



A MAGNANIMOUS
PEOPLE CREATE
A MOST FITTING
EDIFICE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Terumah
Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Video: Offsetting the Enormous Cost of the Illustrious Mishkan

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Why The Spoils of the Sea as Atonement

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Balance, CounterBalance, & Equilibrium

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Obviating the Loss of Acuity Through The Continuum of Study

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The Infinite Applications of Intellectual Property

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1. Proverbs: "I have given you a good acquisition don't abandon it."
2. Midrash: Two merchants exchange their merchandise – one has silk the other spices.
3. After the exchange, each merchant no longer possesses what he originally had.
4. Regarding Torah this is not so.
5. Two individuals, each knowing a section of the Talmud, teach the other – each retains what he had and gains what he acquired. "How special is the gift of Torah."
6. Why is Torah unique in this regard – the same should be true regarding any branch of knowledge?
7. Rambam: "Until when must one engage in study? Until one dies... when one does not engage, one forgets."
8. Torah, although comprised of many subjects and classifications of law – when engaging in one subject one doesn't disengage from others.
9. In other branches of knowledge when studies and disengages to study another subject one immediately begins forgetting.
10. Torah, regardless of its vastness, is all considered one.

Meriting A Sanctuary to Contain The Infinite

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1. G-d's presence was located in the Holy of Holies – the location of the Holy Ark.
2. The Ark contained two sets of Tablets and the Torah.
3. One of the coverings of the Mishkan: Ram's hides.
4. Midrash: The Ram hides are in Yaakov's merit – he was disguised by his mother as a hairy person with goat hides.
5. Rivka instructed him to take the blessings from his father that were rightfully his.
6. Midrash: G-d said "Although all the heavens can not contain my presence, my presence will be contained within the goats hides."
7. Yaakov, "The man of the tent (of Torah)," is the personification of Torah.
8. The objective of creation is for the Torah and the Jewish People to fulfill it.
9. Mishnah: If There is no flour there is no Torah.
10. Without the material, the Torah and the Jewish People could not exist.
11. All existence can not contain G-d's infinite presence.
12. Yaakov, the embodiment of Torah, created the setting to contain the infinite of G-d's Presence.

Integrating The Celestial and The Terrestrial

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1. Ramban: The Mishkan in all its aspects is a replication of Sinai.
2. At Sinai G-d brought heaven to earth; in the Mishkan G-d's presence was no less.
3. G-d was the equivalent of the Groom, and Jewish People the Bride, at Sinai; its replications were the two cherubs on the Ark.
4. When G-d called to Moshe from the communion tent, the decibel level was no less than Sinai; Moshe alone heard it.
5. If G-d was communicating to Moshe alone, why speak as he spoke at Sinai?
6. Moshe was spoken to in this manner because being the conduit for Torah the Sinai experience continues.
7. When sacrifices were brought in the Mishkan, or the Jews prostrated themselves on Yom Kippur, it was the most intimate moment.
8. Midrash: Sinai was a public display of G-d's relationship with the Jews, and the Mishkan was in concealment.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Terumah



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Perfecting and Advancing One's Being

The *Torah* enumerates the various materials that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan*, "You shall take from them: gold, silver, copper..." The *Midrash* explains, "G-d showed *Moshe* three tithings (terumos). One corresponded to the *Mishkan*, the second to the first Temple and the third to the Second Temple. As it states, 'gold, silver, and copper...'

Gold alludes to the *Mishkan* that was built by *Moshe*, because it was precious and beloved to G-d as gold. Silver alludes to the first Temple. As the verse tells us that the level of wealth that the Jewish people possessed at the time of King Solomon was so great that silver was no longer valued. Since the word '*nechoshes* (copper)' alludes to something that is deficient (*nechushta*), copper corresponds to the second Temple because there were five things that were lacking in it: the Holy Ark, the *kapores* (cover

for the Ark), the cherubs, the heavenly fire, and the Divine Presence."

Reb Chaim of *Volozhin* in his work *Ruach Chaim* explains that a human being is comprised of three parts: the life source (*Nefesh*), spirit (*Ruach*), and soul (*Neshama*). All physical movement emanates from the *Nefesh* that is contained within the physical being. This life source is shared by all living creatures alike. The *Ruach* (spirit - which means wind) is the spirit that gives man the power of speech (ability of verbal expression). The *Neshama* is the essence of man that is spiritual which is the basis for him to possess an intellect. *Rabbi Chaim* of *Volozhin* explains that just as each individual is comprised of these three elements, the Jewish people as a whole also possess these three components.

Avraham, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*, the founding Patriarchs of the Jewish people, respectively represent each

one of these components. *Avraham*, our Patriarch corresponds to the *Nefesh* (life source) of the Jewish people, as we see his most prominent characteristic was *chesed*. This was expressed through his physical movement that emanates from the *Nefesh*. *Avraham*, as the Patriarch, perfected the *Nefesh* of the Jewish people through his selfless acts of loving kindness. As it states regarding *Avraham's* hosting of the angels, "*Avraham* ran towards them...*Avraham* ran to the cattle, took a calf tender and good..."

Yitzchak, our Patriarch is referred to by *Chazal* as the "unblemished offering." Just as the *Kohen* needs to meet certain criteria regarding his intent when he performs the service of the offering, so too was *Yitzchak* pure in thought when he was brought as an offering. If the *Kohen* should have a certain improper thought, it would invalidate the sacrifice. He, therefore corresponds to the soul of the Jewish people.

Yaakov, our Patriarch who is quantified as the one who studied Torah. As the *Torah* refers to him, "The perfect man who dwelt in the tent (of *Torah*)." Thus, he perfected the *Ruach* (power of speech) of the Jewish people because when one engages in *Torah* study it should be articulated.

If one would want to classify the *Mishkan* and the two Temples according to the understanding of *Reb Chaim of Volozhin*, (that there is a soul, spirit, and life source of the Jewish people) one would say that the *Mishkan* of *Moshe* corresponded to the *Neshama* (soul) of the Jewish people. *Moshe*, being the most special Jew who ever lived had infused into the *Mishkan* an intent of the most advanced level. As a result of his involvement in the *Mishkan*, it was regarded by G-d as precious and beloved as gold.

In addition, *Chazal* tell us that since *Moshe* was involved with the building of the *Mishkan* it exists eternally. Thus, the *Mishkan* was not destroyed but rather it was hidden away. The purpose of the *Mishkan* of *Moshe* was to perfect the soul of the Jewish people, which is eternal (As it states, "You shall make for Me a Sanctuary...").

The Temple built by King Solomon addressed and perfected the *Ruach* (spirit) of the Jewish people. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Nidarim* tells us that the first Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people did not recite the blessing of the *Torah* before they engaged in its study. The *Gemara* cites a verse from

Eicha, "They had abandoned My *Torah*..." Since the First Temple was meant to perfect the spirit which corresponds to *Torah* study and the Jewish people failed in this area, G-d thus allowed it to be destroyed.

The Second Temple, which was the most deficient in spirituality, corresponds to the life source (*Nefesh*) of the Jewish people. It was thus intended to perfect the life source (*Nefesh*) of the Jewish people through the mitzvos between man and his fellow, such as loving kindness. Since the Jewish people did not advance themselves in this area, but rather they failed, G-d allowed the Second Temple to be destroyed. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah* tells us that it was because of baseless hatred (*sinaas chinam*) among the Jewish people that caused the destruction of the second Temple. Baseless hatred towards one's fellow is the antithesis of *chesed* (kindness) which was addressed and perfected by *Avraham's* selfless and indiscriminate kindness.

The *Mishkan*, first Temple, and second Temple, were each given to the Jewish people in order to perfect an aspect of their spirituality. Although these edifices were taken from them because they had failed, the Jew is still able on a personal level to perfect the three components of his spirituality. By engaging in *Torah* study, one will perfect his spirit (*Ruach*). Through his prayer and service of G-d one will perfect his soul (*Neshama*) by having pure thought when engaging with G-d. One will perfect his *Nefesh* through performing acts of loving kindness. This is alluded to by the *Mishna* in Ethics of our Fathers, which states, "The world stands on three principles, *Torah*, *Avodah* (service), and acts of loving kindness."

The Initiative that is Needed to Meet One's Purpose

The *Torah* states regarding the building of the Holy Ark, which was the repository that contained the *Torah*, "...You shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without you shall cover it..." The *Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah* explains that by specifying that the Ark must be covered with gold on the inside as well as on the outside, the *Torah* is teaching us that, "A *Torah* Sage whose inside is not the same as his outside is not a *Torah* Sage." Meaning, in order for one to be classified as a *Torah* Sage, his inner purity

of commitment should be consistent with his outer demeanor and persona.

A *Torah Sage* is not merely a repository of information, but rather, he must be genuine and sincere in his service of G-d in every aspect of his life. This classification applies only to the one who studies *Torah* for the sake of its actualization and not merely for the sake of its intellectualism. This is the symbolism of the Holy Ark being inlaid with gold on the inside and the outside.

The *Torah* states regarding the specifications of the Holy Ark that contained the Testament (*Torah*), "They shall make an Ark...two and a half cubits in length; a cubit and a half its width; and a cubit and a half its height." *Baal Haturim* explains that the reason the specifications of the Ark had half measures was to indicate that in order for one to have the capacity to acquire and retain *Torah*, one needs to break his character traits. It is only when one is humbled that one becomes worthy of being a receptacle for *Torah*. As *Chazal* tell us, "*Torah* is acquired by the one who is willing to sacrifice himself for it."

The *Torah* states, "They shall make an Ark..." The *Midrash* explains, "We find that there are ten activities regarding the building of the *Mishkan* that are introduced with 'You shall make...' This is to correspond to the Ten Utterances of G-d through which He created the world." What is the relevance between the ten activities of the building of the *Mishkan* and the Ten Utterances through which the world was created?

Chazal ask, "Why is the portion of *Shabbos* juxtaposed to the portion of the *Mishkan*? To teach us that all the thirty-nine classifications of creative activity that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan* are forbidden on *Shabbos*." The *Torah* tells us that G-d Created existence in six days and He refrained from creative activity on the seventh day. Thus, the Jewish people were commanded to keep the *Shabbos* holy and observe it by refraining from creative activity. The creative activities from which the Jew must refrain on *Shabbos* are derived from the creative activities that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan* because the *Mishkan* itself was a microcosm of Creation.

The *Midrash* cites a verse from Psalms, "'Hashem, I love the shelter of Your House and the place of the residence (*Mishkan*) of Your Glory...' *Reb Yaakov B'Reb*

Yossi said, 'Why does King David say 'I love the shelter of Your House...?' It is to indicate that the *Mishkan* itself is the equivalent of Creation.' Where do we find that it is equivalent?

The *Torah* states regarding Creation, '...G-d spread the heavens like a tapestry...' Regarding the *Mishkan* it is written, 'You should make tapestries made of goat hides...' Regarding Creation the *Torah* states, 'And G-d separated between the waters...' Where do find the concept of separation in the *Mishkan*? It states, 'The curtain shall separate (between the holy and Holy of Holies).' Regarding Creation, the *Torah* states, 'The waters shall gather...' Regarding the *Mishkan*, it states, 'The water will gather in the copper laver.'...It states regarding the creation of man, 'So G-d created Man in His image...'

Where do we find the corresponding element for 'Man' in the *Mishkan*? It is the High Priest. (Just as *Adam* was created to serve G-d on earth, so too was *Aaron* chosen to be the Officiant of G-d in the *Mishkan*)..." The *Midrash* continues to offer many other correlations between the *Mishkan* and the creation of the world. Why did the *Mishkan* need to be the equivalent of Creation?

The objective of Creation was for G-d's Presence to dwell in the physical realm with Man to be His Officiant. However, because *Adam* had failed by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, physical existence was no longer fit for the Divine Presence. By sinning, *Adam* putrefied the world that was created to be the pristine setting for G-d's Presence.

At *Sinai*, the Jewish people once again ascended to the level of *Adam* before the sin; however, because they sinned with the golden calf, they were not qualified to host G-d's Splendor. G-d therefore commanded the Jewish people to build the *Mishkan* so that He could dwell in their midst. As it states, "Build for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst..." Thus, the *Mishkan* needed to be a microcosm of Creation since it was meant to be the equivalent of the original creation to host G-d's Presence.

The objective of Creation is for the sake of the *Torah* and for the sake of the Jewish people to fulfill it. As it is stated in the *Torah*, "*Bereishis bara Elokim*- In the beginning G-d created ..." *Chazal* explain this verse to mean that for the sake of *Torah*, which is referred to

as “*reishis* (choicest)” and for the sake of the Jewish people who are also referred as “*reishis* (chosen)” the world was created.

Ramban explains that regarding the vessels of the *Mishkan*, the first one that is discussed is the Holy Ark because it is the most important one, since it was the location of the Divine Presence. Thus, the beginning and focal point of Creation is the *Torah*. Similarly, the *Mishkan* began with the building of the Holy Ark because it contained the *Torah* and represents a true *Torah* Sage. Although G-d is Infinite, the Jew is able to have a relationship with Him through the *Torah*, which is represented by the Holy Ark in the *Mishkan*. By breaking (negating) one’s characteristics and humbling oneself as is reflected through the “broken” measurements of the Ark, the Jew can connect to G-d, the Infinite Being.

The Altar- Reflecting The Jewish Experience

The *Torah* states regarding the building of the Altar (*Mizbeiach*), “You shall make the Altar of acacia wood, five cubits in length and five cubits in width... three cubits its height.” The *Midrash* states, “G-d said to *Moshe*, ‘Instruct the Jewish people to build an altar for burnt offerings so that it should atone for the sins of My children. I had made a precondition with *Avraham*, our Patriarch, that if his children should sin, they will have atonement through the offerings...What is the significance of the word ‘*Mizbeiach* (Altar)’?”

The word ‘*Mizbeiach*’ is an acronym. The first letter of the word is the letter ‘*mem*’ which represents ‘*mechila* (forgiveness).’ The second letter is ‘*zien*’ which represents ‘*zechus* (merit).’ The next letter is ‘*beis*,’ which represents ‘*beracha* (blessing).’ The last letter is ‘*ches*’ which represents ‘*chaim* (life).’ In the merit of the burnt offering ‘*olah*’ you would be ‘*misaaleh* (elevated.)”

The *Midrash* continues, “The Altar was made of acacia wood (*atzei shitim*) in the merit of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. He had hosted the angels and told them to rest under the shade of his tree (*eitz*). What is the significance of ‘*shitim*’? When the Jewish people had engaged in ‘*shtus* (foolishness)’ through the Golden Calf, G-d had said, ‘Let the merit of *Avraham* (who had hosted the angels under his tree) atone for

their foolishness.’ Another interpretation of ‘*shitim*’ is that it is an acronym: ‘*shin*’, which represents ‘*shalom* (peace)’; ‘*tes*’ which represents ‘*tova* (goodness)’; ‘*yud*’ which represents ‘*yeshua* (redemption)’; ‘*mem*’ which represents ‘*mechila* (forgiveness).

The *Torah* states that the Altar was ‘five cubits in length and five cubits in width.’ What is the significance of this specification? When the Jewish people were given the Ten Commandments, five Commandments were written on one Tablet and the other five were written on the second Tablet. (Thus, there is a correlation between the height and width of the Altar and the Ten Commandments). The *Torah* states, ‘three cubits its height’ which corresponds to the three Redeemers of Israel. As it states, ‘I will send before you *Moshe*, *Aaron* and *Miriam*...” Every aspect of the Altar is rooted in and connotes the merit of our Patriarchs and the three Redeemers. It is in their merit that the Altar facilitates atonement and blessing on behalf of the Jewish people.

The *Torah* tells us that there are three species that qualify for a sacrifice: the ox (*shor*), sheep (*kesev*), and goat (*eiz*). The *Midrash* tells us that each of these species correspond to one of the Patriarchs. The ox (*shor*) was chosen in the merit of *Avraham*. As it states regarding *Avraham*’s hosting of the angels, “*Avraham* ran to the cattle, took a calf tender and good, and gave it to the youth who hurried to do it...” The sheep (*kesev*) was chosen to be an offering in the merit of *Yitzchak*. As the verse states regarding the *Akeidah* (binding of *Yitzchak*), “And *Avraham* looked up and saw- behold a ram – after it had been caught in the thicket...”

The species of the ram reminds G-d of the special act of the *Akeidah*, which was the ultimate sacrifice. The goat (*eiz*) was chosen to be an offering in the merit of *Yaakov*. As the *Torah* states regarding *Rivka*, our Matriarch, telling her son *Yaakov* to take the blessing from his father *Yitzchak*, “So now, my son, heed my voice to that which I command you. Go now to the flock and fetch from there two good goats...” These goats were meant to be prepared by *Rivka* as delicacies through which *Yaakov* would receive the blessings from his father.

Each species as an offering can only facilitate atonement and mercy because it corresponds to the merits of the Patriarchs. Every day we recite in the

first blessing of the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer), "Blessed are you *Hashem*, our G-d,...Who recalls the kindness of the Patriarchs and brings the Redeemer..." The basis for the survival and development of the Jewish people throughout the millennia is in the merit of the Patriarchs. They have drawn upon their spiritual account continuously throughout the ages. However, when the merits of the Patriarchs will be depleted, G-d will bring the Redeemer for their children. G-d will be forced to bring the Redeemer of the Jewish people even if they are not worthy because there is no longer a basis to maintain them as before.

The Patriarchs, through their spiritual initiatives and service of G-d, inculcated into their souls unique characteristics, which are inherited by every Jew until the end of time. Every aspect of the Jew, from his innate characteristics to his potential of accomplishment was established by the Patriarchs. The specifications and composition of the Altar reflects the fact that the Jew's existence is enmeshed on every level with our holy antecedents.

The Representation of Good and Evil

The *Torah* at the beginning of the Portion of *Terumah* enumerates the various materials that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan*, "Gold, silver, copper...and ram skins that are dyed red...and oil for illumination". The *Midrash* states, "Gold signifies the Babylonian exile (*Daniel* had seen in his dream the Babylonian emperor *Nebuchadnezzar* as a golden head) ...Silver represents and signifies to the exile of the *Medes* (*Haman* had given 10,000 talents of silver to *Achashverosh* the King of Persia, to seal the fate of the Jewish people.)

Copper represents the Greek exile, which was the least of all the exiles (Copper in Hebrew is '*nechoshis*' which alludes to the word '*nechustah*' (the least)). The ram skins that were dyed red represent the fourth exile, which is the Roman exile (*Edom*) (the nation who destroyed the Second Temple). G-d said, 'Although you (the Jewish people) will experience four exiles and you see these four kingdoms behaving with insolence and coming upon you, I promise that ultimately I will bring you salvation from the bondage.' As it states regarding the oil that was used to kindle the *Menorah*, 'oil for illumination...' It represents the light of *Moshiach*."

The *mitzvah* to build the *Mishkan* is based on the verse, "(G-d said) Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst..." Although the *Mishkan* was the holiest location in existence, because it was the dwelling place for the Divine Presence, four of the materials that were chosen by G-d that were needed for its building represent and allude to the four civilizations who will dominate the Jewish people. These four kingdoms were opposed to the Jewish people, because they oppose G-d. If this is so, why does G-d want for them to be represented in the holiest location, the *Mishkan*?

Maharal of *Prague* explains that the number four connotes and signifies total opposition. We find that the Jewish people are meant to experience four exiles at the hands of the four kingdoms. The Jewish people were in Egypt for four hundred years, based on the calculation of *Chazal* from the birth of *Yitzchak* until the redemption. *Avraham*, our Patriarch when he heard that his nephew Lot had been taken captive by the four mightiest kings, went to do battle with them and was victorious. These are examples that represent total opposition. When one is surrounded on all four sides, he is totally opposed. *Avraham* was opposed by the four kings and the Jewish people throughout history have been totally opposed by the nations of the world.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah* tells us that after the Jewish people returned to the Land after the Babylonian exile and built the Second Temple, the Men of the Great Assembly understood that the evil inclination for idolatry was an all-consuming force that had spiritually ravaged the Jewish people and was responsible for their spiritual decline. It was a force that was more overwhelming than the sexual drive.

The Men of the High Assembly had fasted and prayed to G-d to allow them to destroy this inclination. The *Gemara* tells us that G-d responded to their supplications and consequently a fiery lion came forth from the Holy of Holies. They took this fiery lion, which represented the evil inclination for idolatry and trapped it inside a lead cylinder and disposed of it. Because of the action of the Men of the High Assembly, the Jewish people are no longer overwhelmed or subject to the evil inclination for idolatry. How is it possible that the very essence of impurity should have relevance to the location of the Holy of Holies, which is the location of the Divine Presence?

It is because free choice cannot be maintained unless it is within a context where there is a balance of representation between good and evil. Through the exercise of free choice, man is able to influence the balance between good and evil in the world. If mankind were to do good in abundance, then the representation of good would be empowered and dominate over evil. However, if man chooses to fail, evil would be empowered and the world would be inclined to sin to a greater degree. Therefore, the representations of these two forces which affect existence must have a representation in the Holy of Holies. Similarly, the four kingdoms and exiles, which are in total opposition to G-d and the Jewish people must be represented in the location where G-d's Presence dwells.

Although we find something similar throughout the *Torah*, where G-d maintains the balance of good and evil in the world as manifested through individuals, it is not the same type of balance that is represented in the *Mishkan*. *Avraham* had chosen to be the one to espouse monotheism to mankind, thus infusing the world with holiness and make G-d's Presence a known entity. There needed to be a counterbalance to *Avraham's* influence. G-d thus brought *Nimrod* into existence, who had thrown *Avraham* into the fiery kiln. The counterbalance for *Yitzchak* was *Ishmael* and the counterbalance for *Yaakov* was *Esav*, the counterbalance for *Moshe* was *Bilaam*, and the counterbalance to the Jewish people until the coming of *Moshiach* are the Edomites.

The Torah Sage, the Guarantor of Existence

The *Torah* states, "And these are the ordinances (*Mishpatim*) that you shall place before them..." The *Midrash* explains, "King Solomon writes in Proverbs, 'A King through justice establishes the land. But one who is as *terumah* (tithes) destroys the land.' The *Torah* sage who is proficient in every aspect of the *Torah* is the equivalent of a king. The justice that he brings about by engaging in *Torah* and adjudicating disputes establishes existence.

However, if this individual chooses to act in a manner that is similar to *terumah* (tithes), which is stored in the corner of the house, he is the one who destroys existence. This is the individual who despite his qualifications as a judge, chooses to remain

uninvolved in the needs of his fellow and community. He is the one who says, 'Why should I be bothered or burdened by my community? Why should I be involved in resolving their legal disputes? Why should I heed their outcries? It is better for me to withdraw from my community and only immerse myself in *Torah* study.'

This person is the one who destroys the world by not serving his community as a *Torah* Sage. Just as *terumah* remains in the corner of the house undisturbed until it is given and consumed by the *Kohen*, so too does this individual reclude himself from the community." Why is the *Torah* sage who chooses to only engage in *Torah* study and not with the issues of his community regarded as one who destroys existence?

The *Midrash* cites an incident involving *Rav Assi*. When *Rav Assi* was on his deathbed, his nephew entered and found him crying. *Rav Assi's* nephew asked him, "Why are you crying? Is there any area of *Torah* that you have not learned or have not taught? You have many disciples who sit before you. Why are you afraid? Is there any area of acts of kindness that you had not performed? And your greatest praise is that you distanced yourself from rendering judgments -- you did not involve yourself in litigation and judgments of *Torah*. You did not sully yourself with messy communal matters. What could be wrong?"

Rav Assi responded, "It is because of this failing (of not occupying myself with litigation and communal matters) that I am crying. Maybe I will face Heavenly Punishment over the fact that I could have rendered judgments for Israel and abstained from doing so." What is the culpability of the *Torah* sage, who although is fully engaged in the study of *Torah* and its dissemination and performance of *mitzvos*, but did not render judgments for his fellows?

The *Midrash* states, "If there is justice below, there is no need for justice from above. However if there is no justice below, then there will be justice from above." Meaning, if justice is addressed by the earthly court, then there is no need for G-d to intercede and implement His Divine Justice. However, if man does not implement proper justice, then G-d will mete out His Justice, which is the equivalent of the destruction of the world.

When the Attribute of Justice is in force, it does not differentiate between the righteous and the evil because there is no individual who does not have a flawed record. If the earthly court implements justice as it is prescribed by the *Torah*, they are the guarantors of existence because G-d's Attribute of Mercy will be in place. However, if the qualified judge, who is the *Torah* sage, chooses to withdraw from his responsibility, he contributes to the destruction of existence because his inaction is the cause of Divine Justice.

Chofetz Chaim writes in the introduction of his work *Chofetz Chaim* (based on the *Zohar*), that when *satan* comes before G-d to bring prosecution upon the Jewish people, He silences him by saying, "I do not want to hear anything negative about My children." However, if the Jewish people speak negatively and critically about one another (*lashon ha'rah*) *satan* comes before G-d and says, "If Your children are speaking negatively about one another how can You deny me the right to bring judgment against them?" G-d then allows *satan* to bring prosecution upon the Jewish people.

As a result of *lashon ha'rah* and other forbidden speech suffering, death, and destruction will come upon the world. Because of this, the *Zohar* writes that the one who initially spoke the *lashon ha'rah* is held culpable for all the destruction, death, and suffering that came about as a result of his negative speech. Similarly, the one who has the capacity to render judgment and chooses not to do so, will be held culpable for the consequence of Divine Justice that will be brought upon the world. This was the concern of *Rav Assi* for not rendering judgments for the Jewish people.



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