



WHEN ILLUMINATION PROVIDES ELUCIDATION

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tetzaveh

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

For the Sake of Illumination

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Physicality is Only to Facilitate Spirituality

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Moshe's Loss of the Kehuna is Actualized

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The Significance of the Eight Vestments

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The Mishkan: An Act of Hashem

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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 & 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.

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."

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 7 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 & Moshe, were the only 2 humans whose souls dwelt within their bodies.

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WHEN ILLUMINATION PROVIDES ELUCIDATION

The Prerequisite to Wisdom

Torah: Regarding the making of the Priestly Vestments, “And you shall speak to all the wisehearted (*chachmei leiv*) people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the vestments for Aaron...”

Baal Haturim: The phrase in the verse, “*chachmei leiv asher*” has the numerical equivalent of “*yiraas* – fear.” The one who is permeated with the fear of G-d has wisdom. As King David writes in *Tehillim (Psalms)*, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of G-d.” Thus, the one who had fear of G-d (*yiraas Hashem*) was the one qualified to be endowed with the spirit of wisdom.

Gemara in Tractate Berachos: “It is only the heart that contains wisdom, that I will (G-d) fill with wisdom.” Meaning, if one has the fear of G-d then He will endow that individual with wisdom. Why is the fear of G-d the prerequisite to wisdom? There are several levels of *yiraah* (fear). One level of fear is fear of punishment (*yiraas ha’onesh*). This individual fears G-d because

he understands that there will be repercussions if he were to transgress the Word of G-d. This level of fear is rooted in self-preservation rather than a true appreciation and understanding of G-d.

Another level of fear is the one who reveres and esteems G-d because he appreciates and comprehends the awesomeness and omnipotence of the Infinite Being (*yiraas ha’romimus*). This level of fear is emanates from one’s appreciation of G-d Himself. When the *Torah* refers to the one who is a “*Chacham leiv*” (wise-hearted), it is the individual whose fear, in essence, is awe.

Gemara in Tractate Nidah: Before a child is born an angel teaches him the entire *Torah* in utero. The child in utero has a light illuminating above his head and he is able to see from one end of the world to the other. This child has absolute clarity, without any obstruction. The moment the child is born into existence he forgets all of the *Torah* that he was taught because he leaves the spiritual setting and enters into the physical, which is limited and confining.

When one becomes entombed in physicality, one becomes engrossed in self-interest because of the innate make-up of being a physical being. The only way one can regain and have any relevance to that original clarity is to lead a life of spirituality— thus negating self-interest. It is only through spiritual pursuits – *Torah* study and *mitzvos* – that one can come to esteem and revere G-d. When the individual has shed his physical characteristic of selfinterest, he regains the uninhibited clarity of his spiritual beginnings. Thus, he is endowed with a spirit of wisdom.

Torah: After *Yosef* had advised Pharaoh on how to deal with the upcoming famine to guarantee the existence of the Egyptian civilization, Pharaoh declared to his subjects, “Have we ever seen an individual who has the spirit of G-d in him.” Despite the spiritual impurity of Egypt, *Yosef* revered G-d on an exceptional level. He is referred to by *Chazal* as “*Yosef ha’tzaddik* – *Yosef* the righteous.” It was because of his personal level of fear and reverence of G-d that *Yosef* merited exceptional wisdom that was recognized by Pharaoh as Divine. If one wants to come upon the truths of *Torah* one’s fear of G-d must be within the context of awe, which is rooted in reverence. It is only then that one becomes the receptacle that is worthy wisdom.

Moshe’s Role as Advocate of the Jewish People

Midrash: “*R’Yehudah b’R’ Simon*, ‘It is analogous to one who is making a crown. Another will ask him, ‘What are you making?’ He responds, ‘I am making a crown.’ He continues, ‘You should insert into the crown as many precious stones and pearls as you could because ultimately the crown will be worn on the head of the king. This will bring greater glory to the king.’ G-d said to *Moshe*, “You should praise the Jewish people before Me as much as possible because ultimately I will be glorified through them. As it states in the verse, “Through you (the Jewish people) I (G-d) will be glorified.”

One would think that G-d will be glorified through the Jewish people only if they are worthy because they live their lives in accordance with His Will. If this is not the case, then what is the value of *Moshe*’s praise? Despite this fact, G-d wanted *Moshe* to praise the Jewish people before Him so that He may be glorified. There are many opportunities in life. However, one needs to have the clarity to recognize them. Even if one is

fortunate to recognize the opportunity, one needs to have the ability to act upon it. All of these steps are necessary prerequisites to succeed in life.

The Attribute of Justice (*Midas HaDin*) demands absolute perfection. If one is not perfect then one is not deserving. Contrastingly, the Attribute of Mercy (*Midas HaRachamim*) says that despite one’s lack of perfection one deserves the opportunity to succeed. G-d presents opportunity to the Jew to succeed spiritually despite his deficiency because he has some degree of merit. From where does this merit emanate?

There are spiritual advocates and prosecutors for every individual. The advocates argue in the heavenly court on behalf of the individual that despite his shortcomings he should be given the chance to succeed. The prosecuting angels argue that because the Jew has failed through his transgressions he should not be given another opportunity. G-d said to *Moshe* that he must be the advocate for the Jewish people. If *Moshe* would praise the Jewish people before G-d it would bring them merit. This will cause them to have the Divine Assistance they need in order to advance to higher spiritual dimensions. Without the praise of *Moshe*, this opportunity would not be available to them and they would not have the opportunity to glorify G-d. *Moshe*’s praise of the Jewish people is essential for them to be given the clarity to appreciate the opportunity that will be provided for them and thus make them more special “chosen people.”

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z’tl* citing a *Zohar*: Before one commences the *Amidah* (silent prayer), he should have in mind the *mitzvah* of “loving your fellow as yourself.” What is the relevance of this *mitzvah* to the *Amidah*? The *Amidah* was authored in the plural. All of our requests in this prayer address the needs of the Jewish people as a whole. One must be concerned for his fellow as he is concerned for himself. Thus, by having in mind the *mitzvah* of loving one’s fellow, it will emphasize the central thrust of the *Amidah* which is that every Jew is important because he is part of a unified Jewish people who have concern and love for one another. One should pray for his fellow to succeed and have the opportunity to advance. It is by doing so that one merits the opportunity and clarity to take advantage of what is at hand. Consequently, G-d will be glorified to a greater degree through His people.

The Correlation between the Purity of the Oil of the Menorah and Moshe

Torah: "Now you (*Moshe*) shall command the Children of Israel that they take for you (*Moshe*) pure, pressed olive oil (*shemen zayis zoch*) for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: *Shemen zayis zoch* (pure pressed olive oil) means that only the first droplet of oil extracted from the olive qualifies for the kindling of the *Menorah*.

Midrash: "They will take for you olive oil and not oil from nuts or any other oil because it is only olive oil that illuminates the world." One would think that since any oil can be used to bring about an illuminating flame that it too would qualify as an oil that "illuminates." However, the *Torah* is emphasizing that it is only olive oil that illuminates the world.

Commentary on the *Midrash Zayis Raanan* citing the *Gemara*: "One who consumes olive oil will be assisted with wisdom (*chochmah*)." Evidently, olive oil is associated with wisdom, which is the light to the world.

King Solomon: "A hedonist walks in the dark." Meaning, one who is immersed in physicality has no clarity. Thus, he is in the dark. The light that is associated with olive oil is not a physical light but rather wisdom, which is rooted in spirituality.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Basra*: The illumination of the *Menorah* symbolizes the Oral Law. Since *Moshe* was the conduit for the transmission of the *Torah*, we can understand the relationship between him and the oil of the *Menorah*.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh in the name of the *Zohar*: In the merit of the Patriarchs the Jewish people were redeemed from three of our exiles: the Babylonian exile in the merit of *Avraham*, the Persian (*Poras Maadai*) exile in the merit of *Yitzchak*, and the Greek exile in the merit of *Yaakov*.

Zohar: The redemption of the Jews from our current exile, the Edomite exile (Roman), will be in the merit of *Moshe*. *Moshe Rabbeinu* will not allow his merit to be utilized to bring about redemption until the Jewish people properly engage in *Torah* study and observance. The reason our exile is so lengthy and redemption has not yet taken place is because we have not yet achieved that special quality/purity of *Torah* study.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: *Shemen zayis* symbolizes the study of *Torah* and *zoch* (pure) alludes to the purity of that study. It must be for its own sake, *Torah l'shmah*. Just as only the purest droplet of oil qualified for illumination of the *Menorah*, so too does one's *Torah* study need to be pure in its intent. He continues to explain that the words "*kasis l'maohr*" (crushed for illumination), alludes to one's willingness to sacrifice and deprive himself for the sake of *Torah* study.

Torah: "*Ha kol kol Yaakov v'ha yadayim yidei Esav* (the voice is the voice of *Yaakov*, and the hands are the hands of *Esav*)." *Yitzchak* our Patriarch had given this blessing to his son *Yaakov*. "The voice of *Yaakov*" is referring to *Torah* study and *tefillah* (Prayer), which is an expression of the "voice."

Chazal: As long as the Jewish people engage with their "voice," as the "voice" of *Yaakov*, (symbolic of *Torah* study), then the hands will not be the hands of *Esav*. Meaning, that *Esav* will not have the ability to harm or diminish the Jewish people. However, if the Jews do not utilize their voice for *Torah* study then the hands will be the hands of *Esav*. Meaning we will fall victim to the oppression and cruelty of *Esav*.

We can now appreciate the words of the *Zohar* that just as the voice/*Torah* of *Yaakov* was studied with purity, identically we can only be extracted from the oppression of *Esav* through that quality of *Torah*. Thus, *Moshe* will not allow his merit to be utilized for the sake of redemption unless it is studied on that special level – selflessly and with great sacrifice. If *Torah* is studied in its proper context, it will affect every aspect of existence and will bring about our redemption from our current exile.

The Mishkan, a Conduit for Blessing

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Metzia*: "Blessing can only come upon something that is hidden from the eye, and not upon something which is counted, measured, or weighed." The *Gemara* presents an application of this principle. If a farmer brings in his crop and has not yet quantified his harvest, if he prays to G-d that blessing should come upon his crop it is considered a valid prayer. However, if he first quantifies his harvest prior to his prayer, then it is considered a prayer in vain.

The *Mishkan* was an edifice that was precisely measured and weighed at a level of exactness not to

be compared. There is no other blueprint that is more specific than that of the *Mishkan*. Each vessel, tapestry, beam etc. was created and assembled with the utmost precision. Its accounting needed to be exact in order to bring about its functionality. Nevertheless, the *Mishkan* was the conduit through which all blessing flowed to the Jewish people and to the world. Yet, this seems to be contradictory to the principle that blessing cannot come upon that which has been quantified. How could the *Mishkan* be the source of all blessing if in fact it was an edifice that was so precisely measured and quantified?

Maharal of Prague *z'tl*: Blessing comes upon that which is not quantified because the concept of “*beracha*” (blessing) is a spiritual concept. Something that is spiritual has no limitation and is not subject to time, space, or location. Thus, since *beracha* is a spiritual concept (unlimited), if it were applied to something that is known and quantified it would be subject to physical constraints. Once blessing is in the context of the physical it no longer functions as blessing – which is purely spiritual and unlimited. This is the reason blessing only comes upon something that is “hidden from the eye.”

We can differentiate between the precision and quantification of the *Mishkan* and other measured items such as the grain of the harvest. When the farmer weighs and measures his grain he is quantifying the reality of his harvest. The value of a bushel of grain is determined by functionality of the bushel of grain, which is its consumption value.

By contrast, although the physical quantities of the *Mishkan* and specifications are precise, nevertheless its essence and value are of an unknown value. Its physical manifestation is only to bring about spiritual influences. Only G-d knows the true value of the *Mishkan* and its ramifications. Thus the *Mishkan*, although it was quantified in every aspect of its physicality it remained “hidden from the eye.” Its physicality was only a representation. Therefore it was the conduit for the greatest dimension of blessing since its value and essence was completely incomprehensible and un-quantifiable.

Torah: Vestments of the *Kohen* (Priest) needed to be made in the most precise and specific manner. The ply and material of the thread that were used in the vestment are meticulously described by the *Torah*; however, they

too are only a representation of the spiritual influences brought about by the vestments. The value of the vestments is also “hidden from the eye.”

Gemara in Tractate *Sotah*: G-d says to the one who is arrogant, “There is not enough room in the world for the both of us.” G-d despises the one who is arrogant and haughty. He is considered an abomination. Why is this so? One who is humble does not value himself for his own qualities. He does not quantify himself; rather, his is to do the Will of G-d and his aspiration is that his actions will be valued.

Contrastingly, the arrogant individual values himself for his own qualities and achievements. He not only values his own achievements, he wants others to acknowledge them. Thus, the arrogant person quantifies himself because it is through this quantification that he perceives his own value. Therefore, G-d does not associate Himself with a limited and physical being. G-d associates Himself with the humble person because by negating himself he merits the ultimate value and Divine Assistance – since he is “hidden from the eye.”

To What Standard is the Jew Held? (From *Terumah*)

Torah: Regarding the building of the Ark, “They (*v’asu*) shall make the Ark made of Acacia wood.” In another verse the *Torah* states, “You (*v’asisa*) shall make for yourself the Ark made of Acacia wood.” In one verse the making of the Ark is expressed as “they/*v’asu* shall make” (in the plural) referring to the Jewish people and in another verse it is expressed as “you/*v’asisa* shall make” (in the singular) referring to *Moshe*.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: “When the Jews are doing the Will of G-d then the verse refers to the Ark as ‘They shall make.’ However, when they are not doing the Will of G-d, the *Torah* refers to the building of the Ark as ‘you’ (singular – *Moshe*).” When the Holy Ark (*Aron*) was built, the Jew’s relationship with G-d at that particular moment was either at an acceptable level or not. If so, whatever the level of relationship that existed at that time should be expressed in the *Torah* in the singular or plural (depending on the nature of the relationship). Evidently the *Torah* is alluding not to the actual building of the Ark (*Aron*) but rather to the Jewish people’s ongoing relationship with the Ark and what it represents.

When the Jewish people identify properly with G-d, then the reference will be “they shall make the Ark.” However, when they are faltering in this area, then the Ark identifies with *Moshe*. How do we define “doing the Will of G-d?” Is doing the *mitzvah* for the sake of G-d (*I’shmah*) sufficient to be classified as “doing the Will of G-d?” To what standard does G-d hold the Jews?

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos* presents an argument between *R’ Yishmael* and *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai* regarding how a Jew must invest his life in spirituality. *R’ Yishmael* is of the opinion that a Jew should conduct his life according to the way of the world. He should plow in the plowing season, sow in the sowing season, etc... He should commit the remainder of his time to *Torah* study.

R’ Shimon Bar Yochai: The Jew must dedicate his life totally to *Torah* and be engaged in *Torah* study full time. If one is dedicated to this degree, then “His work shall be done by others. G-d will cause the non-Jew to do the bidding of the Jew.”

R’ Yishmael disagrees, citing the verse contained within the second paragraph of the *Shema*: “I command you today to love *Hashem*, your G-d, and to serve Him, with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will provide rain for your land... that you may gather in your grain...” This last verse clearly indicates that even when one is fully dedicated to G-d and he fulfills the *mitzvos* with all of his heart and soul, he will need to bring in his own harvest after G-d provides him with rains of blessing.

R’ Shimon Bar Yochai: This verse is not a refutation of his position but rather it is referring to a context in which the Jewish people are not doing the Will of G-d. It is only then that he will need to bring in his own harvest. Evidently, according to *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai*, one could perform the *mitzvos* with total dedication and still be considered as one who is not doing the Will of G-d.

Seemingly, the basis for the argument between *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai* and *R’ Yishmael* is— to what standard does G-d hold the Jew. *R’ Yishmael* is of the opinion that serving G-d with all one’s heart and soul is considered meeting G-d’s criteria. Thus, *R’ Yishmael* understands that one must invest his life in the context of the way of the world. However, *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai* understands that this criteria is not sufficient.

Gemara: “Many (people) did as *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai* (prescribed) but they did not succeed.”

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z’tl*: The *Gemara* does not say that *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai*’s prescription for life was

disproven, but rather, it tells us that his standard of perfection is not feasible for most people but only for the few.

Gemara: “Many (people)” attempted – inferring that a minority had succeeded. In order to identify with the Holy Ark (*Aron*) one must reflect the purity of the gold from which it was madewhether it is *R’ Yishmael*’s standard of purity or the purity described by *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai*. *Moshe Rabbeinu*, regardless of the purity of the Jewish people, always identifies with the Holy Ark because of his dimension of spirituality, which was the purest. When the Jewish people live their lives as G-d had requested of them, then the Ark identifies with the Jewish people. However, if they should fall short of G-d’s expectation, then it only identifies with *Moshe*.



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