



WHEN ILLUMINATION PROVIDES ELUCIDATION

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tetzaveh Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Video: Vivid Truth Dispels Ambiguity

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The Ultimate Vestment Created by G-d

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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 seven 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 and Moshe, were the only two humans whose souls dwelt within their bodies.

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 and 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.

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Aaron's Sons Qualifications as Kohanim

The *Torah* states that G-d commanded *Moshe* to install Aaron and his sons to be the *Kohanim* (Priests), "(G-d said to *Moshe*), Bring Near to yourself Aaron your brother, and (v'es) his sons with him (eeto) from among the Children of Israel – Aaron, Nadav, and Avihu, Elazar, and Issamar, the sons of Aaron to minister to Me." The word "es (and)" in the Hebrew language does not have a meaning onto itself; however, when it connotes that something is an adjunct to another.

For example, there is a Positive Commandment, "You shall revere G-d. (*Es Hashem Elokecha Tirah*)."
The *Gemara* cites the opinion of *Rebbe Akiva* who explains that the word "es" is coming to include the *Torah* sage. Meaning, one must revere the *Torah* Sage as one would revere G-d Himself. Thus, when the verse referring to Aaron and his sons being installed as *Kohanim*, the *Torah* uses the term "v'es" to communicate, that the sons of Aaron only assumed

the classification of *Kohanim* because they were an adjunct to him as his sons.

There are two ways that the *Torah* could express the term "with him." The expression, "eemo (with him)" or the expression "eeto (with him)" are both expressions that mean "with him." In which context is each of these words used? If it is to express that two people are of equivalent standing, then the word "eemo" is used. However, in the context in which one individual is secondary to the other, the term "eeto" is used. When the *Torah* refers to Aaron and his sons being installed to be *Kohanim*, it uses the term "eeto (with him)" regarding Aaron's sons to indicate that they were worthy to be *Kohanim* only because they were Aaron's sons. Thus, they were secondary to him.

Baal HaTurim points out that in the verse cited above, the name "Aaron" is mentioned three times. It is to allude to the three *Kohanim* that remained after the death of *Nadav* and *Avihu*. After they were

struck down by G-d, only *Aaron*, *Elazar*, and *Issamar* remained as *Kohanim*. Why should the sons of *Aaron* be alluded to through the mention of their fathers name? It is because the only reason *Aaron's* sons were qualified to be *Kohanim* were because they were his sons. They were not worthy in their own right, but rather it was only because they were the sons of *Aaron*. They are thus alluded to through *Aaron's* name being mentioned multiple times.

The *Torah* tells us that after *Aaron's* two sons were struck down by G-d *Moshe* told *Aaron* that after his participation in the sin of the golden calf, all four of his sons were meant to die. However, because *Moshe* supplicated G-d to annul the decree, G-d only allowed that half of the decree should be annulled. Thus, only two of *Aaron's* sons were taken by G-d and not all four. Why should any of *Aaron's* sons be liable for their father's spiritual failing?

Chazal tell us that *Aaron's* two sons *Nadav* and *Avihu* were killed by G-d as a result of bringing a strange fire before G-d. However, if they would have had sufficient clarity, they would not have made this mistake. If *Aaron* had not participated in the golden calf, in the merit of their father, *Nadav* and *Avihu* would have been endowed with clarity. However, because *Aaron* deserved to be punished, they were denied that clarity, thus causing them to make a mistake which caused their death.

Had *Moshe* not been successful in annulling half of the decree all four of *Aaron's* sons would have been denied clarity and failed in a manner that would have caused them to be liable for death. Within the context of their failing, because they acted inappropriately as *Kohanim* which is synonymous with their father *Aaron* (*eeto*). To emphasize the cause of their death, the punishment manifested itself in the context of their failing as *Kohanim*, rather than another context. We see from this that the merit of *Aaron* greatly affected his sons as is alluded to by the verse using the term "*eeto*" to indicate that the sons of *Aaron* were secondary to him and had special value only because of their father.

The Innate Value of Aaron's Pain and Distress

The *Torah* states regarding the kindling of the *Menorah*, "Now you shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive

oil for illumination..." The *Midrash* states, "You (G-d) illuminate all creation; yet, You command us to kindle the lights of the *Menorah*."

Reb Meir says, 'G-d said, 'The lights that *Aaron* kindles are more beloved to Me than the luminaries that I have set in the heavens.' Why is this so? When all of the Tribes were asked to bring gifts and offerings to participate in the inauguration of the Altar, the Tribe of *Levy* was excluded. As a result, *Aaron* was pained and distressed. He said, 'All of the Princes were allowed to participate in the inauguration of the Altar, but I have no share in the offerings.' G-d responded to him, 'I swear on your life! Their participation was only one time; however, you will have your own special inauguration by kindling the lights of the *Menorah*.'

As the verse in *Psalms* states, 'G-d heard the desire of the humble..." *Aaron* was pained and distressed because he was denied the right to participate in the sanctification of G-d's Name. Because his distress, he was granted the *mitzvah* of kindling the *Menorah*, which is considered the most special service in the *Mishkan*. Because the kindling of the *Menorah* was precipitated by *Aaron's* pain and distress that he was not able to sanctify G-d's Name, it was more beloved to G-d than the luminaries in the heavens.

This is similar to the incident of *Avraham's* hosting of the three wayfarers on the third day after his circumcision. The *Torah* states, "*Avraham* was sitting in the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day..." *Chazal* tell us that because G-d wanted *Avraham* to have a respite from engaging in hospitality to recuperate from his infirmity, He took the sun out of its sheath, thus causing it to be the hottest day since the beginning of existence. Rather than taking this reprieve as relief, to the contrary, *Avraham* was pained that he was denied because of the circumstance to be able to host guests. He thus sat at the entrance of his tent awaiting individuals to host.

Avraham's hospitality was used as a vehicle to espouse monotheism. He was thus pained because he was denied the opportunity to bring pagans to monotheism and recognize G-d as the Omnipotent One. Because he was pained that he was denied this opportunity, G-d sent him three angels in human form to host.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Metizia* tells us that every aspect of *Avraham's* hospitality that he provided to

the angels was evaluated. It bore unlimited benefits for the future of the Jewish people. As a result of the evaluation of all the aspects of *Avraham's* hospitality, the Jewish people merited special gifts in the desert that allowed them to survive and thrive. They merited the Clouds of Glory because *Avraham* offered the shade of his tree. They merited the Manna because *Avraham* offered bread. They merited the wellspring of *Miriam* because *Avraham* offered his water.

Although *Avraham* had participated in the *mitzvah* of hospitality selflessly until the age of ninety nine, it did not bear this level of fruit. It was only because *Avraham* was pained that he was not able to perform the *mitzvah* of hospitality to convert non-believers to monotheism that G-d provided him angels for him to fulfill the *mitzvah* of hospitality. It was not until that moment that his hospitality produced unlimited benefit.

Just as *Avraham's* pain for being denied a *mitzvah* opportunity to serve G-d was the catalyst that caused unlimited benefit to the Jewish people, similarly *Aaron's* pain and distress for being denied the opportunity to sanctify G-d's Name, caused him to merit the kindling of the *Menorah*, which G-d values more than the luminaries in heaven.

The Commonality between Purim and Pesach

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Taanis* states, "When the month of *Av* begins, we decrease our joy. When the month of *Adar* begins, we increase our joy..." The *Mishna* in Tractate *Taanis* tells us that five tragedies occurred on the ninth of *Av* (*tisha b'Av*) (both Temples were destroyed on that day). One would think that it would be sufficient to commemorate the ninth of *Av* alone, by designating it as a day of mourning. However, *Chazal* tell us that due to the enormity of the tragedy, one must begin to minimize his level of joy at the beginning of the month.

On the 14th or the 15th of the month of *Adar* we celebrate the festival of *Purim*. On the 14th it is celebrated by non-walled cities and on the 15th it is celebrated in walled cities, in which the walls stood at the time of *Yehoshuah Bin Nun* (the time the Jewish people entered into the Land of *Canaan*). *Chazal* are telling us that it is not sufficient to celebrate the day of the *Purim* festival alone, but rather one must increase his level of joy from the beginning of the month to

indicate that the dimension of good fortune is so overwhelming, that one must begin increasing his joy at the beginning of the month.

The basis for the celebration of *Purim* is that there was a decree that was authorized by *Achashverosh* the Persian Emperor, to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child. This was initiated and legislated into law by *Haman* the evil one, who was the viceroy of the Persian Empire. The decree at the last moment was miraculously overturned, thus sparing the Jewish people from annihilation. In addition, they were given permission to destroy their enemies (the Amalekites) on the 13th of the month of *Adar* in the open cities and an additional day was given to those who lived in *Shushan*, the capital of the Persian Empire, to destroy them on the 14th of *Adar*.

There is a rabbinical obligation to celebrate *Purim* through feasting. As it states in the *Megillah* of *Esther*, "It is a day of joy and feasting..." However, we find another rabbinical holiday, which we celebrate to commemorate the victory over the Greeks- the festival of *Chanukah*. During this time, the enemies of the Jewish people were defeated and driven out of the Land of Israel. Regarding this festival, there is no obligation to celebrate through feasting as regarding the festival of *Purim*.

Maharal of Prague z'tl asks, "If the days of *Chanukah* were designated to commemorate the victory over our enemies, why do we not celebrate through feasting as one celebrates to commemorate the miracle of *Purim*?" On *Purim* there was a decree to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child, regardless of their belief. It was purely because they were Jewish that the Amalekites wanted to destroy them. The decree was to remove the Jewish people from existence. Therefore, to appreciate the miracle we feast in order to emphasize that the miracle relates to the physical existence of the Jewish people.

However, regarding the Greeks, they never intended to annihilate the Jewish people, but rather they wanted them to assimilate and Hellenize, by accepting their pagan beliefs and culture. Because the Jewish people vehemently rejected this consideration, the Greeks issued decrees to nullify the *Torah*, which ultimately led to an all-out conflict. The physical destruction of the Jewish people was only a consequence of the Jew not willing to forgo and forfeit his spirituality. Therefore,

on *Chanukah* we celebrate the spiritual survival of the Jewish people, through giving thanks and praise to G-d rather than through feasting.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Megillah* has a quandary, "If there is a leap year and there are two months of *Adar*, during which month should one celebrate the festival of *Purim*? Is it during the first month of *Adar*, which follows the month of *Shvat*, which is the time *Purim* is usually celebrated. Or is it the second month of *Adar*, which is before *Nissan*, during which it is usually celebrated before the month of *Nissan*?" The *Gemara* concludes that one should celebrate *Purim* during the second month of *Adar* because we juxtapose one redemption to another redemption. Just as *Purim* was a redemption of the Jewish people, so too was *Pesach* (the exodus from Egypt) a redemption of the Jewish people.

On *Pesach* we celebrate the redemption from Egypt. Before the exodus, the Jewish people were the slaves of Pharaoh and after their redemption they became the servants of G-d. The sole purpose of the redemption of Egypt was not merely to free the Jewish people from slavery, but rather so that they should become the nation of G-d through the receiving of the *Torah* at Sinai. At Sinai, G-d held the mountain over their heads and gave them an ultimatum, "If you accept the *Torah* it will be good for you, if not you will be buried under the mountain." They accepted the *Torah*; however, it was under duress. They chose to live. It was not an acceptance out of love.

On *Purim* the Jewish people were saved from total annihilation. As a result of seeing an open miracle by G-d they understood and appreciated His overwhelming level of love for them. This understanding caused them to reaffirm their acceptance of the *Torah* out of love. The commonality between the redemption from Egypt and *Purim* was the ultimate result. The purpose of the redemption from Egypt was to receive the *Torah* at Sinai. The effect of being redeemed from instant annihilation was that the Jewish people reaccepted the *Torah* at a more advanced level. Thus, *Chazal* enacted that during a leap year *Purim* should be celebrated in the second *Adar* to indicate the both *Purim* and *Pesach* ultimately were for the sake of acceptance of *Torah*.

The Inner Workings of Existence

The *Torah* states regarding the placement of the *Menorah*, "In the Tent of the Meeting, outside the Curtain that is near the Testimonial (Ark)." The *Menorah* was located on the outer side of the Curtain, that separates between the Holy and the Holy of Holies. The *Midrash* states, "The *Menorah* should be kindled outside of the Curtain so that you should not think, 'I (G-d) need your light.'" G-d does not need anything because He is perfect in the most absolute sense. The value of the *Torah* and *mitzvos* that are performed by the Jewish people to serve G-d are only so that they should be the beneficiaries of His Goodness.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Basra* tells us that the light of the *Menorah* symbolizes the Oral Law, which is G-d's elucidation of His Written Word. The logical location for the *Menorah* to be situated would have been along side the Holy Ark, which is the repository of the Tablets and the *Torah* itself. However, the location of the *Menorah* was in the area of the Holy, so that one should not mistakenly believe the G-d needs our light.

The *Midrash* continues, "Moshe said to G-d, 'You are the light of the world. Why then do You command us to kindle the lights of the *Menorah*?' G-d responded, 'To elevate you in the eyes of the nations of the world. So that they should see that G-d needs your light.'" Seemingly the two statements of the *Midrash* are contradictory. If in fact G-d does not need the light of the Jewish people, because He is perfect in the most absolute sense, then what is the meaning of the second *Midrash* that G-d does need the light of the Jew?

Regarding G-d Himself, He is not in need of anything because need indicates deficiency. He is not deficient in any way. Every *mitzvah* that the Jew performs is to attain his own spiritual perfection. Thus he will become worthy of having a relationship with G-d. One of the tenets of Judaism is that there is a system of reward and punishment that is in effect. If one behaves in a positive manner in accordance with the Will of G-d, which is transmitted through the *Torah*, then he will be rewarded. However, if one fails and transgresses His Word, he is held culpable.

Since the objective of Creation was for the sole purpose of the Jewish people fulfilling the *Torah*, the function of physical existence is affected by their spiritual achievements and failures. All the blessing that comes

to existence is based on the spiritual performance of the Jewish people. When they live and abide by the principles and dictates of the *Torah*, the world is elevated and receives G-d's bounty. The Jew is the one who is the determining factor of whether the world rises or falls. This is the meaning of the *Midrash* that states, "I need your light." However, G-d is not bound by any laws, ordinances, or systems that were put in place. He may choose to override them whenever He sees fit. Pharaoh and the Egyptians mistakenly believed that G-d was bound by the Zodiac and the natural order.

Even when the Jewish people are not worthy of receiving His Kindness, G-d may choose to allow them to be beneficiaries of His blessing. This is an expression of His dominance. We say at the end of the first blessing of the *Amidah*, (Silent Prayer), "...Who recalls the kindnesses of the Patriarchs and brings the Redeemer to their children's children for the sake of His Name, with love." The Jewish people are maintained in existence because of the merits of the Patriarchs.

However, when those merits are depleted, G-d will bring the Redeemer (*Moshiach*) for the sake of His Name with love. Despite the fact that the Jewish people may have exhausted the merits of the Patriarchs and are unworthy of redemption, G-d will nevertheless bring *Moshiach*. The reason *Moshiach* has not yet come is because the world is still maintained by their merit. It is preferable that existence advances and perfects itself due to the free choice of the Jew. However, when the merit of the Patriarchs will no longer be G-d will choose to do as He sees fit.

Rambam writes in the last of the thirteen tenets of Jewish belief, "O believe with complete faith that there will be a resuscitation of the dead whenever the wish emanates from the Creator..." Meaning, G-d will decide and determine when the resurrection of the dead will occur. This determination will be made outside of the constraints of any system, calculations, or order. It is solely based when He deems it fit to do so.

It is interesting to note that the *Torah* states regarding the materials that were given to build the *Mishkan*, "Take for Me *Terumah*..." One would think that it should have stated, "Give for Me *Terumah*..." because the Jewish people were asked to donate towards the building of the *Mishkan*. The reason the *Torah* uses the term "take" rather than "give" is to indicate that when

one gives in accordance with the Will of G-d one is in fact "taking" because he is the beneficiary of his own actions. G-d does not in any way need or benefit from the service of the Jewish people, but rather they are the beneficiaries.

Torah, the Mechanism For Spiritualization

The *Torah* states, "(G-d said to *Moshe*) Now you shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed/crushed olive oil for illumination (*Menorah*)..." It seems from the words "...that they shall take for you (*Moshe*)..." that the Jewish people were to take, for the sake of *Moshe*, the first droplet of pure olive oil for the illumination of the *Menorah*. Why were they commanded to do this for the sake of *Moshe*?

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh cites the *Zohar* that states the Jewish people were redeemed from the first three of their four exiles in the merit of the Patriarchs. In the merit of *Avraham*, our Patriarch, they were redeemed from the Babylonian exile. In the merit of *Yitzchak*, our Patriarch, they were redeemed from the Persian exile. In the merit of *Yaakov*, our Patriarch, they were redeemed from the Greek exile. The redemption of the Jewish people from the fourth and current exile, the Edomite exile (Roman), will come about only in the merit of *Moshe*. However, *Moshe*, being the personification of *Torah*, will not allow his merit to be utilized to bring about redemption until the Jewish people are quantitatively and qualitatively engaged in *Torah* study.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that the "pure, pressed olive oil" of the *Menorah* symbolizes the manner in which one must engage in *Torah* study in order to be worthy of *Moshe's* merit. Just as only the purest droplet of oil qualifies to kindle the *Menorah*, so too must one study *Torah* with a pure intent. The *Torah* must be studied for its own sake (*l'shmah*). Just as the olive was crushed in order to extract the pure oil for illumination, so too must one be willing to sacrifice and deprive himself from the material for the sake of *Torah* study. It is only when the Jewish people will engage in *Torah* in this manner, will *Moshe* allow his merit to be used to bring about redemption.

We pray every day in the blessing for the Davidic Reign (*es tzemach David avdecha*) in the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer) that G-d should bring the *Moshiach*, speedily in our day. The *Gemara* tells us that when *Moshiach* will come, G-dliness in existence will become so evident that one's level of free choice will effectively become almost non-existent. The primary focus of humanity will be to address and advance their spirituality.

Rambam writes in the Laws of Repentance that one's deservingness of reward is based on one's ability to choose between right and wrong. However, if one is no longer in conflict because he is compelled to do good because of its obviousness, then one is no longer deserving of reward. If the coming of *Moshiach* will bring an end to the setting of free choice, which is the ultimate objective of creation, then why do we pray for his coming?

We pray for the coming of *Moshiach* because when G-d's Presence is not experienced and felt, it becomes a setting for a desecration of His Name. We are willing to forego and deny ourselves, for His sake,

the purpose of our own existence, which is spiritual advancement. Why would *Moshe*, who had dedicated his life selflessly to G-d's Glory, deny the Jewish people their final redemption to bring about the greatest glorification of G-d?

Moshe understood that without proper *Torah* study, one would not have the capacity to internalize and appreciate the ultimate revelation of G-d's Presence. The only way one would be qualified and be sufficiently developed to understand its value, one must engage in *Torah* study in a qualitative and selfless manner. Only then will His revelation be understood. Not appreciating G-d's Presence, when it is the most obvious, would be the ultimate desecration. Therefore, *Moshe* chooses to withhold his merit from the Jewish people to prevent a greater desecration of G-d's Name.



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