

The Mishkan as Location of ATONEMENT



Original Painting By: Yoram Raanan

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayikra

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weely Video: Moshe as Conduit to Transmission

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Drawing G-d into Our Lives:

The power of Shabbat & the Festivals in empowering our function.

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Fully Redeemed When Fully Reinstated

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The Duality & Polarity of the Mirror

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1. In the merit of the righteous women, our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt.
2. The Jewish man had no interest in procreating; they despaired they would not leave Egypt and were destined for eternal bondage.
3. The women went into the fields where their husbands were working with food & water, and enticed their men to desire them & procreate.
4. Rabeinu Bachya: Yaakov and his family were worthy to receive the Torah- but a critical mass of 600,000 males aged 20 and above were needed.
5. The women donated their copper mirrors for the Laver in the Mishkan.
6. Moshe initially rejected them because they were the paraphernalia of the evil inclination.
7. G-d said to Moshe: They are more special to me than all else donated. If not for the mirrors, there would not be a Jewish People.
8. Due to the mirrors, there were legions of Jews born into existence.
9. If not for the belief and determination of the women, the Torah would not have been given at Sinai.

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A Replication of the All -Time Great Moment

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1. G-d called to Moshe from the communion tent.
2. The level of audibility was all-powerful and consuming.
3. Moshe alone, was privy to these communications; why then, such intensity?
4. Ramban: A parallel exists between Sinai and the Mishkan.
5. Mishkan: A replication of Sinai in all its details.
6. As G-d communicated with Moshe at Sinai, so too, in the Mishkan.
7. Gemara: G-d's joy on Day 8, when the Mishkan assumed permanence, was the same as the time of creation.
8. The Mishkan was the equivalent of creation before the sin of Adam.
9. After Adam ate of the fruit, the world became putrified, causing G-d's presence to ascend and leave this existence.
10. The Mishkan was the new location for the Divine Presence – fulfilling the original intent.

Leveraging the Balance to Establish Stability

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1. Moshe communicates the laws of the Torah to the Jewish people.
2. Midrash: Both the laws pertaining to the convert and those related to idolatry are mentioned 48 times.
3. Ethics Of Our Fathers: The Torah is acquired through 48 ways.
4. Gemara: I have created the evil inclination, I have created the Torah as its antidote.
5. There is a balance between good and evil; each a counterbalance to the other.
6. 48 prerequisites to acquire the Torah which is the counterforce to idolatry– mentioned 48 times...
7. One deliberately violating the Shabbos is the equivalent of an apostate who rejects the Torah.
8. A Jew engaging in idolatry, though observing mitzvos meticulously, equals the apostate who rejects the entire Torah.
9. One who observes Shabbos meticulously is forgiven for all his sins– even if idolatry should be found among them.
10. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: Though observing the Shabbos is to refrain from creative activity, the Torah refers to its observance as doing the Shabbos.
11. Since Shabbos corresponds to the entire Torah, it causes a correction in the areas of spiritual deficiencies.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayakhel / Pekudei

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The Sinai Experience Continues Through the Mishkan

Torah: “He (G-d) called to Moshe...”

Midrash citing a verse from Psalms: “Bless G-d His angels mighty in strength (*geborei koach*) that do His bidding to obey the voice of His word.’ Who is considered to be mighty in strength (*geborei koach*)? It is *Moshe*. There was no one as mighty as he was.

“When the Jewish people stood at Sinai, they were overwhelmed by the Voice of G-d. As the verse states, ‘If we continue to hear the Voice of G-d we will die...’ *Moshe* was able to hear the Voice of G-d and was not harmed. From this we learn that *tzaddikim* (devoutly righteous) are even greater than the most advanced angels. The greatest angel does not have the capacity to listen to the Voice of G-d – rather they stand and are overwhelmed.

“*Yoel*: ‘G-d presented His Voice before His heavenly retinue. They stood and were overwhelmed.’ However, *tzaddikim* have the capacity to hear His Voice... You may say (within the context of the *Mishkan*) that when G-d spoke to *Moshe* He did so in a low voice so that *Moshe* would be able to withstand it. However, G-d continuously spoke to *Moshe* in the same manner as He had done at Sinai, with a loud and overwhelming voice.

“*Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos*: When the Jewish people initially heard the voice of G-d at Sinai they expired. (G-d needed to resurrect them)... From where do we learn that when G-d spoke to *Moshe* in the Tent of the Meeting (*Mishkan*) it was with the same voice (level of audibility) as Sinai? It states, ‘*Moshe* came to the Tent of the Meeting and he heard The Voice speaking to him...’ This is the Voice that he had heard at Sinai...”

Rambam in the Fundamentals of *Torah*: At Sinai, the entire Jewish people witnessed G-d speaking to

Moshe saying, "Tell them such and such..." Seemingly G-d needed to speak with a great level of audibility so that the millions of people who were gathered at Sinai could also hear His Voice. It was necessary for all the Jewish people to hear G-d's Voice and hear Him speaking to *Moshe* in order to establish *Moshe* as his spokesman- thus establishing the irrefutable authenticity of the *Torah*.

However, after the Sinai event, why was it necessary for G-d to continue to communicate with *Moshe* with the same level of audibility as Sinai? One would think that the purpose of these communications were for *Moshe* to hear and understand the Word of G-d. If so, it would have been sufficient to communicate at a lesser level of audibility.

Ramban regarding the *Mishkan*: The *Mishkan* was a replication of the Sinai event. Every aspect of the Sinai event was reflected and represented in the *Mishkan*.

Ramban: "In the *Mishkan* G-d communicated to *Moshe* from between the Cherubs (*Kruvim*). At Sinai the *Torah* states, 'The words of G-d you heard from the fire...' The Cherubs that were situated on top of the Holy Ark were fashioned from gold, which reflects the color of fire. Thus, just as the Voice of G-d came to *Moshe* at Sinai from the fire, so too did the Voice of G-d emanate from a comparable setting in the *Mishkan*." Thus, the *Mishkan* was a replication of Sinai, which was the equivalent of the Jewish people receiving the *Torah* at Sinai.

Torah: "These are the words of the *Torah*...."

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: Based on this verse, if any prophet introduces a new law that was not communicated by *Moshe*, is a false prophet. This is because *Moshe* is the only source of *Torah* that was communicated by G-d. When *Moshe* passed away, the *Torah* was sealed and complete. There were no longer any communications of law from G-d through any other prophet.

Anything that was communicated to the prophets by after *Moshe* was unrelated to the *Torah* laws themselves. G-d communicating with *Moshe* in the *Mishkan* was the equivalent of *Torah* being transmitted at Sinai, since the *Mishkan* was a replication of Sinai. If this is so, just as G-d at Sinai spoke with an overwhelming powerful voice that was beyond the capacity of the Jewish people (causing them to die),

so too did He communicate to *Moshe* in an identical manner in the *Mishkan*. It was a continuation of the communication of Sinai.

Torah in *Yisro*: After the Jewish people pleaded with *Moshe* to receive the *Torah* on their behalf, "*Moshe* said to the people, 'Do not fear, for in order to elevate you has G-d come, so that awe of Him shall be upon your faces, so that you shall not sin.'" Because of the intensity and overwhelming holiness of Sinai, the experience was etched into the soul of every Jew until the end of time. It was not only the Jews that lived at that particular time in history, but as *Chazal* tell us based on the words of the *Torah*, every Jewish soul that is meant to ever come into existence was exposed to the Words of G-d at Sinai. Every Jew that will ever exist was impacted by that experience. Thus, whenever G-d communicated the *Torah* to *Moshe* in the *Mishkan*, it was in that same context as Sinai.

Torah: After the sin of the Golden Calf, "G-d said to *Moshe*, 'You must go down because your people who you have taken out from Egypt have become corrupt.'"

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "You must go down" to mean, G-d said to *Moshe*, "You will be lowered from your spiritual status after the Jewish people have sinned because you were only elevated to that special level because you represent them. Now that they are no longer worthy of that special relationship, your level will be diminished." Thus, *Moshe* receiving the *Torah* on behalf of the Jewish people is the equivalent of the Jewish people themselves hearing the *Torah*. As the *Mishkan* was the medium for His Presence to dwell in their midst, so too was *Moshe* the medium through which G-d communicated the *Torah*. Thus, when G-d communicated the *Torah* to *Moshe* he did so as He had done at Sinai.

The Significance of the Torah Sage

Torah: The Holy Ark was cast in pure gold, "On the inside and on the outside."

Gemara in *Yomah*: A *Torah* sage (*Talmud Chacham*) whose inside is not consistent with his outside is not a (true) *Torah* sage. Meaning, his internal purity and sincerity must be consistent with his outward presence.

Midrash: "Although the middle box (of the Ark) is made of wood, it is given great honor and respect. Why is

this so? It is because the *Torah* is contained within it. In addition, the first Tablets although they were broken were also contained within it and afforded respect. As it states, 'I placed into the Ark the Tablets, the broken Tablets, and the *Torah*...' What do we learn from this?

Although a *Torah* sage may be impoverished (in the material sense) he must be shown special respect because of the *Torah* that is contained within him. Why was a gold crown placed on the top of the Ark? It is to reflect the crown of *Torah*.... Understand how beloved the Ark is to G-d! Just as the Heavenly Throne is beloved to G-d so too is the Ark. Why is it so beloved? It is because the *Torah* is contained within it.

Since the *Torah* is considered to be to the right of G-d...The Ark is beloved to G-d...

Rav Nason: 'Every aspect of the Ark is beloved to G-d as the Heavenly Throne.' From where do we learn this? At the splitting of the Sea the Jewish people said, '...I will make for You a Sanctuary...' We see that the Heavenly Sanctuary corresponds to the earthly Sanctuary and the Ark within the Sanctuary corresponds to the Heavenly Throne..." Thus, the *Torah* sage, who is the equivalent of the Ark when he is consistent from the inside and the outside is beloved to G-d as the Ark.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: If one gives fruit to a *Torah* sage it is considered as if one had brought the new fruits to the Temple (*bikurim*). If one gives wine to the *Torah* sage to drink, it is as if one poured wine libations on the altar. The offering of the new fruits and the wine libations were only brought within the context of the Temple. Why is the *Torah* sage considered to be the equivalent of the Temple?

Midrash: The Holy Ark was beloved to G-d (as much as the Heavenly Throne) because of the *Torah* that was contained within it. The Holy Ark was the location of the Divine Presence in the *Mishkan* (Temple). Similarly, the individual who qualifies to be the *Torah* sage is the location of the Divine Presence to no less a degree than the Holy Ark itself. Therefore, when one gives him fruit and wine, it is the equivalent of bringing the *bikurim* and libations in the Temple.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: "After the destruction of the Temple, G-d only has the four cubits of *Halachah* (definitive law) in His world." After the destruction

of the Temple, the Divine Presence is located where definitive law is beings studied and elucidated. Thus, wherever the *Torah* sage may be, his location is the location of the Divine Presence.

Torah: "Yaakov departed from *Beersheva* and went toward *Charan*."

Chazal: Why is it necessary for the *Torah* to inform us that Yaakov "departed from Beer-sheva"? It is known that he was located in Beer-sheeva. Why is it important for the *Torah* to convey is from which location Yaakov was traveling.

Rashi citing the *Midrash*: "When a *tzaddik* leaves a location, the beauty, glory, and splendor of that location leave with him." The *tzaddik*'s departure causes a void because the Divine Presence is no longer there. Thus, the change is profound. The *tzaddik* is the source of blessing wherever he may be. It is because G-d says, "Wherever My Presence is found it is a location of blessing. I will come to you and bless you."

Shedding Light in an Existence of Darkness

Torah: "He (G-d) called (*vayikra*) to *Moshe*..."

Midrash: "The *Torah* uses the term '*vayikra* (called)' to indicate the greatness of *Moshe*. We find at the beginning of Creation when G-d created day the *Torah* states '...and G-d called (*vayikra*) the light 'day'...' Just as G-d called (*vayikra*) the light 'day' so too He called (*vayikra*) to *Moshe*. Who is greater? Is it the captor or the captured?

The captor is greater. The light was called 'day.' There is no true light other than the *Torah*. As King Solomon writes in Proverbs, '*Neir mitzvah v'Torah ohr* (the *mitzvah* is the fuel and the *Torah* is the light/illumination).' *Moshe* captured the *Torah* in its entirety. As it states, 'You ascended above and you captured the captured.'

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: *Moshe* ascended to heaven and took the *Torah*, despite the angels who were opposed to man possessing G-d's Splendor. Thus, *Moshe* was the captor who captured the *Torah* (the light). G-d said to *Moshe*, 'In this existence you are the leader of the Jewish people. At the end of

time when the righteous come to claim their reward, you shall be ahead of them all.' Thus, *Moshe* being the captor is even greater than the *Torah* itself."

Prophet Jeremiah: "If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the statutes of heaven and earth would not be put in place."

Gemara in Tractate *Nidarim*: "The covenant" is referring to the study of *Torah*, which must be in effect continuously in order to maintain existence.

Ramchal: When G-d Willed existence, He linked every aspect of existence to the *Torah*. When one engages in *Torah* study, it activates various spiritual influences and forces that allow the world to manifest and generate great blessing. However, if *Torah* study were to cease, so too would existence.

Gemara in Tractate *Pesachim* as well as other locations: Physical existence is comparable to the nighttime period (darkness) and the world to come (at the end of time) is comparable to the daytime period (light). Just as in the nighttime period one perceives his surroundings in a distorted manner, so too is one's perception of truth in the physical world distorted and obscured. G-d called the light 'day.' The only way one is able to see existence in its true light is through the study of *Torah*, which is the source of illumination. The study of *Torah* allows one to have a sense of his own spirituality, thus removing the conflicts of interest that distort truth.

The world to come will be completely illuminated and free of distortion because evil will be vanquished. However, G-d gave the Jewish people a mechanism, which is the *Torah*, to illuminate the physicality of the world to have a semblance of the world to come.

Gemara in Tractate *Kiddushin*: "I (G-d) created the evil inclination and the *Torah* as its antidote." *Moshe*, because of his unique dimension of spirituality was the one who brought this special light into existence through his acquisition of the *Torah*. He will thus be the first to receive reward because it is only because of his accomplishment that anyone can see truth and thus advance spiritually. Just as G-d called the light 'day' He called to *Moshe* who was the one who brought light into the world, despite the darkness of physical existence. He was the one who allowed the Jew to have "day" during the nighttime period, the physical world.

Rambam in the Laws of *Torah* Study: "Although there is a *mitzvah* to study *Torah* during the day and nighttime period, the majority of one's study should be done in the nighttime period... As the Prophet Jeremiah states (*Eicha*), 'Rise and sing out in the night.'"

Rambam: The song of the Jew is the *Torah*, which is most effective when studied during the nighttime period. The Prophet wrote these words in *Eicha*, which was expressed after the destruction of the Temple. He had witnessed the Jewish people going into exile and further into darkness. The only way one could have some semblance of understanding of one's predicament is through the light of *Torah*, which is the song of the Jew. One sings when one is joyous. Similarly, when one is able to achieve clarity through the study of *Torah*, despite darkness of the world, when he will come upon understanding it will give him joy.

The Unceasing Love of a Father

Torah: "He (G-d) called to *Moshe*..."

Midrash: 'From where did G-d call to *Moshe*? He called to *Moshe* from the communion tent (*Ohel Moed*). The Name of G-d should be blessed forever. He chose to leave the upper spiritual levels of existence to dwell in the lower physical realm. He chose to dwell in the *Mishkan* because of His love for the Jewish people." G-d gave the *mitzvah* of "Build for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst" to demonstrate His love for the Jewish people.

Torah in *Vayakhel-Pikudei*: The *Mishkan* is referred to as the "Sanctuary of the testament." To what is it a testament?

Chazal: It is a testament that G-d had forgiven the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf.

Sifsei Chachamim (commentary of *Torah*): "If the second set of tablets were given to the Jewish people by G-d, it is clearly an indication that they were forgiven and reinstated as His people. Why was it necessary for the *Mishkan* (the location of G-d's Presence) to be the testament that G-d had forgiven them?"

Sifsei Chachamim citing *Taz* (*Rabbi David HaLevi*): It was not sufficient for the Jewish people to know that G-d had forgiven them. G-d wanted the nations of

the world to know that He had forgiven them. Thus, He gave them the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan* so that He could dwell in their midst. By G-d leaving His exalted location to dwell on the terrestrial level with the Jewish people, He publicly demonstrated that they were not only reinstated as His people but they were also loved by Him.

The Jewish people were not abandoned.

Maharal of Prague in his commentary on *Chanukah*: Although there was a Temple that contained G-d's Presence, the Greeks did not accept the fact that the Jewish had a special relationship with G-d. They decreed that every Jew must write on the horn of an ox that would be displayed in his home, "We do not have a share in the G-d of Israel." The Greeks believed that because the sin of the Golden Calf had taken place soon after the Jewish people were taken to be G-d's people, it is an indication that there was never a true relationship between them and G-d.

G-d left the upper spiritual realm to dwell in a physical world to be in their not because it was to fulfill the objective of Creation, which was for the sake of the study of *Torah*, but rather to demonstrate His love for them.

Midrash in Terumah: The *Mishkan* with an allegory. "After a King had married off his only daughter, he asked his son in law to build a small room in their home on his behalf so that he could visit his beloved daughter, from whom he had difficulty parting." Similarly, the *Mishkan* is an expression of G-d's love for the Jewish people, which is not dependent on any specific criteria. G-d considers them His children and thus loves them unconditionally as a father loves his child.

Mishna in *Ethics of our Fathers*: That unconditional love is everlasting. In contrast, love that is based upon a circumstance will cease if the circumstance ceases. Thus, the love that G-d has for the Jewish people is eternal. Despite the fact that the Jewish people are in exile, G-d's love is unceasing.

Gemara in *Tractate Berachos*: Every day (a number of times), a Heavenly Voice cries out, "Woe to the Father who exiled His children from His table. Woe to the children who have been exiled from their Father's table..." Because of the sins of the Jewish people, G-d cannot openly demonstrate His love in a

more revealed manner. However, His love continues without diminishment.

Man's Relevance to Atonement

Torah: "When a man (*adam*) among you brings an offering..."

Gemara: The *Torah* usually refers to "a man" as "*ishe*," As the *Gemara* explains that when the *Torah* repeats the word "*ishe, ishe*" regarding the bringing of a sacrifice it is to include that a non-Jew is also able to bring a sacrifice to the Temple. If this is the manner in which the *Torah* usually expresses itself, why does the *Torah* refer to "a man" as "*adam*" and not "*ishe*" in the opening verse of the Portion of *Vayikra*, which discusses the laws that pertain to offerings?

Midrash Tanchuma: "The *Torah* refers to man as '*adam*' regarding the offerings to teach us that if one sins similar to *Adam*, he must bring a sacrifice for atonement." After *Adam* had sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he was driven out of the Garden of Eden. Because of his sin, G-d decreed that *Adam* should be subject to death. Although *Adam* had justified his eating from the fruit of the Tree, which should classify his sin as "inadvertent" he was not given the opportunity to atone for his sin with an offering. The *Torah* tells us that one is allowed to atone for an inadvertent sin through a sin offering. Why was *Adam* not given this opportunity of atonement?

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: *Adam* was pure in his essence. There was no aspect of evil in his being. If this were so, then there is not sufficient justification for *Adam* to have rationalized his behavior regarding his eating of the Tree. His sin could not have been inadvertent. It was due to *Adam's* choice that he ate of the Tree. Thus, his transgression was classified deliberate. Because of *Adam's* degree of purity and clarity, inadvertency had no relevance to him. Therefore, a sin offering, which is intended to atone for inadvertent transgressions had no relevance to *Adam*.

As a result of his sin, existence became tainted with evil. Just as *Adam's* foreskin, which is a covering that is an expression of his spiritual impurity, so too did man inherit this spiritual blockage that denies him a natural level of clarity and understanding of G-d

and purity. After the sin of *Adam* every human being has true relevance to inadvertent transgression that distorts truth and thus allows man to sin. Thus, the *Torah* tells us that one can atone through the bringing of a sacrifice.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: Because Adam had sinned he is referred to by Chazal as “a heretic,” “an idolater,” or “one who rejected G-d.”

Because *Adam* was handiwork of G-d who was created with total purity, the only way he could have sinned was to deny G-d’s existence on some level. If he had retained and maintained the clarity with which he had been endowed, he not have been able to defy the Word of G-d by eating of the Tree of Knowledge.

Although man is able to bring a sacrifice to atone for his inadvertent sin, the *Torah*, regarding sacrifices, specifically uses the appellation of “*Hashem (YKVK)*” to refer to G-d, which connotes the Attribute of Mercy. It is only because of G-d’s Mercy that He allows man to bring an offering to atone for his inadvertent transgression.

Within the context of the Attribute of Justice, one’s failings are considered to be inexcusable, regardless of the lack of clarity due to the sin of *Adam*. The Attribute of Justice would regard the sinner as liable for death and not allow him to atone through an offering.



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