

Hashem commands Moshe to solicit for the Mishkan.

**דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבָבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-  
תְּרוּמָתִי:**

“Speak to Bnei Yisroel and they shall take for Me *terumah* donations. From every adult person that his heart gives freely they shall take My *terumah* donations.” (Shmos 25:2).

Hashem is asking for freewill donations. However, no set amount is suggested. The purpose of this donation is only given at the end (ibid 25:8) and not before soliciting donations. Why? Terumah offerings and tithes are always the initial earnings and not predetermined. Practically, it usually is 1% to 2% of gross earnings that is given to the Kohen and collected at the time of intake. Here, Hashem is asking for such freewill donations. Why use the word “take” twice? Also, who is taking it, Moshe or the people? Also, “take for Me” is for whom, Hashem or Moshe? Also, this is a medium level command. There are three words used by the Torah for a command: Say (emor), speak (daber), and command (tzav). If this donation is free willed, why use anything more than “say?”

There is a certain risk in building a Mishkan based on wholly volunteer donations. Perhaps the following conditions arise. The people do not have the supplies or those that have it are not compelled to give. The people do not give enough. They can also give too much of one item but not enough of another. Finally, this pasuk is qualified as the next few pesukim qualify what is to be given: Only gold, silver, copper, yarns of specific colors and specific threads, and a few other itemized essentials. (Ibid 25:3-7). What if a person wants to give black Egyptian cotton or a different kind of wood? Will that donation be rejected?

“Speak to Bnei Yisroel.” The amount of giving is voluntary as is the selection of the item to be given. However, even so, when soliciting public donations, the request must be serious and with conviction. It is not a conversation. *We will be building a Mishkan to Hashem so anyone who wants to donate, there will be a box in middle of the camp. Please bring the donation there.* An outright command, too, would defeat the free will aspect.

“Take for Me *terumah* donations.” ויקח always infers a transaction. Hashem already gave them the wealth from Mitzrayim before they left and at the edge of the Yam Suf. Now the request is to take of those gifts of loot and wealth, and purchase a Mishkan for Hashem. It is transforming that worldly wealth into a holy place for the Holy Presence to dwell among Bnei Yisroel (or inside Bnei Yisroel). Now that Bnei Yisroel started to receive Hashem’s Torah and worshipped Him by Har Sinai, the next step is to take a *teruma* donation from the loot and wealth. “Take for Me” implies that the Bnei Yisroel will not expend or exhaust their assets. They will take the 1% or 2%. They will *take* it from their

total accumulation and donate it. The point is not the giving as much as the taking. They have to learn to remove tithes from their capital so that they get used to understanding that it's not all theirs. Hashem provides it. That is why the reason, "Make for me a Mikdash." (Ibid 25:8), is given at the end. The point, here, is the taking. Obviously, Hashem has an end goal for the donations themselves.

"From every person." *מִכָּל אִישׁ* makes it a proper noun. It is every man, woman, and family, but only those that possessed property. All those property owners are encouraged to take a small portion off of the top.

"That his heart gives freely." Those who could not bring themselves to give were not penalized. However, it is more. 1% or 2% off the top is what everyone – except the greatly miserly – gives freely. Three is little effort to give away this amount. All the gains are sitting in a pile and this amount does not seem to make a dent. Terumah is an amount that the heart gives of freely. More than that takes practice and effort and a generous heart. Furthermore, *נָדַב* is used in Tanach as freewill giving when one is moved by his spirit because of circumstances. For example, it is used for those that answer the call and volunteer for war. (Shoftim 5:2). It is also used for freewill returning to Yerushalayim (Nehemiah 11:2) and giving offerings at the first Beis HaMikdash (Divrei Hayomim I 29:5-17) and second Beis HaMikdash (Ezra 1:6, 2:68). It is when life circumstances (a simcha, yeshua, or influx in spiritual feeling) moves the heart to be giving toward Hashem. It is a *hakaras Hatov* giving but also a pledge of allegiance. Here, Hashem just freed the nation from hard bondage, led them safely across the desert and a sea, gave them water from a rock, food from the sky, and then pledged for them to be His nation at Har Sinai. This was a time when their hearts would be stirred to give back. Terumah donations, generally, have this characteristic. As one accumulates his gross intake of income, he is stirred in appreciation to give back.

"They shall take My *terumah* donation." 'Take' here is plural. Bnei Yisroel should take Hashem's donation. Giving is really an act of taking. When one gives of him or herself, that person is taking a part of themselves – their time, energy, or money – and giving it to another. Before one can give one must take. The most important part of giving charity and kindness is taking it first. Take it – take the time, the effort, the resources – and prepare it for a donation. When one realizes that giving involves taking, then the effort seems obvious and less undesirable. A big obstacle to doing acts of kindness is the effort involved. Either the thought is *it's my money, I earned it*, or *it's my time and energy, I have no patience or energy to give it*. When the donor realizes that taking is part of the process and sets his or her mind to take, the inherent obstacle or effort is removed.

It is important to understand the sequence here. The request for donation is given first. The items wanted are then listed *after* the givers already prepared their donations. Then the purpose is given. The reason is that Hashem wanted them to first learn the lesson of taking and giving. They can give whatever they want. If it was not on the list they will then trade, barter, or purchase (*take*) the correct items with their prepared donations. Finally, they will be ultimately satisfied with the donation knowing its purpose.