

From Anyone with a Compelling Heart

¹Adonai spoke to Moses saying, ²“Tell Bnei-Yisrael to take up an offering for Me. From anyone whose heart compels him you are to take My offering. ³These are the contributions which you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴blue, purple and scarlet cloth; fine linen and goat hair; ⁵ram skins dyed red, sealskins, acacia wood; ⁶oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; ⁷onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastplate” (Ex. 25:1-7)

The first thing that caught my attention when reading this week’s *Parshah* is the English word chosen by the TLV translators for the Hebrew expression *yidbenu libo*, “whose heart compels him.” I remember that in 1993 when we started computerizing UF EE’s curriculum the UF Center for Instructional Research Computing Activity (CIRCA) endorsed the use of a presentation package called Compel versus PowerPoint 4 for Windows. For around \$99 you could get a powerful tool that included graphics, video capability and sound clips in addition to the obligatory charts and graphs that every software of its kind should have. It was also capable of animation and morphing. The word Compel stuck with me over the years. The English Dictionary defines compel as evoking interest, attention, or admiration in a powerfully irresistible way; not able to be refuted; inspiring conviction; and not able to be resisted; overwhelming. Synonyms include enthralling, captivating, gripping, engrossing, riveting, spellbinding, convincing, persuasive, cogent, irresistible, forceful, and powerful. That is quite a number of words to explain compelling.

When it comes to anything called “My offering” Adonai Himself chose the concept of a compelling heart. Even more to the point, when it comes to anything dealing with Adonai, He wants our hearts to compel us to perform and obey His Word. It is always a matter of the heart: “For the eyes of Adonai run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this...” (2 Chron. 16:9, KJV). Anything less is foolishness: “⁹The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable—who can know it? ¹⁰I Adonai search the heart, I try the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds” (Jer. 17:9-10). Therefore, when it comes to tithes and offerings, we must ensure that these come because of our *compelling heart* to please Adonai and not because it is required (and it is) or expected (and it is) of us. In *Kol Simcha* we love Adonai so much that everything we do and want to do is motivated by unconditional (*agape*) love and nothing else.

I also could not help to notice that Adonai does not want junk or leftovers. He asked, specifically, for *gold, silver bronze, blue, purple and scarlet cloth; fine linen and goat hair; ram skins dyed red, sealskins, acacia wood; oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; and onyx stones*. The best of the best, don’t you think? Where did the Children of Israel get such stuff while being in the middle of the great desert? It came from the Egyptians the morning after the Passover: “³⁶Adona gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and let them have what they asked for. So they plundered the Egyptians (Ex. 12:36). The treasures were given to them only a few weeks earlier, but it was not free. They did work 430 years for it! It is the fruit of our labor that gives us the resources to be able to give Adonai substance rather than remainders and scrap. Adonai deserves the very best we have to offer! Like the Hallmark commercials, “only when you want to give the very best.”

We focus mostly on the *love aspects* of a believer’s life, there is and will be a compelling motivation to do and give the very best there is to Adonai. That desire permeates everything we do for Him and with Him and His people. I believe we are to treat Adonai’s things with reverence, fear and delight. I pray that our congregation will develop *a heart that compels* us to be and practice excellence in everything we are involved with.

We want to develop this kind of heart this year as we strive to become righteous doers (*tzadikim*) and obedient to His Word. *Shabbat Shalom!*