

# The Mishkan as Location of ATONEMENT



Original Painting By: Yoram Raanan

## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayikra

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

**Moshe's Level of Humility**

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**The Value of 13**

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**Mishkan: A Replication of Sinai**

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**Ultimate Opportunity: Body & Soul Have a Relationship with Hashem**

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**Inadvertent Versus Deliberate Sin**

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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 & 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.

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### 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 is 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.

### 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.

## Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayikra

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### **The Fruits of One's Labor**

*Torah:* The Princes of Israel donated the precious stones (*avnei shoham* and *avnei miluim*) that were needed for the breastplate and *Ephod* that were worn by the High Priest.

*Rashi* citing the *Midrash*: "When it came to inaugurating the *Mishkan*, the Princes were the first to participate with their offerings and gifts. However, regarding the construction of the *Mishkan*, the Princes were the last to participate. They had said, 'Let the Jews participate in the building of the *Mishkan* to the extent that they can, and whatever remains unfinished we will complete.' The Jewish people provided all of the materials that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan*."

"The Princes asked, 'If all the materials were already provided what is there left for us to do?' They therefore provided the precious stones that were needed. However, when it was time to inaugurate the *Mishkan*

the Princes did not repeat their mistake by waiting until the end to participate. They were the first to provide their offerings and gifts."

When the *Torah* writes the word "Princes (*Niseeim*)" regarding the building of the *Mishkan*, it is written in a deleted form. The letter "yud" which reflects the plural in the word "*Niseeim*" is omitted. The omission indicates that their participation in the building of the *Mishkan* was deficient. One would think that the claim against the Princes for waiting until the very end was due to the fact that they risked not participating in the *mitzvah* of the building of the *Mishkan* for the sake of their own glory. It was their arrogance that prevented them from participating immediately.

*Midrash*: "The Princes were not the first to participate in the building of the *Mishkan* because they were laid back (lazy). This is the reason the letter 'yud' is omitted when the *Torah* refers to them." Why was their failure not due to their own arrogance?

The Princes of Israel were truly devout and special individuals who were not haughty, but rather had an advanced level of spirituality. Since they were physical beings, they needed to contend with issues that challenge every human being. Every person is subject to a degree of inertia that emanates from his physicality that impedes him from acting with alacrity. The Princes succumbed to this inertia (laziness) and thus waited to see what would be lacking in the building of the *Mishkan*, despite its importance and spiritual value.

*Torah*: If a *mitzvah* presents itself, one should immediately attend to it. The *Torah* teaches us this principle from the verse, "You shall watch over the *matzos*." In Hebrew the word "*matzos*" when written without vowels can be read as "*mitzvos*." Meaning, the *Torah* is alluding to the principle that just as one when making *matzos* cannot delay so not to allow it to become leavened, so too must one act with alacrity to attend to the *mitzvah* at hand.

*Torah*: *Moshe* did not participate in the building of the *Mishkan*, but rather allowed the Jewish people to partake of the *mitzvah*.

*Midrash*: "G-d saw that *Moshe* was in a melancholy state. He asked, 'Why are you glum?' *Moshe* replied, 'I did not participate in the building of the *Mishkan*.' G-d asked, 'Why did you not participate in the building of the *Mishkan*?' *Moshe* answered, 'I wanted to give the opportunity to the Jewish people to build it, and whatever they will not complete, I would.' G-d responded, 'I swear on your life that your participation will be greater than theirs. You shall be the one to erect the *Mishkan*.'"

Based on the words of the *Midrash*, *Moshe*'s response was identical to that of the Princes who also waited until the end to participate in the building of the *Mishkan*. If this is so, why were the Princes reprimanded by G-d and *Moshe* praised? *Moshe* was the most humble person who ever walked the face of the earth. He was totally negated to G-d. Since this was so, there was no basis for self-interest. Thus, the only way one can understand *Moshe*'s words is that he truly wanted the Jewish people to have merit. However, the Princes who were not negated to this degree, were subject to self interest. Therefore, their delay is attributed to their deficiency of laziness and their gift rendered deficient.

## 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*" so 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.

*Torah*: 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.

## 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* (and 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...”

“Prophet *Jeremiah (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)*: One of the earlier later commentators who explains that 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* can be explained 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*: 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.

## Choice, the Basis for Trust and Faith

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

*Midrash* citing *Psalms*: “Blessed is G-d His angels mighty in strength (*geborei koach*) that do His bidding to obey the voice of His word. Who are the angels? They are *Moshe* and *Aaron*. As it states, ‘G-d sent His angel to take them out (of Egypt)...’ *Rav Huna* says in the name of *Reb Acha*, ‘The angels to which the verse is referring are the Jewish people. They are mighty in strength like angels because they declared at Sinai ‘*Naaseh V’nishma* – we will do and we will listen.’” It seems from the *Midrash* that it took enormous strength for the Jewish people to accept the *Torah* at Sinai. What is the basis of this strength?

*Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos*: *Rav* was so immersed in his *Torah* study that he did not realize that his finger was under his heel and it was bleeding. A heretic came to him and said, “I see that you people have not changed. You are still impulsive. Just as long ago, because of your impulsiveness, you declared that you would do before you heard the extent of your obligation, so too you remain impulsive as is clear from your injury.”

*Rav* explained to the heretic that there is a verse that states, “The one who has faith, it will lead him; however, the one who does not have faith will be cast aside. We have faith and thus we will be led to salvation whereas your kind will be cast aside.” It seems from the *Gemara* that the acceptance of *Torah* at Sinai was based on the Jew’s trust and faith in G-d to accept His Word without exception. However, based on the *Midrash* it seems that one needs enormous strength to accept the Word of G-d.

Another opinion cited by the *Midrash* is that the *geborei koach* are those who observe the *mitzvah* of *Shmitta* (Sabbatical year). *Midrash*: “Why are they identified as *geborei koach* (people of enormous strength)?” The one who remains silent as he sees his fields being

treated as if they were ownerless, with their fences being breached and the fruits being eaten by anyone who wishes to do so is a *gebor koach*. The individual who remains silent under these circumstances is identified as one with enormous strength because it requires unusual strength to hold back the inclination to demonstrate one’s ownership rights – and thus preventing others from partaking of his field.

*Ethics of our Fathers*: “Who is the strong one? The one who subdues his inclination.” One is able to have enormous strength not because he was endowed with physical strength but rather because he chose to subdue his inclination. It is by choosing to follow the path of G-d, despite one’s inclination, that establishes him as the strong one. This is the difference between the Jew and the nations of the world.

Because the Jewish people made many choices to establish their spirituality, they were able to have enormous faith in Him to reach unparalleled heights of spiritual advancement. Unlike the heretic who succumbs to his inclination, and rejected the path of good. Due to the Jew’s spiritualization of self, he is able to have greater strength to observe the Sabbatical year because he appreciates and internalizes the value of heeding G-d’s Word. The Jewish people chose to be straight, while the nations of the world chose not to be so.

King Solomon in *Ecclesiastes*: “G-d had made man straight, but he sought out many intrigues.” The Jewish people remain straight because they made and continuously make the right choices which is to subordinate the evil inclination. However, the nations of the world chose to follow their own inclinations will ultimately be cast aside.



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