



WHEN ILLUMINATION PROVIDES ELUCIDATION

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tetzaveh

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

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Expunging Evil For The Ultimate Glory

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Empowering All Systems of Existence

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1. Mitzvah: To kindle the Menorah every day.
2. The Menorah was in the covered sanctuary in the Holies outside of the curtain.
3. The Ark containing the Tablets and the Torah was located in the Holy of Holies- the location of the Divine presence.
4. Gemara: The illumination of the Menorah represents the Oral Law.
5. Should not the Menorah be alongside the Ark with the Written Law?
6. Midrash: Do not think that G-d needs your light.
7. The Jewish People ask G-d: "You are the light of the world: why do You need our light?"
8. "It is to elevate you in the eyes of the nations that I need your light."
9. G-d, absolute in perfection, has no needs.
10. The world's existence is bound to the performance of the Jew.
11. However, because G-d is absolute and wills existence, He can choose to supersede the system.
12. This is the meaning of "Your Light I don't need."



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Qualifying the Officiant Through His Appropriate Attire

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1. A Kohen can officiate a service when wearing the priestly vestments.
2. Aaron and his sons were installed as Kohanim on the eighth day of the inauguration.
3. The first seven days Moshe officiated wearing a white tunic.
4. Why was Moshe's service valid although it was without priestly vestments?
5. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: The High Priest's vestments were to atone for the sins of the Jewish People.
6. Moshe's service atoned for Aaron's sin of the golden calf.
7. Shelah Hakadosh: The essence of every human being is his soul; the body is only the vestment of the soul.
8. Adam and Eve's bodies, before eating the fruit, were untainted.
9. Afterwards, their bodies became putrified and no longer qualified as vestments.
10. The Kohen is only functional as an officiant if he wears an appropriate vestment.
11. Moshe's physicality was so purified he radiated holiness; his body qualified as his vestment.
12. All he needed was a white tunic to cover his nakedness.
13. Ramchal: Adam before the sin and Moshe, were the only two humans whose souls dwelt within their bodies.

The Entry Point to Greatness Availed by Life

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1. The Menorah is only kindled with olive oil.
2. Gemara: The illumination of the Menorah brings the Divine assistance needed to come upon the truth of Torah.
3. Noach sent out the dove to see if the flood waters had receded.
4. The dove returned with an olive leaf in its mouth.
5. Midrash: "Better my sustenance should be bitter from the hand of G-d than sweet from the hand of man."
6. Before it is processed, the olive is naturally bitter and caustic, corroding the cutting iron implement.
7. The Jewish People are compared to the dove.
8. Midrash: To comprehend and come upon the truth of the oral law, one must forgo many of life's amenities.
9. Tanchuma: When suffering comes upon the Jewish People they submit and pray to G-d, unlike the nations who bolt and become defiant.
10. Through experiencing the bitter, one comes upon clarity.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Tetzaveh

Menorah: JudaicaMasterpieces.com



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The Value of Spiritual Disappointment

Torah regarding the kindling of the *Menorah*: “Now you shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination...”

Midrash: “*Reb Meir* says, ‘G-d said, ‘The lights that *Aaron* kindled are more beloved to Me than the luminaries that I have set in the heavens.’ Why is this so? When all of the Tribes were asked to bring gifts and offerings to participate in the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, the Tribe of *Levy* was excluded. As a result, *Aaron* was pained and entered into a state of melancholy. He said, ‘All of the Princes were asked to participate in the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, but I have no share in the offerings.’

“G-d responded to him, ‘I swear on your life! Their participation was only one time; however, you will have your own special inauguration by kindling the lights of the *Menorah*.’ As the verse in *Psalms* states, ‘G-d had heard the desire of the humble...’” Because

Aaron was pained that he was denied the opportunity to participate in the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, G-d considered his kindling of the *Menorah* to be more special than their inauguration of the *Mishkan*.”

Torah at the end of *Ki Savo*: “*Moshe* summoned all of Israel and said to them, ‘You have seen everything that *Hashem* did before your eyes in the land of Egypt...But *Hashem* did not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day.” It was not until the Jewish people had wandered in the desert for forty years that they had the capacity to fully understand and internalize the value of their relationship with G-d.

Rashi citing *Chazal*: “G-d did not give the Jewish people the heart to recognize His Kindness to cleave to Him until this day. What happened on this day? *Moshe* had finished writing a *Torah* scroll that he had given to the tribe of *Levy*. All of the Jewish people came before him and said, ‘*Moshe*, why are you

giving the *Torah* scroll only to the Tribe of *Levy*? We too stood at Sinai where G-d gave us the *Torah* just as He had done to the Tribe of *Levy*. Why are you giving them the right to dominate the *Torah*? We have the same rights to the *Torah* as they do. One day the Tribe of *Levy* may say to us, 'The *Torah* was only given to us and not to you.'

"When *Moshe* heard their claim, he had great joy. *Moshe* said, 'On this day I understand that you truly feel the desire to cleave to G-d. Now you are His people.'" Just as *Aaron's* kindling was considered something special because he was pained for being denied the participation in the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, so too the Jewish people became more worthy to be G-d's people when they expressed their pain.

In the blessing of the *Torah*: "Blessed are You...Who has selected us from all the nations and gave us His *Torah*..." If one truly understands and appreciates the privilege of being chosen by G-d to be given His *Torah*, one would be overwhelmed with joy. This is similar to the incident of *Avraham's* hosting of the angels on the third day after his circumcision.

Torah: G-d caused it to be the hottest day (since the beginning of existence) so that *Avraham* should be able to have a respite from engaging in hospitality. Rather than taking this reprieve as an opportunity to recuperate, *Avraham* was pained because he was denied the opportunity to host guests. He thus sat at the entrance of his tent awaiting wayfarers. *Avraham's* hospitality was a means to espouse monotheism. He was thus pained because he was denied the opportunity to bring mankind to recognize G-d as the Omnipotent One. Because of his feeling of being denied, G-d sent him three angels to host, who were the most special guests.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Metizia*: Every aspect of *Avraham's* hospitality that he provided to the angels was evaluated and produced unlimited benefits for the future of the Jewish people. As a result of this evaluation, the Jewish people merited special gifts in the desert that allowed them to survive. These gifts sustained and protected them throughout their forty-year trek in the desert. In the merit of the water that was offered to the angels the Jewish people received the wellspring of *Miriam*, which traveled with them. In the merit of offering the shade of his tree, they

received the protection and benefits of the Clouds of Glory. In the merit of the bread that he offered, the Jewish people were given the Manna.

In the merit of the meat that *Avraham* offered, the Jewish people were given the *slav* (quail). Even beyond the fortyyear period, *Chazal* tell us that the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* was given to the Jewish people in the merit of the shade of *Avraham's* tree. Because *Avraham* experienced pain from being denied the opportunity to do G-d's Will, his hospitality to the angels impacted upon the future of the Jewish people until the end of time.

The Unforgivable Behavior of Amalek

King Solomon in Proverbs: "A deprecator (*letz*) you should smite, but a fool (*pessi*) could be made wise."

Midrash: "A deprecator you should smite" refers to *Amalek* and "a fool you could make wise" refers to *Yisro*.

Torah: "*Yisro* heard..."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: *Yisro* heard about the splitting of the Sea and the battle against *Amalek*. It was because of (either) these events that *Yisro* chose to forgo all of his glory as sheik of *Midian* to become part of the Jewish people in the desert. *Yisro* initially was classified as the fool, because he had chosen a path of idolatry. He later became wise because of the events of which he had become aware.

In contrast, the deprecator is a person who has no capacity to appreciate the value of what he mocks or belittles. Thus, King Solomon tells us that the only way to respond to a deprecator is to smite him. *Yisro* was only lacking in spirituality because he was not aware of truth. However, once he came upon truth, he fully embraced it. *Amalek*, on the other hand, regardless of the blatant reality of truth, he remained oblivious to it because he did not have the capacity to appreciate it.

Chazal: At the time of the splitting of the Sea, the presence of G-d was palpable. As a result of the splitting of the Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian armies, the Jewish people had assumed a special aura in the eyes of the nations of the world. They trembled in awe before them. What G-d had done on behalf of the Jewish people, revealed to the

world His special relationship with them. Despite the awesomeness of their presence, *Amalek* attacked the Jewish people soon after the splitting of the Sea. How could *Amalek* not be overwhelmed with fear from the Jewish people, as the rest of the world was? They chose to attack the Jewish people without any concern for the consequences.

Chazal: *Amalek's* attack on the Jewish people is analogous to a fool who jumps into a scalding bath that others are too afraid to approach out of fear of being scalded. The fool jumps into the bath and is severely scalded; nevertheless, the bath is cooled down for others to enter. As a result of the attack of *Amalek*, the aura of G-d and the Jewish people was diminished in the eyes of the world.

Why did *Amalek* remain unaffected after the splitting of the Sea, while the rest of the world stood in reverence and fear from the Jewish people? It was because *Amalek* possesses the characteristic of the "deprecator" (*letz*). They do not have the capacity to appreciate or esteem anything that has relevance to G-d. To the contrary, they are opposed to the existence of G-d. Thus, there is no basis for entering into a dialogue with *Amalek*. The only way to deal with them is to destroy them.

Rav Hutner zt'l in *Pachad Yitzchak*: If one truly esteems and appreciates the value of something, he will belittle or deprecate it. However, if one does not have the capacity to recognize or sense its value, then he will deprecate it.

Torah in *Balak*: "(*Bilaam* said through his prophetic vision), '*Amalek*, the first of nations, in the end will enter into eternal destruction.'"

Chazal: At the end of time all the nations will come to recognize G-d's dominion over all existence. Despite the spiritual shortcomings of these nations, they have some degree of capacity to appreciate His Presence. *Amalek*, in contrast, because he does not have the capacity to sense G-d, will not merit the ultimate revelation. Since they were the first nation to attack the Jewish people after the splitting of the Sea, they openly demonstrated that they have no relevance or capacity to appreciate spirituality. Thus, at the end of time when G-d will reveal Himself to the world, *Amalek* will go into the oblivion.

Gemara in Tractate *Megilah*: *Haman* (the viceroy of the Persian Empire) was unequalled in his ability to speak evil (*lashon hara*). No one was able to communicate negativity as effectively as *Haman*, the evil one. When he approached *Achashverosh*, the king of the Persian Empire, to annihilate the Jewish people, he demonstrated his expertise in negative expression (*lashon hara*). Why was *Haman* able to communicate negative speech in the most lethal manner?

Haman personified every aspect of *Amalek*. He was a direct descent of the *Amalekite* King *Agag*, who was killed by Samuel the Prophet (at the time of King Saul). He personified the characteristic of deprecation and was thus able to speak *lashon hara* in the most lethal manner. He was unable to see any aspect of the Jewish people in a positive light. Therefore, when he spoke negatively about the Jewish people he was able to bring about the decree to annihilate them.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Taanis*: When the *Torah* is studied for its own sake it is the equivalent of a life potion; however, when it is studied with a sinister intent to undermine or disgrace another person, the same *Torah* study is transformed into a death potion. Regarding the one who studies *Torah* with a sinister intent, *Chazal* tell us that G-d says, "It would have been better that he should not have come into existence."

Why is G-d so severe with the one who studies *Torah* with a sinister intent? *Torah* is the ultimate illuminator as it is stated by King Solomon. The *Torah* reveals G-dliness in existence by revealing holiness where it has been hidden. When one studies *Torah* with the proper intent, he is able to see truth. However, when one utilizes the *Torah* to undermine another, he is expressing the characteristic of *Amalek* with something that is the most holy thing in existence, which is the *Torah* itself. Rather than bringing about life through the *Torah*, he chooses to utilize it for negativity and destruction. Thus, it would have been better that this individual not have come into the world.

G-d says, "My throne is not complete until *Amalek* has been obliterated from under the heavens." It is because *Amalek* is the ultimate deprecator who denies G-d's existence and thus undermines His Presence. He must be removed from existence.

The Inaugural Feast Of Achashverosh, a Cause for Annihilation

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: There was a discussion between *Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai* and his students regarding why the Jewish people were deserving of annihilation during the period of *Purim*. *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* asked them, "What is your opinion why the Jewish people were deserving of destruction?" They responded, "Jewish people deserved annihilation because they benefited from the inaugural feast of *Achashverosh* (the Emperor of Persia)."

Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai rejected their reason, because if it were as they had said, then only the Jews in Shushan who participated in the feast should have been liable for punishment and not the entire Jewish people. He said that the reason the Jewish people deserved annihilation was that they had bowed to the image of *Nebuchadnezzar* (Babylonian Emperor, who had destroyed the First Temple).

Nebuchadnezzar had ordered all of his subjects to bow to his image or be subject to death. The only ones who did not bow were *Chananyia*, *Meshael*, and *Azarya*. The students of *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* asked him, "If in fact the Jewish people deserved to be destroyed why were they not?" He answered them, "Because when they bowed, it was only an external action that was devoid of any belief that *Nebuchadnezzar* was a deity. Thus, the decree against the Jewish people also manifested itself as something that was external but not substantive."

Chazal: The feast in which the Jewish people had participated was in conformance to dietary laws. If so, why was benefiting from the banquet a reason for the Jewish people to be deserving of annihilation?

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: *Achashverosh* delayed his inaugural feast until the third year of his reign. Under normal circumstances, a king would celebrate his coronation at the beginning of his reign. Why did *Achashverosh* delay it until the third year? The *Gemara* explains that the Prophet had said in the Name of G-d that after 70 years of exile in Babylon, the Jewish people would return to the Land of Israel.

According to *Achashverosh's* calculation, the 70-year period was not complete until the third year of his reign. His position as emperor was secure only after he was assured that the Jews were not returning to

the Land of Israel. When the anniversary of the 70th year had passed, and the Jews remained in exile, *Achashverosh* believed that G-d had abandoned and forsaken His people. G-d reneged on His promise that He will bring them back.

In essence, the feast of *Achashverosh* was the celebration of the abandonment of the Jewish people by G-d. Thus, the banquet was the celebration of the desecration of G-d (*Chilul Hashem*). This is the reason *Mordechai* was vehemently opposed to the Jewish people participating in the banquet. Thus, because the Jewish people benefited from the banquet, they deserved to be annihilated. However, *Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai* disagreed with his students.

Reciprocation- a Prerequisite to Reinstatement

Midrash explaining the basis for every aspect of the *Mishkan*: "*Rav Bisna* says, G-d said to the Jewish people: My Children, I want you to do for Me as I have done for you. Just as I sustained you in the desert with the Manna, I want you to sacrifice before Me a lamb every morning (daily communal sacrifice). Just as I cleansed you with water, you should make for Me a Laver (*kiyor*).

"Just as I anointed you with oil, you should bring the anointing oil (*shemen ha'mishchah*). Just as I have cloaked you in elaborate embroidered vestments, you should make for Me an embroidered curtain (*Paroches*)...Just as I adorned you with ornaments, you should make the Holy Ark and its crown. Just as I adorned you with earrings/nose rings/jewelry, so too should you cover the Ark with a gold covering...Just as I provided you with the pillar of fire that accompanied you at night in the desert, so too should you kindle the *Menorah*..." What is the significance of the Jewish people reciprocating for what G-d had done for them as a people? G-d, being Complete in an absolute sense, does not need anything.

Ramban: The *Mishkan* was a replication of Sinai. The intensity of G-d's Presence in the Holy of Holies in the *Mishkan* was the equivalent to that of the Sinai event. Just as G-d communicated to *Moshe* and the Jewish people at Sinai, He spoke to *Moshe* from between the Cherubs on the Holy Ark that was located in the Holy of Holies. *Ramban* presents many correlations (based on verses) that indicate that the *Mishkan* was the equivalent of Sinai.

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: When the Jewish people had unequivocally accepted the Torah at Sinai with the declaration “*Naaseh v’nishma* – we will do and we will listen” they were reinstated to the level of spirituality of *Adam*, before the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. A consequence of their new spiritual status was that they had overcome all of their physical handicaps (if one were blind he was able to see etc.) The Jewish people were no longer subject to death. They had reverted to the state of *Adam* before the sin, which was eternal. It was only after the Sin of the Golden Calf that they regressed to the post-sin status of *Adam*.

The *Mishkan* was a symbol of the reinstatement of the Jewish people after they had sinned with the Golden Calf. The *Mishkan* was the medium through which G-d dwelt in their midst. As it states, “Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I shall dwell in your midst.” In order to replicate the setting for the Divine Presence to dwell, the Jewish people needed to meet certain criteria.

Torah: The materials that were given by the Jewish people for the building of the *Mishkan* needed to be given “through the generosity of their hearts” (not as an obligation). If one felt obliged to contribute the materials to the *Mishkan*, it did not qualify. The materials for the *Mishkan* needed to be given with the same selfless dedication as the Jewish people had embraced the *Torah* at Sinai with their declaration of “*Naaseh v’nishma*.”

Torah: When G-d confronted *Adam* regarding his eating the fruit of the Tree, He asked him “...Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” *Adam* replied, “The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me of the tree...”

Chazal: *Adam*’s response to G-d’s question was an expression of an ingrate. Rather than being thankful and appreciative for the wife that G-d had created for him, who was essential to actualize his potential, *Adam* chose to blame G-d for his failing. He had said that as a result of this woman that G-d had given him, he ate of the tree. When the Jewish people complained about the Manna in the desert, which was essential for their survival and spiritual development, G-d quantified them as “ingrates.” He said, “You are ingrates who descend from an ingrate (*Adam*).” The innate negative characteristic of lack of appreciation emanates from *Adam*, the father of mankind.

In order for the *Mishkan* to be able to facilitate the Divine Presence in its midst, the Jewish people had to address the innate failing of *Adam*. After eating of the Tree of Knowledge, *Adam* had demonstrated the negative characteristic of being an ingrate. The materials, which G-d had instructed the Jewish people to donate, acted as a medium through which they would express their gratitude for everything that G-d had provided for them from the time they had left Egypt until the present.

Through this reciprocation they addressed and corrected the failing of *Adam*, thus allowing themselves to be worthy of a relationship with G-d that was similar to what had existed before the sin. In order for a Jew to have greater relevance to the Divine Presence, he must continuously be appreciative for all that G-d provides. One must recognize that even his own initiative is a gift from G-d.

The Challenges of Life

Torah in *Terumah*: One of the materials that was needed to build the *Mishkan* was Acacia wood (*atzei sheetim*). *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who ask, “From where did the Acacia wood come in the desert? (Acacia trees do not grow in the desert nor are they an indigenous species in Egypt.)”

Yaakov, our Patriarch had seen in his Divine vision that the Jewish people would one day be redeemed from Egypt and would need to build the *Mishkan* in the desert. He therefore brought with him Acacia trees from the Land of *Canaan* to Egypt. He instructed his children that when they would leave Egypt was is important to take with them the Acacia wood.”

Gemara in *Avodah Zorah*: After the receiving the *Torah* at Sinai, the Jewish people had ascended to the level of *Adam* before the sin and they were no longer subject to death. However, after the sin of the golden calf, they had reverted back to the level of *Adam* after the sin and they were subject to death. Had they not sinned with the golden calf they would have been qualified to be the location of the Divine Presence. However, because they were tainted as a result of their sin, a *Mishkan* was needed to be built to be the medium through which G-d could dwell among them. As it states, “Build for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst.”

This is similar to the firstborn (*bechorim*) who were initially qualified to be G-d's officiants. However, because of the golden calf, they became tainted and were no longer qualified. They were replaced by the *Kohanim*, the sons of *Aaron* who were not involved with the golden calf. Why did the Jewish people fail with the sin of the golden calf?

Rashi in *Ki Sisa* citing the *Midrash*: Towards the end of the forty-day period when *Moshe* was in heaven receiving the *Torah* the skies blackened and the Jewish people saw the bier of *Moshe* being carried across the heavens. This vision of *Moshe's* remains indicated to them that *Moshe* had died in heaven and was not going to return. As a result of this belief, the rabble initiated the idea that they needed a deity to assume the position of leadership because *Moshe* who had taken them out of Egypt was no longer there. In actuality, what they had seen was a distortion of truth. The Jewish people were deceived by *satan*, which caused them to fail with the golden calf. Had they known that *Moshe* was alive, they would have not considered sinning and the world would have been brought to spiritual perfection.

The *Torah* states in the Portion of *Vayechi*, "Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; and the days of Yaakov..." *Rashi* cites the *Midrash*, which addresses the opening paragraph structure of the Portion of *Vayechi*. It is referred to as a "parsha setumah (a sealed portion)". One of the interpretations regarding the significance of the portion being "sealed" is that Yaakov wished to reveal the end of time (*ha'keitz*) to his sons but it was concealed from him. The *keitz* is the end of time when *Moshiach* will come and the world will be brought to a state of spiritual perfection. Yaakov did not reveal the end of time to his sons.

There is a question in the *Midrash* if it was Yaakov's choice not to reveal it or G-d had caused Yaakov to forget when the moment of the end was going to be.

The end of time that Yaakov would have revealed was the moment that the Jewish people had achieved their level of perfection at Sinai. The world had been reinstated to a level of purity before the sin of Adam. If Yaakov would have revealed to his children that the end of time was going to be the Sinai event, the Jewish people would have not been deceived by *satan* because they would have received a tradition from Yaakov that their moment at Sinai was the end of time. However, because it was not shared with them, they did not realize the significance of that moment and thus visualizing *Moshe's* remains in a darkened heaven was truly a test for them, which they had failed. G-d wanted the Jewish people to be subjected to the test of the golden calf to see if they would have sufficient faith in Him or fail as they did.



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