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YORAM RAANAN

A MAGNANIMOUS PEOPLE CREATE A MOST FITTING EDIFICE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Terumah

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weely Video: When The Objective Is Singularly For The Relationship

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The Precedent Antidote Needed For Reinstatement

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When Illumination Is Not Limited To Behavior

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Perfection Indicated By The Incomplete

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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.

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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.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Terumah



A MAGNANIMOUS PEOPLE CREATE A MOST FITTING EDIFICE

Torah, the Ultimate Commodity

Torah: “Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, ‘Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for me a portion....’”

Midrash: “King Solomon writes in Proverbs, ‘(G-d says) I have given you a good commodity, do not abandon it.’”

Reb Shimon Ben Lakish: There were two merchants who were standing together. One sold silk and the other sold spices. They said to one another, ‘let us exchange the commodities that we are selling.’ Thus, the merchant who was originally selling silk gave his silk in exchange for the spices and the spice merchant received the silk in exchange for the spices. After exchanging commodities each one no longer possessed what he originally had.

However, the *Torah* is not similar to this. If one had studied the section of plantings (*zrayim*) and the other studied the laws relating to times (*moed*). If each were to teach his fellow the area of *Torah* that he had studied, one would not lose what he originally possessed but

rather each one would gain from the other. Both will possess two areas of *Torah* rather than only one as they originally possessed. As was the case regarding the commodities. Is there a better commodity than this? These are the words of King Solomon.

It is true that when one is dealing with the material, if one were to exchange with his fellow his commodity, he would no longer possess what he originally had. However, regarding any branch of knowledge such as medicine and physics, if the one who has a proficiency in medicine teaches the one who has a proficiency in physics and vice versa, each will ultimately possess expertise in both areas. Neither one needs to compromise on what he originally possessed. If so, why is *Torah* considered to be such a special commodity?

Rambam in Laws of the Study of *Torah*: “Until when does one need to study *Torah*? It is until the moment until he dies.” One would think that the reason for this is no different than any other *mitzvah* obligation. One

must continue to perform the *mitzvah* as long as he is able to do so. *Rambam*, however, explains the reason by citing a verse, "It may be removed from your heart all the days of your life." As long as one is not engaged in the study of *Torah*, he begins to forget. Thus, the reason one must study *Torah* until the last moment of his life is so that he should not forget his *Torah* knowledge.

When the physicist takes the time to teach his fellow physics and the one who is proficient in medicine takes the time to teach his fellow his area of expertise, they both begin to forget their original area of expertise because of the hiatus. Whenever one detaches from any branch of knowledge, immediately the process of forgetting begins and the knowledge base begins to fade. There is a cost factor to acquiring new areas of knowledge- the original knowledge is compromised.

However, in *Torah* study there is no such compromise. When one who is proficient in one area of *Torah* teaches his fellow and vice versa, neither of their original proficiency in *Torah* will be compromised. Ultimately, both of them will be in full possession in both areas of *Torah*. There is no cost factor at all. There is something unique and special about the innateness of *Torah* that as long as one is engaged in any form of *Torah* study, he merits a special Divine Assistance to fully retain what he originally possessed. One is not compromised to any degree when he studies other areas of *Torah*. This is because *Torah*, regardless of the variations of subject matter, is one entity. This is the understanding of the words of King Solomon that the *Torah* is considered to be a "good commodity." There is no other commodity, regardless of its value, that can be compared to *Torah*.

The Mishkan, a Replication of Existence

Torah at the beginning of *Terumah*: Enumerating 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."

Midrash: "Gold corresponds to the Babylonian civilization (the prophet *Daniel* had seen in a prophetic vision the Babylonian emperor *Nebuchadnezzar* as a head of gold) ...Silver corresponds to the Persian/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 civilization. The ram skins that were dyed red correspond to the Roman Empire (*Edom*) (who destroyed the Second Temple). The oil that was

used for the kindling of the *Menorah* represents the light of *Moshiach*. G-d said, 'Although you will see four kingdoms behaving arrogantly and they will come upon you, from the midst of the bondage I will bring you salvation.'" Thus, the materials that were used in the building of the *Mishkan* represent and allude to the four civilizations who dominated the Jewish people.

G-d commanded the Jewish people saying, "Make for Me a Sanctuary (*Mishkan*) so that I may dwell in your midst." The *Mishkan* was the holiest location in existence, because it was the domicile for G-d's Presence on Earth. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans were all evil empires who attempted to destroy the Jewish people and remove G-d's Presence from existence. They were the antithesis of holiness. Although they were evil, they are nevertheless alluded to through the materials of the *Mishkan* in the location of G-d's Presence. Why must this be so?

Chazal: "Why is the portion of *Shabbos* juxtaposed to the portion of the *Mishkan*? To teach us that all the thirty-nine classifications of creating 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. If the basis for the Jewish people observing the *Shabbos* is correlated to the process of Creation, why is the building of the *Mishkan* relevant to the observance of the *Shabbos*? Why are the classifications of creative activity that are forbidden on *Shabbos* defined by the building of the *Mishkan*?

Midrash: The *Mishkan* was a microcosm of existence. Every aspect of Creation is alluded to and represented in the *Mishkan*. For example, just as there were curtains in the *Mishkan*, the *Midrash* cites a verse from Psalms that tells us that G-d spread the heavens like a curtain. Just as G-d said that the waters that were upon the earth should gather, so too do we find that the water gathered in the *laver* in the *Mishkan* (that was used to ritualize the hands and feet of those officiating). Thus, every aspect of Creation is represented in the *Mishkan*.

Torah in the beginning of *Bereishis*: "In the beginning G-d created heaven and the earth – when the earth was empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of G-d hovered over the face of the waters. (*Bereishis bara Elokeem es ha'shamaiyim v'es ha'aretz*:

v'ha'aretz hoysa tohu v'vohu v'choshech al panei tahom v'ruach Elokeem merachefes al panei ha'mayim)."

Midrash: Each of the words in this opening verse of the Torah alludes to civilizations that will come into existence in the future. Meaning, when G-d created existence, He preordained that certain dynamics will unfold in their proper times.

Midrash: "V'ha'aretz hoysa tohu – the earth was unformed," refers to the Babylonian exile. "v'vohu -desolate" refers to the Persian/Medes exile. "Choshech - darkness," refers to the Greek exile; as Chazal tell us, "they blackened the eyes of the Jewish people with their decrees." "Al panei sahom – surface of the deep" alludes to the Roman exile, which is seemingly unlimited/ endless as the depth of the waters that covered the earth. (We are still experiencing the Roman exile after more than 2,000 years.) "V'ruach Elokeem merachefes al panei ha'mayim – the Spirit of G-d hovered over the face of the waters" is ascribed to the spirit of *Moshiach*.

The initial intent of Creation was that physical existence should accommodate the Divine Presence. The world was meant to be the dwelling place for G-d. However, because of the sin of *Adam* the world was putrefied and no longer was qualified to accommodate His Presence. The *Mishkan* was therefore needed to be the equivalent of Creation to accommodate G-d's Presence. Thus, just as the creation of the world contained a representation of the four civilizations that will ultimately come about and dominate the Jewish people, the *Mishkan* which is its equivalent, needed to allude to the same elements in Creation. The ultimate redemption will come about through *Moshiach* which is alluded to by the oil that was used for illumination. Thus, the basis for creative activity which is not permitted on *Shabbos*, is derived from the building of the *Mishkan*, which was the equivalent of the world.

What is Necessary to Maintain the Balance Between Good and Evil

Torah regarding the materials that were used to build the *Mishkan*: "Gold, silver, copper...and ram skins that are dyed red."

Chazal: These materials that were used in the building of the *Mishkan* represent the four exiles that will be experienced by the Jewish people until the coming of *Moshiach*. The *Mishkan* was the dwelling location of the Divine Presence in the world. Thus it was the most holy location in existence.

If this is so, why should the four most evil and oppressive civilizations who wanted to remove G-d's Presence from existence be represented in the *Mishkan*?

G-d Created existence to give man the opportunity to be worthy of reward – to choose between good and evil. If he chooses to do good, he is worthy of reward. In contrast, if he chooses to fail, he will be liable. The only creation within existence that has the ability to dictate his own actions is the human being. It is through the application of one's free choice that man can be meritorious and thus cleave to the Creator, which is the source of all Good, or to the contrary, if he were to make the wrong choice, he will be culpable for punishment. Thus, in order to facilitate the objective of Creation, a context of choice must be continuously maintained.

This is the reason G-d does not present Himself in the most obvious manner. This is because if He were to do so, man would no longer have the ability to choose. He would be forced through his own clarity to accept G-d. If this is so, why did G-d perform revealed miracles in Egypt through the ten plagues, splitting of the Sea, and the miracles in the desert? The revelation of G-d's Presence at the splitting of the Sea was so obvious and palpable that even the lowly maidservant was able to point to G-d's Presence and declare, "This is my G-d!"

Ramban: Because the Jewish people had been enslaved in Egypt for many years, where they were exposed to the most intense level of spiritual impurity that they had become pagans. The world was so steeped in paganism that the context of choice no longer existed. G-d was no longer a consideration because He had become an unknown entity. The world therefore needed to experience G-d in the most obvious and undeniable way to establish an alternative to paganism– to choose between good and evil. Through the revealed miracles, free choice was restored.

In order to maintain the context of choice, there must always be a balance between good and evil.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The Temple is referred to as "sustenance (*shesiya*)" because there was a stone in the location of the Holy of Holies that is referred to as "the stone of sustenance." All the material and spiritual sustenance that is bestowed upon existence emanates from that location. To maintain the balance of good and evil, G-d wanted in that special location to also be a representation of evil to maintain the balance.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The evil inclination for idolatry was an all-consuming force which was responsible for the spiritual decline of the Jewish people through the period of the destruction of the First Temple. It 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.

Gemara: 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 by the inclination for idolatry.

How is it possible that the very essence of impurity should have relevance to the Holy of Holies, which is the location of the Divine Presence? It is because the context of free choice cannot be maintained unless there is a balance of representation of 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 dominate over evil. However, if man chooses to fail, the world would be overwhelmed with sin.

Torah: “We give power to G-d...” and “The rock has become weakened by the sins of the Jewish people...”

How is it possible that the Jewish people could strengthen or weaken G-d through their behavior? It is not that G-d is affected in any way by anything, but rather, G-d established an infrastructure in existence that will advance or regress based on the level of good and evil that is generated by the behavior of the Jewish people. If the Jewish people do the Will of G-d then blessing and bounty comes upon existence and sustains the world. It is an empowerment of the good. However, if the Jewish people should fail through sin, then G-d withholds His blessing from existence. It is through the behavior of the Jewish people that the system of good and evil in the world is strengthened or weakened.

Throughout the *Torah* we see that G-d maintains the balance of good and evil in the world. Because there was an *Avraham* in existence who espoused monotheism to mankind and was an overwhelming positive influence, there needed to be a *Nimrod*, who was the counterbalance. When *Avraham*, our Patriarch passed away, on that same day *Nimrod* was killed. This is because both were needed to maintain the balance between good and evil.

Chazal: Whenever *Rivka* our Matriarch would pass before the study hall, *Yaakov* would bolt within her womb towards it. Whenever she would pass a location of idol worship, *Esav* would bolt within her womb towards that direction. They were the representation of good and evil in existence. Because of this, they were born into the world at the same time.

Despite the holiness of the *Mishkan*, it needed to have a representation of evil within it in order to maintain the context of free choice in existence.

The Altar: Reflecting The Jewish Experience

Torah 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.”

Midrash: “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 ‘*mehila*’ (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.)”

Midrash: 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 ‘*mehila*’ (forgiveness).

Torah: 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).

Torah: 'Three cubits its height' 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.

Torah: There are three species that qualify for a sacrifice: the ox (*shor*), sheep (*kesev*), and goat (*eiz*).

Midrash: 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..."

Midrash: 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 Responsibility to One's Fellow (from *Mishpatim*)

Torah: "And these are the ordinances (*Mishpatim*) that you shall place before them..."

Midrash: "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 recluse himself from the community."

Midrash: 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. As it states, 'A King through justice establishes the land. But one who is as *terumah* (tithes) destroys the land.' I am concerned that perhaps because I abstained from rendering judgment I have brought destruction upon the world!" Why is rendering judgment considered to be so vital to existence?

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: When a gentile came to *Hillel* the elder to convert, he had said that he would only convert to Judaism if he would be taught a single principle that encompassed the entire *Torah*. *Hillel* responded with the principle, "What you despise, to your fellow you shall not do." *Hillel* explained to him that this single principle encompasses the entire *Torah* and the rest is commentary. The *Torah* is comprised of *mitzvos* that are between man and man as well as between man and G-d. The *mitzvah* of loving one's fellow is between man and man. If this is so, then how can this principle encompass the entire *Torah* – including the *mitzvos* between man and G-d?

Midrash: There is a story of two people who were traveling together in a boat. One of them began to bore a hole under his seat. His fellow said to him, "You should stop what you are doing!" He responded, "Why does this matter concern you? I am boring a hole under my seat not yours." His fellow replied, "Do you not understand, it does not matter under whose seat you bore the hole, it will cause the entire boat to sink thus drowning all of us!"

Torah in *Nitzavim*: "You are standing today, all of you, before *Hashem*, your G-d..." *Moshe* presented the Jewish people with the covenant of communal responsibility—the covenant of '*areivus*.' "*Kol Yisroel areivum zeh la zeh* – every Jew is responsible for his fellow." This is a fundamental principle of Judaism. Every Jew is spiritually interconnected/intertwined with every other Jew. Therefore, when one performs a *mitzvah* obligation properly, he not only elevates and advances himself but also the entire Jewish people as a whole. Conversely,

when one individual sins, the consequence of his action is not limited to himself but it pervades the entire Jewish people and diminishes them.

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero in *Tomer Dvora*: The Jewish people as a whole is analogous to a human body. Just as if one limb of the body malfunctions it will cause pain and diminishment to the entire body, so too if one Jew does not follow the dictate of G-d he will cause the entire Jewish people to suffer. Every Jewish soul is a component of the entire system referred to as "the Jewish people."

The principle of 'love your fellow as you love yourself' thus not only addresses the *mitzvos* that are between man and his fellow, but also the *mitzvos* between man and G-d. If one is concerned about fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* properly or keeping dietary laws, then he should be equally concerned that his fellow Jew should also be able to fulfill these *mitzvos*. This is because if his fellow does not do so, he will be negatively impacted as if he himself did not fulfill the *mitzvah*.

Midrash citing Proverbs: "A King through justice establishes the land. But one who is as *terumah* (tithes) destroys the land." A *Torah* sage who does not engage in judgment and the resolution of disputes is acting in a manner contrary to the principle of "love you fellow as you love yourself." By distancing himself from judgment, the *Torah* sage is demonstrating an indifference to his fellow by allowing the deterioration of justice between his fellow Jews. This will lead to the destruction of the world.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: King David did 'judgment and kindness.' Although one may have been found guilty by the court of King David, he would leave the court singing with joy because it was revealed to him the wrong that he had done, thus allowing him to correct it.



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