

THE EXPONENTIAL VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS PART OF THE WHOLE



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YadAvNow.com Weekly Audio Series: Vayakhel / Pekudei

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Shabbos as a Semblance of the World To Come

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Creative Activities and the Violations of Shabbos

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The Grandson Merited to Reinstate the Jews

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A Sefer by
The Chafetz Chaim

Transcending Ego & Recognizing Truth

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1. In Heaven, Moshe was told by G-d, that his people had become corrupt (Idolatry).
2. The Egyptian rabble had instigated the worship of the golden calf.
3. Moshe had allowed them to leave Egypt with the Jewish People.
4. It was within his power to have stopped them from leaving; he did not.
5. There was a claim against Moshe for his endorsement.
6. When Moshe saw the golden calf he smashed the tablets at the foot of the mountain.
7. The breaking of the Tablets was an annulment of the relationship with G-d.
8. It was a retroactive revocation.
9. Moshe chose this location to break the Tablets because that was exactly where they had unequivocally accepted the Torah.
10. Moshe supplicated G-d for forgiveness.
11. G-d offered Moshe the opportunity to become the beginning of a new Jewish People.
12. Moshe: If a nation cannot stand on the merit of the 3 Holy Patriarchs, it cannot stand on the merit of one.
13. Moshe's humility: Knowing G-d wanted His glory to be through the descendants of the Patriarchs.

An Intense Drive Supersedes Barriers

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1. Enormous wealth, given by the Jewish people, was needed to build the Mishkan.
2. Midrash: The least amount of wealth taken out of Egypt was 10 pack animals laden with gold & silver.
3. The spoils of the sea were greater than the spoils of Egypt.
4. Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh: two classifications of people participated in building the Mishkan.
5. Those inspired by their hearts & those of generous spirit.
6. The "inspired by their hearts" are acclaimed as men of stature; not so- "the generous of spirit."
7. The individual who is inspired gives beyond his means - he is taken by the objective.
8. The one motivated by generosity gives to the point where it does not infringe on him personally.
9. Avraham, our Patriarch, rose early to go to the Akeida and hitched his own donkey.
10. Avraham was 137 years old and had servants; why prepare his own donkey for the trek?
11. Bilaam, prophet of the nations - pompous, self-centered, and arrogant, rose early and hitched his donkey to curse the Jewish people.
12. Midrash: Intense love & rabid hate disrupt protocol.
13. When consumed with love or hate, all that exists, despite who you are, is the objective to be addressed.

Definitive Law As Catapult

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1. Moshe assembles the entire Jewish People to teach the laws of Shabbos.
2. Midrash: G-d says, "Gather large assemblies of Jews - so that future generations will learn from you to assemble large assemblies of Jews to teach them what is forbidden and what is permitted - so that I should be extolled among my children."
3. Why? It is possible to say that large numbers of Jews studying Torah is a sanctification of G-d?
4. It appears the Jews are actually praising G-d.
5. There is a positive Commandment to love G-d with all your heart, soul, and assets.
6. How does one achieve this level of love?
7. Gemara: One comes to love G-d through dissemination of Torah to students & engaging in its subject matter.
8. One can only have a true sense of G-d through the study of Torah and its dissemination.
9. When taught the definitive law of the forbidden and permitted, it touches the Jew so causing him to extol G-d.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayakhel / Pekudei



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Yaakov's Choice of Exile

After the sin of the Golden Calf, G-d said to *Moshe*, "And now, desist from Me. Let My anger flare up against them and I shall annihilate them; and I shall make you a great nation."

Torah: *Moshe* began to supplicate G-d on behalf of the Jewish people, saying "Remember for the sake of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and Israel Your servants, to whom You swore Yourself..."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "If the Jewish people deserve to be burned (one of the four death penalties) then remember *Avraham* who gave his life (for Your sake) to be burned in the fiery kiln of *Kasdim*. If they deserve to be killed by the sword, then remember *Yitzchak* who extended his neck at the *Akeidah* in order to allow his father to slaughter him (as an offering for Your sake). If they deserve to be exiled, then remember *Yaakov* who was exiled to *Charan*. If the merit of the three Patriarchs

is not sufficient to save the Jewish people, how then could You make a great nation from me alone? If a chair that is secure with three legs cannot withstand Your anger, how much more so could a chair with only one leg not be able to withstand Your Wrath."

It is interesting to note, when the *Torah* usually refers to the three Patriarchs they are always referred to as, "*Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*" whereas in this context the *Torah* refers to *Yaakov* as "Israel." In addition, the incident of the fiery kiln in which *Avraham* refused to bow down to the idol, but rather to be thrown into the fire, or that of *Yitzchak* who had allowed himself to be bound and taken to be slaughtered as a sacrifice for the sake of G-d are two instances in which both Patriarchs made a choice to give their lives for the sake of G-d. Thus, their choice to sacrifice themselves brought about a great merit to the Jewish people. It is thus understandable why *Moshe* would summon the merit of *Avraham* and *Yitzchak* in his supplication to G-d.

However, regarding *Yaakov's* fleeing to exile in *Charan*, it was due to his personal circumstance that he needed to flee for his life. He had no choice. *Yaakov's* mother *Rivka*, though her prophetic vision, shared with him that *Esav* his brother had vowed to kill him. He therefore needed to flee to *Charan* to avoid being killed. Why should *Yaakov's* fleeing to *Charan* bring special merit to the Jewish people to save them from the Wrath of G-d?

Before *Yaakov* fled to *Charan*, he was told by his father *Yitzchak* that he should seek out a wife from the daughters of his uncle *Lavan*. Just as *Avraham* had given his trusted and dedicated servant *Eliezer* great wealth to negotiate the hand of the future matriarch on behalf of *Yitzchak*, so too did *Yitzchak* give great wealth to *Yaakov* so that he should negotiate the hand of his future wife from *Lavan*. *Yaakov* had spent twenty years in *Charan* because he needed to work for the hands of *Rachel* and *Leah* for fourteen years. He worked an additional six years to acquire wealth. He then spent two years to return to his father's household.

Chazal: *Esav* sent his son *Elifaz* to kill *Yaakov*.

Midrash: When *Elifaz* came upon *Yaakov*, he said to him, "If I do not fulfill my father's dictate to kill you, I will be in violation of the obligation to honor my father *Yaakov* said to him, 'Did you not learn from your grandfather *Yitzchak* that a poor person is the equivalent of a dead person? Take all of my possessions and you would have fulfilled the command of your father."

Why did *Yaakov* not kill *Elifaz* when it was clear that he sought to kill him? Because *Elifaz* assumed the status of a pursuer (*rodeif*), *Yaakov* was permitted to rise and kill him and consequently preserve his wealth. One may say that perhaps *Yaakov* did not kill *Elifaz* because he did not have the strength to overpower and kill and thus had no choice but to relinquish his wealth. However, the *Torah* alludes to the fact that *Yaakov* had exceptional strength. As it states, "*Yaakov* pulled the stone from the mouth of the well."

Rashi: Although the stone was massive and heavy, *Yaakov* was able to remove it as one removes a stopper from a bottle.

Chazal: From here we learn that *Yaakov* had great strength. The value of this information that the *Torah* reveals is to address the question, why did *Yaakov* not kill *Elifaz* if in fact he was able to do so? If he had killed

Elifaz, he would have been able to retain his wealth to negotiate the hand of *Rachel* and not remain in the house of *Lavan* in exile for twenty years. He would have been able to honor the request of his mother to return "after a number of days."

Yaakov understood that if he had chosen to kill *Elifaz*, although it would have been permitted, he would have diminished his spiritual state to some degree. If he were to kill *Elifaz*, the twelve tribes that he was to father would have assumed a spiritual dimension that would have been compromised. *Yaakov* was willing to sacrifice his wealth and remain in exile in *Charan* for twenty years so that the Jewish people should be able to evolve in the most advanced spiritual manner.

Yaakov chose to be in exile and suffer at the hand of *Lavan* for the sake of the eternity of the Jewish people. Since, *Yaakov's* remaining in exile was due to his choice, *Moshe* drew upon his merit on behalf of the Jewish people, so that they should not be destroyed. *Yaakov* is referred to in this context of exile as "Israel." It is because the appellation of "Israel" only came about when he went back to retrieve the small earthenware vessels that he had forgotten. It was then that he battled with the angel and was not defeated but rather was victorious. The angel named *Yaakov* "Israel" as he had said, "You gave lorded over G-d (angel) and men (*Esav* and *Lavan*)..." Thus, *Moshe* when he supplicated G-d on behalf of the Jewish people he referred to *Yaakov* as "Israel," because he had received that name when he had chosen to go into exile for the sake of the Jewish people.

Activating One's Spiritual Senses

Torah: "*Moshe* assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them," These are the things that *Hashem* commanded to do."

Midrash: "Our *Rabbis* who are experts in homilies (*aggadita*) say, 'There is no portion in the entire *Torah* that begins with the word 'Vayakhel' other than this portion.' G-d said to *Moshe*, 'Gather large assemblies of Jews and lecture before them in a public setting the laws of *Shabbos*, so that future generations may learn from you to gather large assemblies of Jews each *Shabbos* in the study halls to learn and to rule on the laws that pertain to what is 'forbidden' and what is 'permitted'. You shall do this, so that My Great Name shall be extolled among My children."

The purpose of assembling and lecturing to large assemblies of Jews is not merely for the sake of the study of *Torah*, but rather to ultimately bring glory to G-d's Name, that he should be extolled by His children. What is the relevance between the study of laws that pertain to what is forbidden and permitted to extolling G-d? One could say that the gathering of large assemblies of Jews to study the laws of the *Torah* is in itself a praise of G-d's Name, because it reflects to what degree they value His Word and His Dictate.

These large assemblies are a declaration that these individuals are dedicated to live by the dictates of the *Torah*. Thus, it is a praise of G-d's Name when they gather to study the law in a definitive context. However, this does not seem to be the profound message that the *Midrash* is coming to teach us. Rather, one must say that the *Midrash* is telling us that it is only through the study of *Torah* that one could come to truly appreciate G-d and thus be able to praise and extol Him.

It is not sufficient to engage in the *Torah* on an intellectual level, but rather one must delve into the practical application of the laws of what is "forbidden" and what is "permitted." It is only after one lives his life in all of its aspects in conformance with the *Torah*, will he have a sense of G-d. Thus, one will be able to extol Him. The reason for this is because the Jew becomes spiritualized through the study of *Torah* and by living a life that is in conformance with its dictates.

The human being is endowed with physical senses that allow him to experience, perceive, and appreciate the physical world around him. However, in order for one to have a capacity to appreciate spirituality, one must develop his spiritual senses, which can only come about through the study of *Torah* and the performance of *mitzvos*. By performing *mitzvos*, the Jew becomes sanctified as we say in the blessing that precedes the performance of a *mitzvah*, "...You have sanctified us through Your *mitzvos*." Only after the Jew develops his spiritual senses through the study of *Torah*, can he extol and praise G-d.

According to Jewish law if a *Torah* scroll is missing a letter or a letter is added to it, the *Torah* scroll is invalid and one does not fulfill his obligation through its reading. One would think that this may be because each word must be read correctly and if it is missing a letter the word would be misread. This is not so. There are instances where a word may be written in a

deleted form, such as without the letter "vav" and its pronunciation is as if the "vav" was present in the word. However, if one adds a letter "vav" to that deleted form of the word, the *Torah* scroll is invalidated, although the word will be read correctly as if it were in the deleted form. *Ramban* in his introduction to the *Torah* asks why.

Ramban: The entire *Torah* from the first letter to the last letter is comprised of various unpronounceable Names of G-d. However, G-d conjugated the letters of His Name in such a manner that the narrative that is presented in the *Torah* could be read. It is because the *Torah* is comprised of G-d's Name that it has a unique and special level of sanctity.

Therefore, although the pronunciation of a word in the *Torah* may remain the same if a letter is added or deleted, the Name of G-d would be altered. Thus, the sanctity of the *Torah* will be diminished. When a Jew studies *Torah*, although he is not pronouncing the Name of G-d in its initial form, he is engaging in His Holy Name. Thus, when one studies *Torah*, he attaches himself to the ultimate in sanctity, which is the Name of G-d. Through this, he will become spiritualized and thus have a sense of His Omnipotence and Unity. He will thus extol Him.

Inspiration, the Catalyst for the Unlimited

Torah: Regarding the bringing of the materials that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan*, "Every man (*ishe*) whose heart inspired him (*nisoah leibo*) came; and everyone whose spirit motivated him (*nadavah rucho*) brought the portion of *Hashem* for the work of the Tent of the Meeting..."

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: We see that there were two categories of people who provided materials for the building of the *Mishkan* – those who gave with an "inspired heart"- *nisoah libo* and those who were "motivated by their spirit"- *nadavah rucho*. When the *Torah* mentions the one who was inspired by his heart "*nisoah leibo*" it predicates it with the word "*ishe* (man)." The *Torah* uses the term "*ishe*" to indicate an individual of special status, thus revealing that the one who gave with an "inspired heart" was at a more advanced level than the individual who gave with a motivated spirit "*nadavah rucho*."

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: The one who gives due to his motivated spirit (*nadavah rucho*) is one who values the cause and wants to support it to the best of his ability. However, he will not allow his level of support to infringe on his own needs. In contrast, the one who was “inspired,” gives beyond his means without considering his own needs. To the one who is “inspired,” all that matters is the cause that needs to be supported and the objective that needs to be fulfilled.

The one who is inspired, because of his level of inspiration does not even have a sense of himself because he is consumed by the objective that needs to be addressed. Although the individual who is *nisaoh libo* “inspired heart” is at a more advanced level than the one who is only “motivated” by his spirit; nevertheless, individuals who identify with both categories are considered to be special.

Torah: Regarding the *Akeidah*, “*Avraham* arose in the morning and saddled his donkey...” Despite the fact that *Avraham* was one hundred and thirty seven years old at the time of the *Akeidah*, and a person of renown and great wealth, who had an abundance of servants and slaves, and was proclaimed as the “prince of G-d”, he nevertheless arose early in the morning to saddle his own donkey to carry out the Will of G-d. This behavior was a demonstration of *Avraham*’s all-consuming love for G-d. His only focus at that moment was to perform the *Akeidah* (binding of *Yitzchak*). Until the objective was fulfilled, nothing else existed for *Avraham*.

Chazal: Regarding *Avraham* saddling his own donkey to do the Will of G-d, “From here we learn the principle that love disrupts all protocol.” At that moment, *Avraham* did not reflect upon his own age or status to delegate the saddling of his donkey. It was the equivalent of not existing. The only thing that did exist, due to *Avraham*’s focus, was the Word of G-d that needed to be fulfilled. Thus, *Avraham* is an example of one with an “inspired heart” (*nisaoh libo*).

Gemara in Tractate *Chagigah*: G-d values the ascent of all the Jews when they visit the Temple Mount during the three festivals of the year. The *Gemara* cites a verse from Song of Songs which states, “How beautiful are your paces, the daughter of the benefactor (*bas nadv*).” Who is the “the daughter of the benefactor (*bas nadv*)?” It is the Jewish people who are the descendants of *Avraham* who selflessly gave his heart to G-d (*nadv leibo*). Because of *Avraham*’s selfless

love for G-d, there was never anything that was too difficult for him to do the Will of G-d.

Rambam in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* (The Laws of studying *Torah*) explaining the individual and the manner in which one acquires the “Crown of *Torah*” (*Kesser Torah*): “The Crown of *Torah* is lying in the corner. It is available to every Jew who wishes to partake of it,” and to “The one who is inspired by his heart to acquire the Crown of *Torah*...”

Rambam citing the *Mishnah* in *Ethics of our Fathers*: It outlines how one must live his life to acquire *Torah*. “This is the way of *Torah* - bread with salt you shall eat, water in measured amounts you shall drink, on the floor you shall sleep, and a life of deprivation you shall live.” *Rambam* chooses the term, “the one who is inspired” by his heart regarding the one who has relevance to acquiring the Crown of *Torah*. It is only the one who is singularly focused due to the inspiration of his heart who can acquire *Torah* at this advanced level.

This individual, because of his unique level of inspiration, does not focus on his physical needs. His physical amenities are only incidental to bring about his objective. With this understanding, the *Mishnah* that prescribes the manner in which one must live his life to acquire the Crown of *Torah*, only has relevance to the one who is “inspired” by his heart. Only this person can minimize and negate himself, thus making everything other than his objective of acquiring *Torah* irrelevant. The only one who can function in a context without limitations is the one who has an “inspired heart.”

Abundant Blessing an Outgrowth of Faithfulness

Torah: *Moshe* gave an accounting of all the gold, silver, and copper that had gone into the building of the *Mishkan*. “These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle...”

Midrash: “This is the meaning of the verse in Proverbs, ‘A man who is faithful has great blessings (*ish emunos rav berachos*). Whoever is trustworthy (*ne’eman*), G-d will bestow upon him many blessings. The verse continues, ‘The one who is not trustworthy and aggressively pursues wealth, he will not be vindicated.’ Who is the man who is trustworthy (*ne’eman*)? It is *Moshe*.”

In whatever pursuit *Moshe* oversaw or was involved, his handiwork was blessed. Why was it blessed? Because he was *ne'eman*. (Since *Moshe* oversaw the building of the *Mishkan*, it was considered to be his handiwork. Therefore, all blessing emanates from it.) Although *Moshe* did not need to answer to anyone regarding the building of the *Mishkan*, he summoned others so that he could demonstrate to them his level of integrity by giving an accounting of all the materials that he had overseen."

King Solomon: If one possesses the characteristic of faithfulness, he is the conduit for blessing. Why does the characteristic of "*ne'eman*" (faithful/trustworthy) bring about great blessing?

Torah: "But you who cling to *Hashem*, your G-d, you are all alive today (*Vatem HaDevakim Ba'Shem Elokeichem Chayim Kulchem HaYom*)."

Maharal of Prague: When one cleaves to G-d, Who is the source of all, he will have life and unlimited blessing. It is because he is connected to the One Who encompasses all and is the source of everything, he will have relevance to blessing. As it states, "In the location in which My Name is called, I will come upon you and bless you..."

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: The "signet of G-d is Truth." Therefore, when one assumes His characteristic of Truth, he will have relevance to cleaving to G-d and consequently will merit unlimited blessing.

We find throughout the *Torah*, G-d says, "I am *Hashem*..."

Rashi citing the *Midrash*: "I am faithful to My Word." G-d demonstrates His Characteristic of "*ne'eman*" (faithfulness) by meting out what one is deserving – such as reward or punishment. G-d's level of integrity and faithfulness as being the True Judge, emanates from the fact that His Signet is Truth. Thus, one who is faithful and assumes the characteristic of G-d will merit unlimited blessing since he is cleaving to the source of all blessing.

The concept of "blessing" is of a spiritual nature. Just as the spiritual realm is unlimited and unquantifiable, so too is blessing unlimited and unquantifiable. On the other hand, the material realm is defined by limitation and quantification. *Moshe*, regarding the *Mishkan* demonstrated the characteristic of "*ne'eman*" because he gave a full accounting of everything that he oversaw. He was beyond reproach. It is because of this characteristic that *Moshe* was the conduit for abundant blessing.

Wisdom to the Wise

Torah: Regarding the building of the *Mishkan*, "G-d said to *Moshe*, 'I will fill him with the Spirit of G-d with wisdom...'"

Midrash: "G-d filled *Bezalel* with wisdom because he already possessed wisdom. This is to teach us that G-d gives wisdom only to those who already possess wisdom."

Reb Chaim of Volozhin in *Nefesh HaChaim*: "If one is not born with wisdom and G-d only gives wisdom to those who already possess it, how does one initially acquire wisdom?" King David writes in Psalms, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of heaven..." If one has the fear of heaven, he will have the ability to appreciate and esteem G-d's Wisdom. He is therefore deserving of that endowment.

Midrash: "A matronly woman asked *Reb Yosi Bar Chalafta*, 'What is the meaning of the verse (*Daniel*): G-d gives wisdom to those who are wise? It should have stated: G-d gives wisdom to those who are fools. Why would G-d need to give wisdom to someone who already possesses it?' *Reb Yosi Bar Chalafta* asked her, 'If two individuals approached you for a loan – one of them being wealthy and the other poor, to whom would you lend the money?' The matronly woman answered, 'To the wealthy one.' *Reb Yosi Ben Chalafta* asked, 'Why?' She replied, 'If the wealthy man were to somehow lose the money that I lent him, he would be able to repay me because he is wealthy. However, if the poor man were to lose my money, he would have no means to repay the loan.'

"*Reb Yosi Ben Chalafta* said, 'Your ears should hear what your mouth is saying. If G-d endowed the fools with wisdom they would sit in unclean locations and bathhouses. They would desecrate the wisdom that G-d had given them. However, if G-d endows the wise person with wisdom, he will sit in the study hall and in the synagogue and engage in *Torah* dialogue. He would not only preserve the pristine quality of the wisdom that G-d gave him, he would actually develop and advance it by interfacing with the elders..."

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: "The storage location for one's *Torah* is one's fear of heaven." As it is stated in the verse, "The fear of G-d is its storage location." If one does not have sufficient fear of G-d, then he will not merit the Divine Assistance that is necessary to retain it.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin in Nefesh HaChaim: We can explain the *Gemara* with an allegory. If one wished to give a large amount of wheat as a gift to his son and he did not have a location to store it, the father will withhold the gift because the wheat will be scattered and trampled upon and ultimately be destroyed. However, if the son would have a storage location to protect and store the wheat, the father would gladly give him a large amount of wheat to his son.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin: Similarly, it is the one who fears G-d who will have the ability to esteem and revere the *Torah* sufficiently and thus preserving its holiness. This individual will be endowed by G-d with the ability to acquire *Torah*. Regardless of how intelligent one may be if he does not possess a sufficient level of fear of heaven, G-d will not give him the Divine Assistance needed to come upon the truth of *Torah*. G-d will not endow the foolish with wisdom because He understands that it will be abused and desecrated.

Rambam in Laws of Torah Study: "One can only teach *Torah* to one who is a proper student. If one teaches *Torah* to such a student, who does not have the necessary qualities to process the *Torah*, *Chazal* tell us it is similar to throwing a stone at *Marculos*."

Gemara in Tractate Avodah Zorah: The pagan ritual of worshiping *Marculos* entailed placing a horizontal stone upon a vertical stone and then throwing stones at the structure. One would think that by stoning this idol, one is actually disgracing it; however, because it is its method of worship, it is considered bona fide idol worship. Thus, one would be subject to the death penalty. One may think that regardless of one's innate characteristics or beliefs it would be beneficial to teach this individual *Torah*; however *Chazal* teach us differently. It is equated to the worship of *Marculos*, which indicates that one's intention is unrelated to what is the reality of the situation. Although one may think otherwise, it is a desecration of the holy *Torah*.

It is only the one who has sufficient fear of heaven will be able to appreciate and thus have the sensitivity in maintaining and processing the *Torah*. This individual is considered to be a qualified repository for the acquisition and storage of G-d's wisdom.



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