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YORAM RAANAN

A MAGNANIMOUS PEOPLE CREATE A MOST FITTING EDIFICE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Terumah

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Hourly Video: The Value of the Sanctuary, the Mishkan

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Tithe What You Have for My Behalf

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And the Four Exiles are Depicted

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The Menorah Initiative Leads to Illumination

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The Mishkan as Microcosm of Existence

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Integrating The Celestial and The Terrestrial

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1. Ramban: The Mishkan in all of its aspects is a replication of Sinai.
2. At Sinai G-d brought heaven to earth; in the Mishkan G-d's presence was no less.
3. G-d was the equivalent of the Groom, and the Jewish People the Bride, at Sinai; its replications were the two cherubs on the Ark.
4. When G-d called to Moshe from the communion tent, the decibel level was no less than Sinai; Moshe alone heard it.
5. If G-d was communicating to Moshe alone, why speak as he spoke at Sinai?
6. Moshe was spoken to in this manner because being the conduit for Torah the Sinai experience continues.
7. When sacrifices were brought in the Mishkan, or the Jews prostrated themselves on Yom Kippur, it was the most intimate moment.
8. Midrash: Sinai was a public display of G-d's relationship with the Jews, & the Mishkan was in concealment.

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The Infinite Applications of Intellectual Property

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1. Proverbs: "I have given you a good acquisition don't abandon it."
2. Midrash: Two merchants exchange their merchandise – one has silk the other spices.
3. After the exchange, each merchant no longer possesses what he originally had.
4. Regarding Torah this is not so.
5. Two individuals, each knowing a section of the Talmud, teach the other. Each retains what he had and gains what he acquired. "How special is the gift of Torah."
6. Why is Torah unique in this regard – the same should be true regarding any branch of knowledge?
7. Rambam: "Until when must one engage in study? Until one dies... When one does not engage, one forgets."
8. Torah, although comprised of many subjects and classifications of law – when engaging in one subject one doesn't disengage from others.
9. In other branches of knowledge when studies and disengages to study another subject one immediately begins forgetting.
10. Torah, regardless of its vastness, is all considered one.

Meriting A Sanctuary to Contain The Infinite

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1. G-d's presence was located in the Holy of Holies – the location of the Holy Ark.
2. The Ark contained two sets of Tablets and the Torah.
3. One of the coverings of the Mishkan: Ram's hides.
4. Midrash: The Ram hides are in Yaakov's merit. He was disguised by Rivka as a hairy person with goat hides.
5. Rivka instructed him to take the blessings from his father that were rightfully his.
6. Midrash: G-d said "Although all the heavens can not contain my presence, my presence will be contained within the goats hides."
7. Yaakov, "The man of the tent (of Torah)," is the personification of Torah.
8. The objective of creation is for the Torah and the Jewish People to fulfill it.
9. Mishnah: If There is no flour there is no Torah.
10. Without the material, the Torah and the Jewish People could not exist.
11. All existence can not contain G-d's infinite presence.
12. Yaakov, the embodiment of Torah, created the setting to contain the infinite of G-d's Presence.

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Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Terumah



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A MAGNANIMOUS PEOPLE CREATE A MOST FITTING EDIFICE

The Altar- Reflecting The Jewish Experience

Torah: Regarding the building of the Altar (*Mizbeiach*), “You shall make the Altar of acacia wood, five cubits in length and five cubits in width...three cubits its height.”

Midrash: “G-d said to *Moshe*, ‘Instruct the Jewish people to build an altar for burnt offerings so that it should atone for the sins of My children. I had made a precondition with *Avraham*, our Patriarch, that if his children should sin, they will have atonement through the offerings... What is the significance of the word ‘*Mizbeiach* (Altar)’? The word ‘*Mizbeiach*’ is an acronym. The first letter of the word is the letter ‘*mem*’ which represents ‘*mehila* (forgiveness).’ The second letter is ‘*zien*’ which represents ‘*zechus* (merit).’ The next letter is ‘*beis*,’ which represents ‘*beracha* (blessing). The last letter is ‘*ches*’ which represents ‘*chaim* (life).’ In the merit of the burnt offering ‘*olah*’

you would be ‘*misaaleh* (elevated.)”

Midrash: “The Altar was made of acacia wood (*atzei shitim*) in the merit of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. He had hosted the angels and told them to rest under the shade of his tree (*eitz*). What is the significance of ‘*shitim*’? When the Jewish people had engaged in ‘*shtus* (foolishness)’ through the Golden Calf, G-d had said, ‘Let the merit of *Avraham* (who had hosted the angels under his tree) atone for their foolishness.’ Another interpretation of ‘*shitim*’ is that it is an acronym: ‘*shin*’, which represents ‘*shalom* (peace)’; ‘*tes*’ which represents ‘*tova* (goodness)’; ‘*yud*’ which represents ‘*yeshua* (redemption)’; ‘*mem*’ which represents ‘*mehila* (forgiveness).’

Torah: The Altar was ‘five cubits in length and five cubits in width.’ What is the significance of this specification? When the Jewish people were given the Ten Commandments, five Commandments were

written on one Tablet and the other five were written on the second Tablet. (Thus, there is a correlation between the height and width of the Altar and the Ten Commandments).

Torah: ‘Three cubits its height,’ which corresponds to the three Redeemers of Israel. As it states, ‘I will send before you *Moshe*, *Aaron* and *Miriam*...’ Every aspect of the Altar is rooted in and connotes the merit of our Patriarchs and the three Redeemers. It is in their merit that the Altar facilitates atonement and blessing on behalf of the Jewish people.

Torah: There are three species that qualify for a sacrifice: the ox (*shor*), sheep (*kesev*), and goat (*eiz*).

Midrash: Each of these species correspond to one of the Patriarchs. The ox (*shor*) was chosen in the merit of *Avraham*. As it states regarding *Avraham*’s hosting of the angels, “*Avraham* ran to the cattle, took a calf tender and good, and gave it to the youth who hurried to do it...” The sheep (*kesev*) was chosen to be an offering in the merit of *Yitzchak*. As the verse states regarding the *Akeidah* (binding of *Yitzchak*), “And *Avraham* looked up and saw– behold a ram– after it had been caught in the thicket...” The species of the ram reminds G-d of the special act of the *Akeidah*, which was the ultimate sacrifice. The goat (*eiz*) was chosen to be an offering in the merit of *Yaakov*.

Torah: Regarding *Rivka*, our Matriarch, telling her son *Yaakov* to take the blessing from his father *Yitzchak*, “So now, my son, heed my voice to that which I command you. Go now to the flock and fetch from there two good goats...” These goats were meant to be prepared by *Rivka* as delicacies through which *Yaakov* would receive the blessings from his father. Each species as an offering can only facilitate atonement and mercy because it corresponds to the merits of the Patriarchs.

In the first blessing of the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer): “Blessed are you *Hashem*, our G-d,...Who recalls the kindness of the Patriarchs and brings the Redeemer...” The basis for the survival and development of the Jewish people throughout the millennia is in the merit of the Patriarchs. They have drawn upon their spiritual account continuously throughout the ages. However, when the merits of the Patriarchs will be depleted, G-d will bring the Redeemer for their children. G-d will be forced to bring the Redeemer of the Jewish people even if they are not worthy

because there is no longer a basis to maintain them as before.

The Patriarchs, through their spiritual initiatives and service of G-d, inculcated into their souls unique characteristics, which are inherited by every Jew until the end of time. Every aspect of the Jew, from his innate characteristics to his potential of accomplishment was established by the Patriarchs. The specifications and composition of the Altar reflects the fact that the Jew’s existence is enmeshed on every level with our holy antecedents.

The Relevance of Torah to Atonement

Torah: Regarding the building of the Altar (*Mizbeiach*), “You shall make the Altar of acacia wood.... You shall make its horns on its four corners...”

Midrash: Every aspect of the Altar alludes to something that is a basis for the Jewish people to be worthy of atonement. “You shall make its horns (*karnos*) on its four corners...” The Altar needed to have four ‘*karnos*’ to atone for the Jewish people who were exalted through four levels of special distinction (*karnos*) that were bestowed upon them at Sinai. The first ‘*keren*’ (level of distinction) that was given to the Jewish people was that G-d had elevated them at Sinai to give them special status...The second ‘*keren*’ was the Crown of *Torah* that was given to them ...The third level of distinction, ‘*keren*’ was the Crown of Priesthood...The fourth ‘*keren*’ that was given to the Jewish people was the Crown of Kingship...”

Every component of the Altar is a prerequisite for it to facilitate atonement. If any part of the Altar is nicked or damaged, even to the slightest degree, it is invalidated. Thus, if one would bring a sacrifice when the Altar is damaged, it would have no value. This is because the totality of the Altar, representing all aspects of merit that is necessary to evoke the Attribute of Mercy, is hindered.

Midrash: The Altar needed to be made of acacia wood (*atzei shitim*) to allude to *Avraham*’s hospitality of the angels. He had hosted them under the shade of his tree. It needed to be five cubits in length and five cubits in width to allude to the Ten Commandments that were embraced by the Jewish people and were given five on each Tablet at Sinai. The Altar needed

to be three cubits in height in order to allude to the merits of the three Redeemers – *Moshe, Aaron, and Miriam*. The four corners needed to exist in a perfect form because they symbolized the four levels of distinction that were bestowed upon the Jewish people at Sinai.

It is interesting to note that within the symbolism of the Altar is the Crown of *Torah*, which was one of the levels of distinction that were given to the Jewish people at Sinai. Every morning we conclude the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer) with a request, “May it be Your Will, *Hashem* our G-d... that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in our days. Grant us our share in Your *Torah*...” What is the correlation between having the Temple rebuilt and meriting our portion in *Torah*? Evidently, they are related.

When the Temple existed it was the location of the Divine Presence. As it states in the verse, “Make for Me Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst.” The only reason a Jew has difficulty coming upon his pre-designated share of *Torah* is because there is a distance between himself and G-d. However, when the Divine Presence will exist in our midst in the Temple, we will have the clarity to process and internalize our portion of *Torah*.

All clarity emanates from the location of the Divine Presence– as it states, “*Ki me Tzion teitzei Torah – Torah* goes forth from Zion.” It is evident that one of the components that is crucial to the atonement of the Jewish people is the Crown of *Torah*, which is represented through one of the corners of the Altar. For a Jew to be more qualified for spiritual reinstatement, he must have relevance to the *Torah*.

In the *Ashrei* Psalm (which is written as an acrostic that represents each of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet): “G-d is close to all those who call upon Him in truth (*b’emmes*).” Simply, one would understand this verse to mean that G-d responds to the one who calls upon Him with sincerity. However, one could understand it in another context. G-d responds to the one who possesses “*emmes* (truth),” which is the *Torah* itself.

King Solomon in Proverbs (*Mishlei*): Regarding the *Torah*, “Acquire *emmes* (truth/*Torah*) and do not sell it.” *Torah* is unadulterated Truth. Meaning, G-d responds to the one who possesses truth/*Torah* when he calls out to Him.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: Since the time of the destruction of the Temple, G-d’s only location in the world is “within the four cubits of *Halacha* (normative Jewish law).” Meaning, the study hall in which people are engaged in studying *Torah* in a manner that leads to the elucidation of *Torah* Law, is the location of the Divine Presence. Since this location represents truth in its absolute form, G-d’s Wisdom, G-d has relevance to that location. We pray from the speedy rebuilding of the Temple in order to give us relevance to the source of Truth, which is G-d Himself – to thus enable us to process the absolute Truth, which is G-d’s *Torah*.

The Mishkan – A Replication of Sinai

Torah: Regarding the building of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), “*Hashem* spoke to *Moshe* saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion (*terumah*), from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion.’” The only materials that were qualified to be given for the building of the *Mishkan* were those that were given selflessly and out of the generosity of one’s heart. If one felt compelled to give, it would not be considered valid for the *Mishkan*. The verse states, “..take for Me a portion...” and concludes with “you shall take My portion.” Seemingly, the second reference to taking G-d’s portion from the Jewish people is superfluous.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: The *Torah* is revealing to us that it was only the portion that was given selflessly/wholeheartedly that was classified as “My portion.”

Ramban: The *Mishkan* was a replication of Sinai. The intensity of G-d’s Presence in the Holy of Holies in the *Mishkan* was the equivalent to that of the Sinai event. Just as G-d communicated to *Moshe* and the Jewish people at Sinai, He spoke to *Moshe* from between the Cherubs on the Holy Ark that was located in the Holy of Holies. *Ramban* presents many colorations, based on verses of how the Divine Presence in the *Mishkan* was the equivalent of Sinai.

The purpose of the *Mishkan* was to create a setting for G-d’s Presence to dwell in the midst of the Jewish people. As the verse states, “Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I can dwell in your midst.” One would think that such an important and crucial task of building the *Mishkan* would be incumbent upon every Jew. As

we find regarding the giving of the *Machtzis Ha'Shekel* (the half silver coin that was compulsory for every Jewish male above the age of twenty to give for the sake of purchasing communal offerings).

Torah: The materials that were presented for the building of the *Mishkan* were not given as a tax or obligation but only out of the generosity of the heart. In fact, this was the only circumstance under which they were acceptable. Why was this so?

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: When the Jewish people accepted the *Torah* at Sinai they unequivocally declared "*Naaseh V'nishma* – we will do and we will listen." When G-d heard this declaration He exclaimed, "Who revealed this secret to My children?" They had spoken in the same manner as angels conduct themselves. The angels do the Will of G-d without first hearing His Command. Thus, the Jewish people at Sinai were the equivalent of angels because they accepted the *Torah* without knowing the extent of its obligation. They selflessly dedicated themselves to doing G-d's Will.

However, as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf, the Jewish people forfeited their special relationship with G-d that they had established at Sinai. In order to reinstate that relationship, G-d instructed them to build the *Mishkan*. Just as the Jewish people at Sinai dedicated themselves to G-d selflessly, as angels do, so too did their giving of the materials towards the building of the *Mishkan* needed to have a semblance of that selflessness.

The only way the Jewish people could be reinstated to the level of "*Naaseh V'nishma*", is to once again assume the posture of the angel by giving to the *Mishkan* in a selfless manner. Because the *Mishkan* was built with materials that were given out of the generosity of the heart, it was able to function at the same level as Sinai. The Divine Presence dwelt in it to no less of a degree than It did at the time of the giving of the *Torah*.

Rambam, based on the *Gemara* in Tractate *Moed Katan*: "When one chooses a *rebbe* (mentor/teacher) he should have a semblance of an angels." What characteristic of the angel should the *rebbe* reflect? An angel is epitomized through "*Naaseh V'nishma*." The angel selflessly executes the will of G-d without any hesitation or conflict. It is only through the individual who possesses this level of dedication that

G-d's *Torah* is communicated. Therefore, one should choose a *rebbe* who is selflessly dedicated to G-d because it is only through a teacher with this degree of dedication that the *Torah* is properly transmitted.

The Mishkan – A Representation of Our Eternity

Beginning of Terumah: The *Torah* enumerates the materials that were needed for the building of the *Mishkan*– "Gold, silver, copper...and ram skins that are dyed red."

Midrash: Each one of these materials corresponds to one of the exiles of the Jewish people. The Babylonian exile is represented by the gold in the *Mishkan*. Silver represents the Persian exile. Copper represents the Greek exile. The Roman exile (*Edom*), which is currently being experienced by the Jewish people is represented by the ram skins that were colored red. *Nebuchadnezzar*, the Babylonian Emperor, who destroyed the First Temple, was shown in a dream all of the future exiles to which the Jewish people were going to be subject. Each of the exiles were represented through gold, silver, copper, and iron. Iron represents bloodshed, which is red.

Kli Yakar: Why was it necessary for *Nebuchadnezzar* to be shown the future exiles of the Jewish people through the various materials that comprised the *Mishkan*? It was necessary for him to understand that despite the fact that the Jewish people's presence in existence throughout history has been miniscule; nevertheless, they will triumph over their enemies.

Each one of the exiles to which the Jewish people were subjected was caused by a world power. *Nebuchadnezzar* had to understand that although he had destroyed the Temple and had conquered the Jewish people, ultimately he and the future enemies of Israel were going to be vanquished because there is a representation of each of them in the *Mishkan*, where G-d's Presences dwells.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The inclination for idolatry was such an all-consuming force that it ravaged the spirituality of the Jewish people during the First Temple Period. It was more alluring than the sexual drive. The Men of the High Assembly, fasted and prayed to G-d to allow them to destroy this inclination.

Gemara: G-d responded to their prayers and consequently a fiery lion came forth from the Holy of Holies. They took this fiery lion, which represented the inclination for idolatry and destroyed it. Because the Men of the High Assembly had destroyed the inclination for idolatry, the Jewish people are no longer attracted by it. How is it possible that the very essence of impurity should be associated with the Holy of Holies, which is the location of the Divine Presence?

Rambam in the *Laws of Repentance*: One's status of "devoutly righteous (*tzaddik*)" or "evil (*rasha*)" is not predestined but rather it is determined through one's choice. Man is therefore confronted continuously by situations in which he must choose between good and evil. If he makes the right choice, he will advance himself spiritually— thus being deserving of reward.

However, if man should fail by succumbing to his evil inclination, his spirituality will be diminished and he will be deserving of punishment. In order to maintain the proper balance between good and evil, at whatever level "good" is represented, there must be a counterforce of "evil" that equally represented. The Holy of Holies was the location of the Divine Presence and was the source of all "good" needed to have within it a representation of "evil" to maintain the counterbalance. This balance between good and evil is the basis of existence and the setting in which G-d created man to perfect himself. This is the objective of Creation.

The *Mishkan* was comprised of representations of the four exiles experienced by the Jewish people. Their presence must be represented in the location of G-d's Presence to indicate that they are the counterbalance for the Jewish people in existence. The Jewish people represent "good" and the nations who dominated civilization represent "evil." One's context of choice is only valid if one has the ability to ultimately succeed by making the proper choice.

Even if one has advanced himself spiritually through multiple proper choices, he cannot become complacent because of his successes. As he advances himself spiritually, simultaneously there is an intensified counterbalance that accompanies that advancement to guarantee that there is always a context of choice. The struggle against evil is never-ending; regardless of one's spiritual dimension.

The Essence of the Jewish Court *(from Mishpatim)*

Torah at the beginning of *Mishpatim*: "And these are the ordinances that you shall place before them..."

Midrash: The expression "place before them" means that one must present judicial matters before a qualified Jewish court (*beis din*) and not a secular court. Although the adjudication and verdict of the secular court is identical to that of the Jewish court, it is a *Torah* violation to go before the secular court.

Midrash: "If one were to present a judicial matter before a secular court it is as if he denies G-d and the *Torah* itself." If the verdict of the secular court is identical to that of the Jewish court, and is not in contradiction to *Torah* law, why then is it considered a denial of G-d and the authenticity of *Torah*?

Psalms: '*Elokim netzav ba'adas keil* – G-d stands (associates Himself) with the congregation of G-d (proper Jewish court).' Meaning, G-d associates Himself with the Jewish court when it convenes. One of the responsibilities of the Jewish High Court (*Sanhedrin*) is to adjudicate capital crimes that will determine if a defendant is liable for the death penalty. If man is subject to err because of his limitations, then how could the *Torah* allow the court to pass judgment? Perhaps the court would be taking an innocent life. Because G-d associates Himself and convenes with a proper Jewish court, that meets all of the prescribed criteria, one does not need to be concerned because He elucidates the subject matter pertaining to the verdict so that the judges should render a proper judgment.

Regardless of the facts and evidence pertaining to the case, whether the defendant is innocent or guilty, the verdict is determined by G-d. Meaning, if it were discovered after the defendant was put to death that the witnesses who had testified were found to be conspiring, although the basis for the verdict was faulty; nevertheless, the decision of the court is correct. This is because G-d convenes with the congregation of G-d. G-d Himself wanted this individual to be put to death through the process of the court. The court only facilitated G-d's Will. Thus, human fallibility has no bearing on the ultimate outcome.

Rambam in the *Laws of Idolatry*: If one's belief in G-d is based on his own intellect, although his position is in total conformance with the *Torah*, he is in violation of the negative commandment, "Do not turn to idols."

Rambam: "The intelligence of man is limited." Meaning, that although one may be correct in his belief of G-d presently through his compelling intellectual evidence, because it is not rooted in fact, he may change his position of belief. Therefore it is similar to turning to idols which is based on one's own perception of truth. In contrast, if one's belief is based on the tradition that was transmitted from generation to generation, dating back to the Sinai event, where every Jew witnessed G-d's Presence and communicating His Will to *Moshe* as His Prophet, then one's belief is no longer based on one's perception of truth, but rather on fact.

When a Jewish court adjudicates a matter between two individuals, regardless of the evidence, the verdict is correct because G-d determines the outcome. Thus, it is the equivalent of embracing G-d and His *Torah*. However, if one goes before a secular court, whose process and verdict/decision may be identical to the Jewish court, if the evidence for the verdict is faulty then the decision of the court is a corruption of justice. This is because G-d had no relevance to that particular court. Therefore going to the secular court in this context is the equivalent of rejecting G-d and His *Torah*.



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