היער כי עם רב היה,  
ועשו סוכות.

ומשה לא דיבר להם דבר המשכן רק אחר  
יום הכיפורים. וזה טעם כל אשר נמצא אתו.

Some of our predecessors explained that our  
Patriarch Jacob planted them, and the Israelites  
brought them out of Egypt at Moses's instruction. . . .

Now, we don't know: If this was transmitted to our  
predecessors by their ancestors, we, too, should  
accept it. However, it is best to seek a different  
explanation if this was merely their theory.

We suggest that there was an acacia grove near the  
Sinai desert. When they arrived at Sinai, Moses  
informed them they would pause there for a long  
time. At that point, they cut down the trees to  
provide enough wood for everyone to build a hut  
and for the leaders to build large courtyards.

Moses instructed them to build the Tabernacle after  
Yom Kippur [several months after they built their  
huts]. By then, they had plenty of available wood.

## TEXT 3A

*Exodus 15:27*

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵילִמָּה וְשָׁם שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עֵינֹת  
מַיִם וְשִׁבְעִים תְּמָרִים.

And they arrived in Eilim. And there  
were twelve springs of water and  
seventy date palms.

## TEXT 3B

*Talmud, Yoma 75b*

דְּבָרִים שֶׁתַּגִּיר אֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם מוֹכְרִין  
אוֹתָן לָהֶם.

[There were] items that merchants  
from the community of nations would  
sell to them.

We learned previously that everything the Jews donated for the Tabernacle was readily available and waiting for pickup.



# TEXT 4A

*Exodus 25:2*

דִּבֶּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה.

Speak to the Children of Israel to take  
for Me an offering.

## TEXT 4B

*Rashi, ad loc.*

"תְּרוּמָה":

הַפְּרָשָׁה. יַפְרִישׁוּ לִי מִמָּוֶנָם נִדְבָה.

"An offering":

A separation. They will set it apart from their property as an offering for me.





Rashi accepts Rabbi Tanchuma's homiletical tale as the literal meaning because none of the other explanations are consistent with the Torah's teaching that the wood was readily available.

## TEXT 5

*Rabbi Yaakov  
Yitzchak Halevi  
Horowitz, Be'er  
Yitzchak, ad loc.*

ומפני שידוע להם שלא היו ארזים  
במצרים אמרו כי יעקב נטעם.

[Rashi] knew acacia trees were not native to Egypt; [he] therefore insisted that Jacob planted them.



## TEXT 6

*Rabbi Chaim Loew,  
Be'er Mayim Chayim,  
ad loc.*

שרצה יעקב שהארזים האלה יהיו מארץ הקדושה.

ומה שאמר "ונטעם", זהו לפי שאותם הארזים עצמן שהביא יעקב עמו, אי אפשר שיעמדו כל אותן השנים שהיו בגלות מצרים אם לא שנטעם.

Jacob wanted the acacia trees to come from the Holy Land.

He replanted them in Egypt because the trees Jacob brought would not have lasted all those years in Egypt had he not planted them.

The Tabernacle's wood came from Israel to ensure its holiness, unlike Egyptian gold and silver. While this answer appeals to adults, Rashi rejects it, as a child would question why only the wood required special origins.





Jacob wanted his children to have trees in Egypt that had once been planted on Israeli soil to serve as a symbol of comfort, hope, and strength when they needed it most.

# TEXT 7A

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 31, p. 146*

כאשר בני ישראל נמצאים בגלות  
מצרים, במצב דקושי השעבוד, ועד  
לגזירת "כל הבן הילוד היארה  
תשליכוהו" (שמות א, כב) וכו', הרי  
נוסף על ההבטחה ד"ואנכי אעלך גם  
עלה" (בראשית מו, ד), "שואבים"  
הם נחמה ותנחומין כל משך זמן  
הגלות בראותם בעיניהם ממש את  
עצי הארזים שהביא יעקב ונטע  
במצרים.

שטעמו בטרחה רבה זו היה מפני  
ש"צפה ברוח הקודש שעתידין . . .  
לבנות משכן במדבר". "וצוה לבניו  
(ובניו לבניהם ובני בניהם אחריהם)  
ליטלם עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים".

When the Children of Israel were in exile in Egypt, in a state of such terrific distress that [the Egyptians] "cast every newborn son into the river" (Exodus 1:22), they drew comfort and consolation from seeing the acacia trees Jacob brought and planted in Egypt. This was even more comforting than G-d's promise, "I will bring you up [to Israel]; I will also bring you up" (Genesis 46:4).

It was especially comforting to know that Jacob made this incredible effort because he prophesied that his children would . . . build a Tabernacle in the desert. He instructed his children, who instructed the following generations, to take them along when they left Egypt.



## TEXT 7B

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, ibid.,  
p. 147*

שבני ישראל יראו בעיני בשר ארזים שהובאו ממקום אחר (מארץ ישראל, המורה על מצב של גאולה), שזה מדגיש עוד יותר שאין נתונים לחלוטין תחת שליטת המצרים, אלא אעלך גם עלה. יצאו, ויעלו לארץ ישראל, ויטלו ארזים אלה עמהם.

Jews would behold with their physical eyes the trees that were transported from beyond Egypt—from Israel, which signifies redemption. This underscored for them that even during their time of bondage, they were not fully under the Egyptian thumb. They were under G-d's authority, Who promised, "I will bring you up [to Israel]; I will also bring you up." They would be liberated from Egypt, ascend to Israel, and bring these trees with them.

The trees strengthened the Jews' faith in their eventual redemption and raised their morale during the exile.



תנחומא

Tanchuma



תנחומין

*tanchumin*



**consolation**

## ANSWERS

- Rashi accepted the homily as a literal explanation because it was the only way Jews could have had acacia wood at the ready in a desert.
- Had he accepted the idea that there was an acacia grove in the desert, the Jews would still need to chop down the trees and bring the logs into their homes.
- Rashi shared the name of his source to explain why Yaakov brought the trees from Israel rather than plant seeds in Egypt.



## TEXT 8

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Sefer  
Maamarim Melukat  
6, p. 138*

שישראל הם שבורים מזה שהם בגלות (גם כשיש להם הרחבה בגשמיות וברוחניות), הוא, כי רצונו האמיתי של כל אחד מישראל הוא שיהיה גילוי אלקות, ועד שזה (גילוי אלקות) נוגע לעצם מציאותו, ולכן, זה שבזמן הגלות אין מאיר גילוי אלקות כמו שהיה בזמן הבית [ובפרט כשמתבונן בזה שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, כל מי שלא נבנה בית המקדש בימיו הרי זה כאילו נחרב בימיו], הנה מזה עצמו איז ער אינגאנצן צוטרייסלט.

Jews are distraught over being in Exile (even if they enjoy material and spiritual prosperity) because a Jew's genuine desire is to experience the Divine presence. This desire is rooted in the core of our spiritual being. We are shaken to the core by the fact that the Divine presence is not manifest today as it was when the Temple stood [in Jerusalem]. Moreover, the following teaching from our sages disturbs us greatly. They taught that we must regard the fact that the Temple was not rebuilt during our lifetime as if it were destroyed in our lifetime (Jerusalem Talmud, Yoma 1:5).



Until the Redemption arrives, G-d's presence remains concealed. It isn't easy to see or feel any sense of closeness to G-d in this material world.

# TEXT 9

*Talmud, Yoma 38b*

אָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַּר אָבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֵין צַדִּיק נִפְטָר מִן הָעוֹלָם עַד שֶׁנִּבְרָא צַדִּיק  
כְּמוֹתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיִּזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וּבָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ" (קֹהֶלֶת א, ה). עַד שֶׁלֹּא כָּבְתָה שְׁמִשׁוֹ שֶׁל  
עֲלִי, זָרְחָה שְׁמִשׁוֹ שֶׁל שְׁמוּאֵל הַרְמָתִי.

אָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַּר אָבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: רָאָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁצַּדִּיקִים מוּעָטִין, עָמַד  
וַיִּשְׁתַּלֵּן בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "כִּי לֹה' מְצוּקֵי אֶרֶץ וַיִּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבְל" (שְׁמוּאֵל א ב, ח).

Rabbi Chiya bar Aba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A righteous person does not pass away until a similarly righteous person is born. As the passage states, "The sun rises, the sun sets" (Ecclesiastes 1:5); before the sun set on Eli the High Priest, Samuel [the prophet] from Ramah was born.

Rabbi Chiya bar Aba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: G-d saw that there would be few perfectly righteous people, so He planted them in each generation. As the passage states, "For the pillars of the Earth belong to G-d, and He set the world upon them" (I Samuel 2:8).

Yaakov planted trees; G-d  
planted righteous people  
as reminders of G-d's  
presence in the world,  
and hope for the future.



## TEXT 10

*Isaiah 30:20*

אִלֵּא יִכָּנֵף עוֹד מוֹרִיךְ, וְהָיוּ עֵינֶיךָ  
רְאוּת אֶת מוֹרִיךְ.

And your teacher shall no longer be  
concealed from you, and your eyes shall  
see your teacher.



During exile, the perfectly righteous, who clearly perceive G-d, sustain us by guiding and uplifting us until redemption.

## TEXT 11

*Rabbi Hillel Malisov  
of Paritch, Pelach  
Harimon, Exodus,  
p. 7*

גם אחר החורבן לא הסתיר להם החורבן, כמו שאמר  
המנוח מורי הרב יצחק אייזיק בשם אדוננו מורינו ורבינו  
הזקן נשמתו עדן, שלפני נשמות הגבוהות כמו רבי שמעון  
בר יוחאי לא נחרב הבית כלל.

The destruction of the Temple did not cause the Divine presence to be concealed from perfectly righteous Jews. My teacher, Rabbi Aizik Epstein of Gomil, said in the name of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi that for lofty souls such as Rabbi Shimon bar Yocha'i, the Temple was not destroyed.

# TEXT 12

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 31, p. 148*

וזוהי נחמתם של ישראל בהיותם  
ב"מדבר העמים", שיש להם  
ה"ארזים" שנטע יעקב אבינו בכל  
דור ודור שהם למעלה מהגלות,  
ונראים לבני ישראל ומשפיעים כח  
בכל ישראל לא להתפעל מחשכת  
הגלות כי אם להתגבר עליו . . .

ואזי זוכים לנחמה השלימה, נחמה  
כפשוטה ממש, בפועל ממש.  
שהנחמה היחידה האפשרית על  
אריכות גלות זה האחרון היא גאולה  
האמיתית והשלימה על ידי משיח  
צדקנו, כפשוטה ממש, למטה  
מעשרה טפחים ממש, ובמהרה  
בימינו ממש.

Seeing the [proverbial] trees planted by  
our forefather Jacob in every generation is  
comforting. These trees are untouched by  
[the spiritual desolation of] Exile, yet they  
are visible to us. They empower us to not  
succumb to the spiritual darkness of Exile  
but rather to overcome it.

With this strength, we merit being fully  
consoled with an actual and real  
consolation. After this long and final Exile,  
the only possible consolation is a true and  
complete Redemption. The literal arrival of  
our righteous redeemer on terra firma,  
speedily in our days.



Each Jew possesses a spark of Jacob's, Moses', and Adam's holiness. Perfectly righteous Jews have collective souls that empower us to find that spark in ourselves.



# TEXT 13

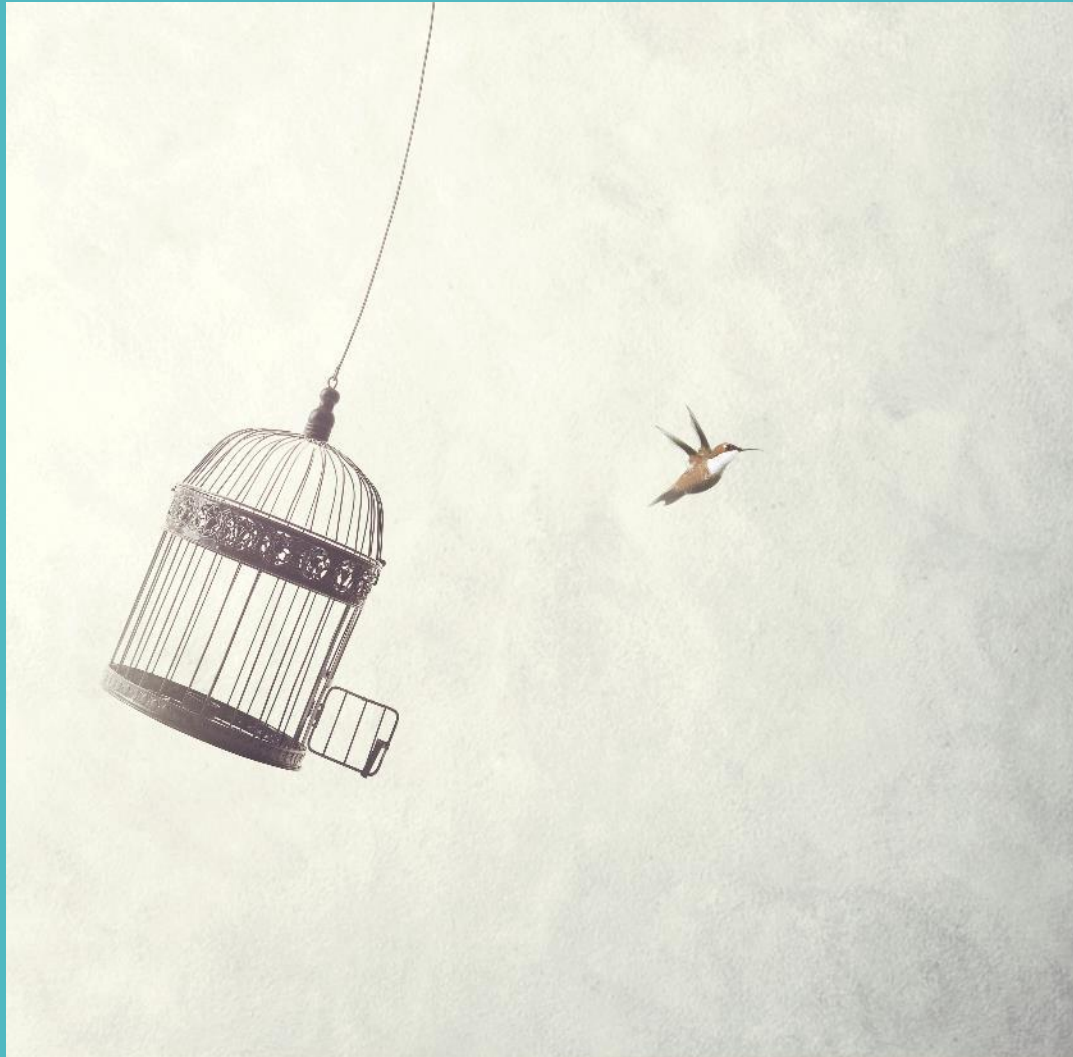
Rabbi Shneur Zalman  
of Liadi, Igeret  
Hakodesh, ch. 7

כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת שֶׁעוֹלָם הָיוּ כְּלוּלוֹת  
בְּאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן. וְדֶרֶךְ כָּלֵל, הִיְתָה  
נִשְׁמָתוֹ נִחְלָקֶת לְמִסְפַּר תְּרִי"ג, רמ"ח  
אֲבָרִים וְשֵׁס"ה גִּידִים, אֶךְ דֶּרֶךְ פָּרֹט,  
נִחְלָקֶת לְנִיצוּצוֹת אֵין מִסְפָּר . . .

וְהִנֵּה, "שׁוֹפְרִיָּה דִּיעֲקָב מַעֲיִן שׁוֹפְרִיָּה  
דְּאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן" . . . וְהִיְתָה נִשְׁמָתוֹ  
גַּם כֵּן כְּלוּלָה מְכֹל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת  
שֶׁבְּיִשְׂרָאֵל . . . וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵב,  
הָעוֹסְקִים בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְמִצְוֹת, מֵאִיר אֹר  
ה' אֵין סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּבַחֲיַנֵּת גִּילּוֹי  
בְּנִשְׁמָתָם. וְזִמֵּן גִּילּוֹי זֶה בְּיָתֵר שְׂאֵת  
וְיָתֵר עֹז הֶהָאָרֶה בְּמוֹחָם וּלְבָם הוּא  
בְּשַׁעַת הַתְּפִלָּה.

Every soul in the world was included in the collective soul of Adam. In general, his soul was divisible into 613 elements, representing the 248 organs and the 365 sinews. More specifically, his soul was divisible into innumerable sparks. . . .

Now, "Jacob's [spiritual] beauty resembled Adam's [spiritual] beauty" (Bava Metzi'a 84a). . . . [This means that like Adam], Jacob's soul also comprised all the Jewish souls. . . . [Thus], G-d's infinite light shines openly into the souls of all who follow Jacob's example, are upright of heart, and engage in Torah study and *mitzvah* observance. This Divine radiance is strongest and most intense in their minds and hearts during prayer.



By connecting to our inner spark, we can experience moments of spiritual redemption even in Exile.

## KEY POINTS

1. The Jews used acacia wood for the Tabernacle, which Jacob prophetically planted in Egypt.
2. Rashi accepts this seemingly fantastical explanation to reconcile how the wood was readily available.
3. Jacob's trees were a tangible reminder of hope and redemption for the enslaved Jews in Egypt.
4. Like Jacob's trees, righteous people in every generation are planted as reminders of G-d's presence and redemption.
5. Each Jew possesses a spark of Jacob's holiness, which can be accessed through Torah, *mitzvot*, and prayer.
6. By connecting to our inner spark, we can experience moments of spiritual redemption even in Exile.

