



A Magnification OF LOVE Through Darkness

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayikra / Purim Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Video: Moshe as Conduit to Transmission

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Coalescing Energies In The Presence of G-d

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Fully Redeemed When Fully Reinstated

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Recollection to Obliteration

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When Celebration is Desecration

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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.

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.

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 Commentaries Series: Parshas Vayikra / Purim



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The Sinister Intent of Haman

The Torah tells us that every male from the age of twenty and above was obligated to give the *Machtzis Ha Shekel* (the half coin made of silver). All Communal Offerings (*Korbanei Tzibur*) that were brought in the Temple were purchased with each year's new half-coin that were given. These coins were replaced every *Nissan*. The *Mishna* tells us that in order to collect a sufficient amount of the new coins by the first of the month of *Nissan*, they would announce at the beginning of the month of *Adar*, that one must send his *Machtzis Ha Shekel* to the Temple. However, if the communal offerings were purchased with the previous year's coins, it is valid, although it was preferable to be purchased with the new half-coins.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Megillah* tells us that *Haman* had given 10,000 talents of silver to *Achashverosh* (King of Persia) to seal the fate of the Jewish people, to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child. In exchange for the silver, *Achashverosh* removed his ring to authorize

Haman to issue a royal proclamation throughout the Persian Empire to establish the date for their destruction. The *Gemara* tells us that before G-d brings punishment upon the Jewish people He provides the antidote for that punishment in advance. G-d therefore gave the Jewish people the Commandment of giving the *Machtzis Ha Shekel*, before the decree of *Haman* to annihilate the Jewish people. It was the antidote to negate and counter the talents of silver that were given by *Haman*.

The *Torah* tells us that when *Eliezer* identified *Rivka* as the appropriate wife for *Yitzchak*, he gave her certain gifts of jewelry. The *Torah* tells us that he gave *Rivka* two bracelets, their weight was ten in gold. *Chazal* tell us that the two bracelets allude to the two tablets which were identical in size, and the weight of ten alludes to the Ten Commandments that were inscribed on the tablets. This jewelry was specifically fashioned by *Avraham* to be given to the future Matriarch, in order to establish and secure the future spirituality of Jewish people.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that because *Haman* appreciated and understood the value and effect of the weight of ten of the two bracelets that were given to *Rivka*, he gave the 10,000 talents of silver to *Achashverosh* to uproot and negate the effect of the bracelets. Why does the *Torah* dictate that only half a coin should be given and not a full silver coin? It was through the half-coin that was given by the Jewish people that they were counted. It was only then was there no negative consequence to the counting.

A half-coin symbolizes and represents something that is not complete. It does not have its own independent identity. It only assumes a special value or importance when it is joined with the other half of the coin. Thus, when a Jew gives a half-coin to be counted it is to indicate that every Jew does not have his own identity but rather identifies with the entire Jewish people.

The *Torah* tells us that when *Esav* came to attack his brother *Yaakov* he came with 400 men. *Rabbeinu Bachya* explains that the number "400" numerically equivalent of "evil eye (*Ayin Raah*)." The evil eye is a characteristic of *Edom (Amalek)*. It is only when one has his own identity and is identified as an individual of independent value, will be subject to the evil eye. If however, one does not stand out as an individual then he is protected from the evil eye.

The Jewish people, being identified with the half-coin had not identity. They could not be quantified and thus not subject to his evil eye. This is something we see regarding the blessing that *Yaakov* had given to the children of *Yosef* that they should proliferate like fish. Since fish are not seen by the human eye because they are under the water, identically, *Yosef's* children should not be susceptible to the evil eye.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Megillah* tells us that *Haman*, the *Amalekite* spoke *lashon harah* in the most lethal manner. It was because he was able to focus his attention on individuals and identify their characteristics to present them in the most negative manner. This was an expression of his evil eye. The Jewish people being identified only through the half-coin are not identifiable as individuals. Since they could not be quantified they were thus protected from the evil eye of *Haman*. The characteristic of not being quantified is a spiritual characteristic, thus not being affected by mortal.

Moshe, the Beloved of G-d

The *Torah* states, "He (G-d) called (*vayikra*) to *Moshe*, and *Hashem* spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying..." The verse tells us that G-d initially called out to *Moshe* and then He spoke to him. What is the meaning of this? *Rashi* cites the *Toras Kohanim*, "In all of the instances in the *Torah* where it states that G-d 'spoke (*deebur*)' 'said (*amira*);' or 'commanded (*tzivui*)', G-d first called (*vayikra*) to *Moshe* before speaking to him. 'Vayikra' is an expression of love. As we find regarding the angels. The prophet writes, 'And one (angel) will call (*v'karah*) another and say Holy, holy, holy is *Hashem*....'" There are various echelons of angels, such as *Serafim*, *Ofanim*, and *Chaos HaKodesh*. Each classification of angel calls out to the other calls out to sing the praises of G-d.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos* tells us that when G-d was going to give the *Torah* to the Jewish people the angels in heaven came to Him with a claim, "What is this (unformed) man that is not even worth mentioning? Leave Your splendor in heaven." The angels did not want G-d to give the *Torah* to the Jewish people, because man is fickle and has a propensity to sin. They wanted the *Torah* to remain in heaven.

G-d said to *Moshe*, "Answer them (the angels)." *Moshe* said to them, "It states in the Ten Commandments that it is forbidden to covet another's property, etc. Angels have no evil inclination and thus cannot covet or have relevance to envy." Angels have no relevance to coveting or envy because they have no evil inclination. They are thus able to recognize and appreciate the dimension of each of their classifications. Since each class is able to perceive the other class without envy, when they call to one another it is with love. There is no evil inclination that interferes to obscure each angel from appreciating his fellow.

When G-d called to *Moshe* it was an indication that He valued and loved him for who he was. If every time G-d spoke or commanded *Moshe* throughout the *Torah* it was predicated on Him first "calling (*vayikra*)" *Moshe*, why does the *Torah* first reveal in the Portion of *Vayikra* this fact? Why did the *Torah* choose the portion of the sacrifices to reveal this expression of love?

The *Torah* tells us that although G-d had promised *Avraham* that he and his offspring would inherit the Land and be as numerous as the stars in heaven, he was

concerned that if his offspring were to sin, they would be destroyed as the generation of the Great Flood and the generation of the Dispersion. G-d told *Avraham* to take various species of animals in the Covenant between the Parts, which allude to the sacrifices that the Jewish people would be given to atone for their sins. *Avraham* did not need to be concerned about the future of the Jewish people because if they should sin they would be atoned through the sacrifices.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Zevachim* tells us that if one brings a sacrifice and it is not predicated on repentance, it is considered to be the sacrifice of the wicked and it is thus an abomination to G-d. Sacrifices only have the ability to bring about atonement/reinstatement because of the Attribute of Mercy. The Torah using the expression "*Vayikra*," which is an expression of love, is stated particularly in the portion of the sacrifices because it indicates G-d's love for the Jewish people, since He gave them sacrifices. Although the non-Jew can bring a burnt offering, he has no relevance to atonement and reinstatement. It is only the Jew who can bring a sacrifice for atonement. Thus, we are able to appreciate the meaning of the expression "*Vayikra*" in this particular context because it is an expression of love for the Jewish people.

In addition, in order for a sacrifice to be considered valid as the *Gemara* states, it must be predicated on repentance. *Rambam* states in the Laws of Repentance, that before one repents, one is considered despised, disgusting, and abominable before G-d. However, after he repents, he is considered to be beloved, cherished and precious. It is because sacrifice only has value if it is valued on repentance, which causes the Jew to be seen in G-d's eyes as special; therefore, the Torah chose to use the expression of "*Vayikra*" in this particular context.

The Patriarchs Before G-d

Rambam writes in the Guide for the Perplexed, that because man has an innate overwhelming need to be subservient to a greater power, it was necessary for G-d to establish a means for man to express that subservience through worship in a permitted context. This is the concept of sacrifices. When one brings a sacrifice, he is expressing that subservience to G-d.

Ramban rejects the position of *Rambam* and states that the object of sacrifices is to activate and coalesce spiritual forces that are necessary for existence and the

Jewish people. Sacrifices are unrelated to the need to be subservient to a greater power. *Reb Meir Simcha* of *Dvinsk* explains the position of *Rambam*. He explains that *Rambam* is not referring to the sacrifices that were brought in the *Mishkan* or the Temple. But rather, he is referring to the sacrifices that one is permitted to bring on one's personal altar (*bamah*), which was only permitted during certain times in Jewish history.

This was a time when the *Mishkan* was not classified as "*Mishkan*" but rather "*Bamah gedola* (great altar)." It was a time when the Holy Ark was not located in the *Mishkan*. When one was not able to bring a sacrifice in the *Mishkan*, G-d permitted to bring his own personal altar to express his subservience to Him. However, when the *Mishkan* was in place and the Temple was built, the personal altar was no longer permitted. The sacrifice that was brought in the *Mishkan* or Temple, was as *Ramban* explains to activate and coalesce spiritual forces that were needed for the Jewish people. *Rambam* fully concurs with *Ramban*. The *Mishkan* and Temple were the location of the Divine Presence. Thus, the sacrifices that were brought in the *Mishkan* or Temple were brought before G-d, This was not the case when it was brought on a personal altar.

The Torah tells us that *Bilaam* was commissioned by *Balak* to curse the Jewish people. In order to endear himself to G-d, *Bilaam* built seven altars and had *Balak* bring upon them sacrifices to G-d. *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who explain that the seven altars that *Bilaam* built were to counter the seven altars that were built by the three Patriarchs. The *Midrash* states, "*Bilaam* said, 'The seven altars that I built are the equivalent of all the altars built by their forefathers. *Avraham* built four....*Yitzchak* built one and *Yaakov* built two..'" *Bilaam* believed that his altars upon which sacrifices were brought before G-d were the equivalent of the altars of the Patriarchs. This however was not so.

The *Gemara* tells us that a non-Jew is permitted to bring a sacrifice wherever and whenever he chooses to do so. He is not permitted to serve idolatry however. What is the difference between a sacrifice brought in the Temple and outside of the Temple when it is permitted? The Temple was the location of G-d's Presence and is thus considered to be brought "before G-d." However, if one brings a sacrifice outside of the Temple on a personal altar, it is only an expression of subservience to G-d but it has no relevance to G-d's Presence being associated with it.

Although *Bilaam* established seven altars and brought sacrifices upon them, because they were not in the location of the Divine Presence their value was limited. It is not comparable to any degree to the sacrifice that is brought before G-d in the location of the Divine Presence. *Chazal* tell us that before the *Mishkan* was built, the holy Patriarchs were the location of the Divine Presence. As they state, “*hein hein ha merkava* (they are G-d’s chariot). Thus, when the Patriarchs brought their sacrifices on the altars they had built, they were brought before G-d because they were the location of the Divine Presence. It was the equivalent of their sacrifices being brought in the Temple and not on a personal altar. In contrast, *Bilaam*’s sacrifices were on personal altars which had no relevance to the Divine Presence. This was something that *Bilaam* did not understand or appreciate.

Shedding Light in an Existence of Darkness

The *Torah* states, “He (G-d) called (*vayikra*) to *Moshe*...” The *Midrash* explains, “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’. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos* tells us *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.”

The Prophet Jeremiah states, “If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the statutes of heaven and earth would not be put in place.” The *Gemara* in Tractate *Nidarim* explains that “the covenant” is

referring to the study of *Torah*, which must be in effect continuously in order to maintain existence. *Ramchal* explains that 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.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Pesachim* as well as other locations tells us that 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. As the *Gemara* in Tractate *Kiddushin* states, “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 writes 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* explains that 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.

Choice, the Basis for Trust and Faith

The *Torah* states, "He (G-d) called to *Moshe*..." The *Midrash* cites a verse from 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?

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos* tells us that *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). The *Midrash* asks, "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. As it is stated in 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. As King Solomon writes 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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