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PEOPLE CREATE
A MOST FITTING
EDIFICE

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YORAM RAANAN

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Terumah

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Why Did the Egyptians Enslave Us?

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Tithing L'Shma

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The Value of Echad

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The Wood of the Mizbeyach

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Thirteen Lveles of Distinction: Our Spiritual Attire

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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.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Terumah



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The Significance of Unity

Parshas Terumah: Hashem asked Klal Yisroel to participate in the building of the *Mishkan* (Portable Tabernacle). “Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion. This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, silver, copper, turquoise wool, purple wool, scarlet wool, linen, goats’ hair, ram skins that are dyed red, *techashim* skins, *shittim* wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for raising the smoke of incense... They shall make Me a Sanctuary – so that I may dwell among them.” As we can see, Hashem enumerated thirteen different items that were to be used for the building of the *Mishkan*.

Midrash: The significance of using thirteen materials to build the *Mishkan* is to reflect the thirteen miraculous acts that Hashem had performed for the Jews in order to bring about the exodus from Egypt. In return for Hashem’s thirteen actions, the Jews were to use

thirteen materials to bring about the full function of the *Mishkan*. What is the significance of Hashem performing thirteen different actions to bring about the exodus?

Maharal: Thirteen is the numerical value of the word *echad* (One). The Jewish people are comprised of thirteen tribes– twelve who were given a share in the Land of Israel and one (*Levy*), which was not. Thus, the thirteen tribes of the Jewish people reflect the Unity of Hashem, which is *echad*. Even within the context of the thirteen tribes that there is a more specific allusion to *echad*. The most spiritual of the thirteen tribes was the tribe of *Levy* because they were chosen to be the officiates of G-d. Therefore in order to indicate his uniqueness we would classify *Levy* as *aleph* (number one).

Of the four wives of *Yaakov*, two of them were considered Matriarchs (*Rachel* and *Leah*) and two were considered concubines (*Bilhah* and *Zilpah*). The

Matriarchs, who were of special spiritual status, bore *Yaakov* eight sons – *Leah* mothered six and *Rachel* two. The number eight is denoted in Hebrew with the letter *ches*. The concubines of *Yaakov* bore him four sons, which is denoted in Hebrew with the letter *dahled*. Identifying the various levels of spirituality contained within the tribes of Israel: we have tribe of *Levy* (*aleph*), we have *ches* (the sons of the Matriarchs), and we have *dahled* (the sons of the concubines) spelling *echad* (one).

Maharal: Not only do the tribes numerically reflect the unity of *Hashem* but also the innate spirituality within each tribe reflects *echad* (alpeh *ches dahled*). *Hashem* brought about the miracles in Egypt not only to punish the Egyptians but also for the Jews to understand who He is – as it says in the verse, “And You will know that I am G-d.” As a result of the sum total of all the miracles and supernatural events that took place at this time, *Hashem* revealed to the Jews that He is the Omnipotent Being. All that exists is only a manifestation of His Will. This was demonstrated through the thirteen acts of kindness to communicate to the Jewish people that G-d is *Echad*.

Moshe was taken aback when he was told by *Hashem* to build the *Mishkan* for the purpose of having a “dwelling place” among the Jewish people. *Moshe* asked G-d, “How is it possible that Your Presence can be contained in such a limited location when all existence cannot contain Your Presence?” *Hashem* responded to *Moshe*, “You concern yourself with your responsibilities (building the *Mishkan*) and let Me concern Myself with My responsibilities (how to dwell within it).”

The *Mishkan* was the medium through which G-d had a relationship with every Jew. In order for this special location to accommodate G-d’s Presence it was necessary for it to reflect His essence which is unity – *Echad* (One). Thus since *Hashem* is *Echad* the number of the materials used to build His dwelling place needed to be numerically *echad*.

Echad represents the unity of G-d and the thirteen materials of the *Mishkan* were the prerequisite for the location to contain *Hashem*’s Presence. Although the Jewish people are comprised of thirteen tribes nevertheless they are one people. The Second Temple was destroyed because of lack of unity among the Jewish people – “*sinaas chinam*” (unwarranted hate). In order for the Jewish people to be qualified to be

taken as G-d’s people at Sinai we needed to be likened to, “one man with one heart.” As it is stated in the *Torah*, “They camped at the foot of the mountain.” (with “camped” written in the singular). Therefore in order for us to reinstate our intimate relationship with G-d who is *Echad* and the ultimate redemption, we must become *echad* – a unified people.

Infusing our Actions with Value

Parshas Terumah: The *Torah* enumerates the materials, which were needed for the building the *Mishkan*. The *Torah* lists these building materials apparently in descending order of preciousness – commencing with “Gold and silver” which are the most precious. We see, however, that the last two materials mentioned are the “*avnei shoham v’ avnei milooyim* (the *shoham* stones and the filling stones)” which were precious gems such as diamonds, sapphires, and rubies. If the *Torah* was listing the materials in order of preciousness one would think that these gems should have been listed first and then followed by “Gold and silver”. Why are the *avnei shoham* and *avnei milooyim* the last materials in the list if they are more valuable than gold and silver?

Torah: All the Jews were asked to participate in the building of the *Mishkan* by donating the necessary materials, “...They shall take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him...” When the Princes of Israel donated the precious gems (the *avnei shoham* and *avnei milooyim*) the word “*Nisiyim* (Princes)” is written without a *yud*.

Ohr Ha’Chaim HaKadosh citing *Chazal*: The significance of the deletion of the *yud* indicates that their participation in the building of the *Mishkan* was deficient. The Princes of Israel said, “Let the Jewish People donate what they can for the building of the *Mishkan* and we will complete what they are not able to complete.” The Jewish people contributed all that was needed for the building of the *Mishkan* except for the *avnei shoham* and *avnei milooyim*, which were given by the Princes. G-d reprimanded the Princes by saying, “How could you wait to see what was lacking and only then complete the *Mishkan* for the sake of your own glory and take a chance that your participation would not be necessary.” This is the significance of the word *Nisiyim* stated in a deleted form to indicate that their participation was deficient. Thus their *mitzvah* was spiritually lacking.

Ohr Ha'Chaim HaKadosh: Although the intrinsic material worth of the *avnei shoham* and *avnei millooyim* was considered invaluable; on the spiritual scale they were considered something of inferior worth because *Hashem* does not evaluate value based on physical properties but rather on spiritual purity. Since the intent and motivation behind the giving of the gems was deficient, the *Torah* mentions them last.

Torah: There is a certain sin offering that is brought to the *Bais HaMikdash* based on one's financial status. A wealthy man brings a meat offering while a poor man brought a bird for his sin offering.

Gemara in Menachos: The wealthy man brings a meat offering of significant material value and a poor man brings a bird offering of little material value. The *Gemara* concludes that although the financial disparity between the rich man and the poor man is great, nevertheless the *Torah* states regarding each of their offerings, "It gives great pleasure to G-d". This teaches us, "Regardless of how much or how little one does, as long as it is done with the proper intent for the sake of *Hashem*, it is valued."

Gemara in Sahhedrin: "All that *Hashem* desires from a person is his heart", meaning feeling and dedication to the *mitzvah* or the cause. Does this mean that it is sufficient for one to mean well in his heart without actually performing the *mitzvah*. Or does it mean that when one performs a *mitzvah*, *Hashem* will value it in a special way only if it is infused with dedication. We see that *Hashem* viewed the precious stones that were given by the Princes as something of inferior quality, because they did not perform this *mitzvah* with zeal and proper intent. Not performing a *mitzvah* with alacrity causes the action to be diminished in value.

Gemara: If one has a *mitzvah* at hand one should not delay its performance but attend to it immediately.

Rav Hutner zt'l: If one was to delay the performance of a *mitzvah* but did eventually fulfill it perfectly – is this *mitzvah* because of its delay considered deficient? Or is it considered perfect because of the manner in which it was performed, regardless of its delay? He concludes that not performing a *mitzvah* with alacrity causes the action to be diminished in value based on the principle that if one has a *mitzvah* at hand one should not delay its performance.

The *Torah* teaches us this principle from the verse, "You shall watch over the *matzos*." In Hebrew the word *matzos* without its vowels can be read – *mitzvos*. The *Torah* is stating, "You shall watch over the *mitzvos*"- meaning if one has a *mitzvah* at hand he should not delay it for a later time. If one delays the baking of the dough after it is kneaded it will become *chometz* (leavened).

Therefore the *Torah* instructs us to watch over the *matzos*. Just as the deficiency in the *matzah* (if it is not watched properly) is an inherent deficiency in the *matzah*; so too if the *mitzvah* is delayed (regardless of how well it is performed at a later time) the *mitzvah* is classified as deficient. Therefore our own glory and our personal priorities must be secondary to the performance of *mitzvos*. Since *Hashem* values our intent and zeal, we should infuse all of our actions with the proper intent at the proper time. Only then that it can be truly considered that we gave our "hearts" to *Hashem*.

The Purity of Truth

Parshas Terumah: The *Torah* tells us in detail about the construction of the Holy Ark (the *Aron HaKodesh*). The *Aron HaKodesh* contained the *Luchos* (the second set of stone Tablets) and the *Shivrei Luchos* (the first tablets that were broken) and a *Torah* scroll. The *Aron* (the Ark) was the repository, which contained the *Torah*. The *Torah* states that the *Aron* was cast in pure gold- "On the inside and on the outside".

Gemara in Yomah: that a *Talmid Chacham* (*Torah Sage*) whose inside is not consistent with his outside is not a *Talmid Chacham*. The paradigm to teach us this is the Holy Ark. Just as the Ark only qualified as the repository to contain the *Torah* because it was cast in gold on the inside and outside to indicate a consistency, so too the *Torah Sage* must have consistency. In order for one to be classified as a true *Talmid Chacham*, one's essence and commitment must be consistent with his proficiency in *Torah* knowledge. If one is not a *tzaddik* (righteous person) and his outward behavior is merely a façade then he is not a *Talmid Chacham*. His proficiency may make him a *Torah* "Scholar", but he is not a *Talmid Chacham*.

Torah: The location of the *Shechina* (the Divine Presence) was in the location of the Holy Ark. The Ark was present in the *Mishkan* (portable Temple) as

well as in the First *Bais HaMikdash* (first Temple in Jerusalem); however after the destruction of the first Temple the Ark was hidden away and therefore the Second *Bais HaMikdash* did not have it. Therefore the *Gemara* tells us, the *Shechina* was not present on a continuous basis during the period of the Second *Bais HaMikdash*. In addition, when the Ark was not in the *Mishkan* it assumed the status of a *Baamah* (Alter) that did not have *Hashem's* Presence. The Ark that contained the *Torah* was the location of the location of the Divine Presence. Therefore if the *Aron* was not present then the *Shechina* did not dwell in that location.

Gemara in *Berachos* based on a *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (*Psalms*): “*Hashem* loves the Gates of *Tzion* more than the sanctuaries of *Yaakov*.” The *Gemara* explains this to mean that *Hashem* loves the location that are outstanding in the study of definitive *Halacha* (Jewish Law) more than synagogues and study halls.

Gemara: “After the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdash* G-d’s location in this existence is within the four cubits (*dahled amos*) of *Halacha*.” The reason for this is because *Hashem's* Presence only identifies with the location of the *Torah* – as we saw in the *Bais HaMikdash* with regard to the Holy Ark. Does this mean that any location of study is similar to the Holy Ark?

The *Torah* tells very specifically how the *Aron HaKodesh* is to be constructed – “it must be cast in pure gold on the inside and on the outside”. The *Shechina* dwells in a location that must be internally and externally consistent with purity. We see from this that unless a location of study has these qualities of consistent purity, only then will the Divine Presence dwell in that location. Why does the location of the *Shechina* require this consistency?

Gemara: “The Signet of *Hashem* is Truth.” The nature of Truth is that it must be completely pure and unadulterated.

Maharal: Truth must be completely unadulterated and even if it is 99.999% true – it is not Truth. This is indicated by the word *Emmes* (which means Truth). The spelling of the word *Emmes* is spelled *aleph mem tuf*. If even the smallest letter “*aleph*” (which indicates an iota) is removed from the word *Emmes*, what remains is “*mem tuf*” which spells “*mes*” (death). Meaning that even if an iota of truth is missing this is not Truth. If a person or a location is only outwardly pure and only has a façade of *Torah* then this lacking in truthfulness. Thus, the

Divine Presence will not dwell or be associated with that person or location. *Hashem* will only rest on a person whose behavior is consistent with his knowledge and internal commitment to the *Torah*.

Going Beyond Our Limits

Parshas Terumah: *Hashem* asked the Jewish people to donate materials for the building of the *Mishkan* (Portable Tabernacle) based on the generosity of each individual’s heart.

Torah: There were two types of people who gave to the *Mishkan* – those who gave with a “generous heart” – *yidvenu leebo* and those who gave with an “inspired heart” – *yeesah leebo*. After *Yaakov* experienced his prophetic dream on Mount Moriah he was so inspired that his legs carried him as if he was floating on air. The *Torah* uses the terms “*Veiyiso*” to indicate that he was inspired. What is the difference between the person who gives with a “generous heart” *yidvenu leebo* and the one who gives with an “inspired heart” – *yeesah leebo*?

Ohr HaChaim HaKodesh: There is a difference between these two people. A person who has a generous heart will give to the “best of his ability” to support a cause that he values. Giving to the best of one’s ability means giving to the point that it does not infringe on his own needs. In contrast, the “inspired” person gives beyond his means without taking into consideration his own needs, because of the degree of his inspiration. This is the difference between *yidvenu leebo* and *yeesah leebo*.

Hashem, the King of the Universe said to the Jewish people. “...Make for Me a Sanctuary – so that I may dwell among you”. One would think this would be sufficient to motivate and inspire one’s heart to donate for the building of the *Mishkan* without limit. However we do see there were those who only gave with a “generous” heart despite the gravity of the request.

Rambam in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* (*The Laws of Studying Torah*): There are characteristics necessary for one to acquire the “Crown of *Torah*” (*Kesser Torah*). A person’s living necessities should be reduced to a minimal level and that one should live a life of deprivation in order to acquire the Crown of *Torah*. The *Rambam* does not say that if one “chooses” to acquire the Crown of *Torah* one should live their life their life in this manner.

Rather, *Rambam* states that only one whose “heart is inspired” to acquire the Crown of *Torah* must follow the specific prescription of life to succeed in this endeavor. Meaning, only one who is innately inspired has relevance to acquire the Crown of *Torah*. It is not a choice that one makes but rather a passion, which consumes the person to the extent of devotion without limit. Anyone who does not have an “inspired heart” will inevitably be conflicted with self-interest and therefore will not be able to acquire the Crown of *Torah*.

Ramban: Positive Commandments represent the “Love of *Hashem*” whereas the Negative Commandments signify “the Fear of *Hashem*”. In order for one to refrain from transgressing the Will of *Hashem* it is sufficient to fear Divine retribution. However, in order to perform a Positive Commandment one needs to be motivated, and love is the motivating factor. If one is imbued with love for *Hashem* there are no limits to one’s commitment.

This is why we ask *Hashem* every day in our prayers to place “love in our hearts” so that we will be inspired to respond unimpeded to serve *Hashem*. Although one needs to merit “love” which comes through *siyata de’shamaya* (the help of heaven), one needs to have a desire to possess it. This is why we pray to *Hashem* to give us “love” in our hearts so that we can be inspired to the point of going beyond being “generous”.

Why Do We Rejoice in the Month of Adar?

Gemara in *Taanis*: “When the month of *Adar* begins one should increase his level of joy. When the month of *Av* begins one should decrease his level of joy.”

Mishna: The month of *Av* is the most tragic month in the Jewish calendar because during *Av* both the First and Second *Batei HaMikdash* (first and second Temples) were destroyed on the same day, among many other tragic events. The month of *Adar*, by contrast, is a month of good fortune and joy because it was during this month that the miracle of *Purim* took place. There was a decree during the reign of the Persian King *Achashveirosh* to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child and at the last moment *Hashem* turned the situation completely around. Instead of the Jews being destroyed by their enemies, the Jewish people destroyed their enemies (the *Amalikites*).

Gemara: The month of *Adar* is a time of good fortune (*mazel*) for the Jewish people and if one has legal

proceedings with a non-Jew, *Adar* is the best month to receive adjudication. What is the focus of the month of *Av*? We decrease our level of joy by contemplating the destruction of the two Temples and the other tragedies that had befallen the Jewish people during this month. During the month of *Av* we reflect on the things that we do not have. By minimizing joy during the month of *Av*, we are able to focus on the cause of all the tragedies, which have befallen us during this month. If we were to be involved with joyous activities during the month of *Av* (as during any other time of the year) we would not be able to focus and appreciate our loss thus not being able correct our situation.

What is the focus of our celebration during the month of *Adar*? On an obvious level, we celebrate and rejoice that *Hashem* saved us from imminent destruction. The question is – why did *Hashem* save the Jewish people? *Mordechai*, the leader of the Jewish people, instructed them not to attend the feast of King *Achashveirosh*, which was the precursor to the decree against the Jews. Nevertheless the Jews did not heed his warnings and attended the feast. Did *Hashem* save the Jewish people because they were deserving of His help?

Gemara quoting the verse of the *Megillah*: “*La Yehudim hoisa ohra v’simcha v’sasson v’kor.*” The verse can mean that after the miracle of *Purim* the Jews recommitted themselves to *Torah* which is (*Ohr* “light”) to (*sasson* “joy”) which is circumcision and *v’kor*, which is the *mitzvah* of wearing *Tefillin*. Evidently it is indicated that before the miracle of *Purim* the Jews were deficient of all of these *mitzvos*. Nevertheless we see that *Hashem* saved the Jewish people – why?

Maharal of Prague citing the *Chazal*: *Yom Kippurim* (the Day of Atonement) can also be interpreted as *Yom Kee Purim* (a day like *Purim*). Seemingly one would think that each of these two days is the antithesis of the other. *Yom Kippur* is the most solemn day during which we fast and we pray for atonement; whereas *Purim* is a day of rejoicing, feasting and indulgence in physical pleasure.

Maharal: What is the common ground between *Yom Kippur* and *Purim*? *Yom Kippur* is a day in which we focus on our spirituality and are completely not distracted from repentance. During *Yom Kippur* we understand our relationship with G-d and we reflect on His greatness and our own insignificance. We believe that

because of our special relationship with G-d that He will forgive the sins of the Jewish people.

On *Purim*, we are also cognizant of our special relationship with G-d. *Hashem* saved the Jewish people from annihilation not because of our devoutness or our level of observance, but rather because we are His children, His people and we have a special relationship with Him. Just as during *Yom Kippur* we have that level of understanding of our relationship with *Hashem* so too do we have this clarity on *Purim*.

At Sinai, *Hashem* coerced the Jews to accept the *Torah* (the Oral Law) by holding a mountain over their head with the threat of destruction if they do not accept. Out of fear, the Jewish people accepted the *Torah*. We read in the *Megillas Esther* (the Book of *Esther*), "*Keemu v'kiblu*" (they fulfilled and accepted [the *Torah*]). This

signifies that on *Purim* after *Hashem* saved the Jews from annihilation, they reaffirmed their acceptance of *Torah* and accepted the *Torah* upon themselves as a result of their love.

On *Purim* the Jewish people accepted the *Torah* out of love for *Hashem* and not out of fear because they understood that *Hashem* valued them. The Jews comprehended that the only reason why *Hashem* saved them from destruction was out of their special relationship with G-d. From this, we can appreciate and understand why we celebrate during the month of *Adar*. It is during this month that we understood how much *Hashem* values us despite our shortcomings. By appreciating how much *Hashem* values us, regardless of our failings, we will come to know that whatever *Hashem* wants for us is in our best interest and not for His own sake.



Yad Avraham Institute