

THE EXPONENTIAL VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS PART OF **THE WHOLE**



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YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Pekudei

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The Mishkan: How Was It Raised?

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Why the Vessels Were Built Before the Mishkan

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Chet HaEigel Was a Turning Point

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Betzalel was the Shaliach for Bnei Yisroel to Build the Mishkan

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Transcending Ego & Recognizing Truth

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1. In Heaven, Moshe was told by G-d, that his people had become corrupt (Idolatry).
2. The Egyptian rabble had instigated the worship of the golden calf.
3. Moshe had allowed them to leave Egypt with the Jewish People.
4. It was within his power to have stopped them from leaving; he did not.
5. There was a claim against Moshe for his endorsement.
6. When Moshe saw the golden calf he smashed the tablets at the foot of the mountain.
7. The breaking of the Tablets was an annulment of the relationship with G-d.
8. It was a retroactive revocation.
9. Moshe chose this location to break the Tablets because that was exactly where they had unequivocally accepted the Torah.
10. Moshe supplicated G-d for forgiveness.
11. G-d offered Moshe the opportunity to become the beginning of a new Jewish People.
12. Moshe: If a nation cannot stand on the merit of the 3 Holy Patriarchs, it cannot stand on the merit of one.
13. Moshe's humility: Knowing G-d wanted His glory to be through the descendants of the Patriarchs.

An Intense Drive Supersedes Barriers

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1. Enormous wealth, given by the Jewish people, was needed to build the Mishkan.
2. Midrash: The least amount of wealth taken out of Egypt was 10 pack animals laden with gold & silver.
3. The spoils of the sea were greater than the spoils of Egypt.
4. Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh: two classifications of people participated in building the Mishkan.
5. Those inspired by their hearts & those of generous spirit.
6. The "inspired by their hearts" are acclaimed as men of stature; not so- "the generous of spirit."
7. The individual who is inspired gives beyond his means - he is taken by the objective.
8. The one motivated by generosity gives to the point where it does not infringe on him personally.
9. Avraham, our Patriarch, rose early to go to the Akeida and hitched his own donkey.
10. Avraham was 137 years old and had servants; why prepare his own donkey for the trek?
11. Bilaam, prophet of the nations - pompous, self-centered, and arrogant, rose early and hitched his donkey to curse the Jewish people.
12. Midrash: Intense love & rabid hate disrupt protocol.
13. When consumed with love or hate, all that exists, despite who you are, is the objective to be addressed.

Definitive Law As Catapult

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1. Moshe assembles the entire Jewish People to teach the laws of Shabbos.
2. Midrash: G-d says, "Gather large assemblies of Jews - so that future generations will learn from you to assemble large assemblies of Jews to teach them what is forbidden and what is permitted - so that I should be extolled among my children."
3. Why? It is possible to say that large numbers of Jews studying Torah is a sanctification of G-d?
4. It appears the Jews are actually praising G-d.
5. There is a positive Commandment to love G-d with all your heart, soul, and assets.
6. How does one achieve this level of love?
7. Gemara: One comes to love G-d through dissemination of Torah to students & engaging in its subject matter.
8. One can only have a true sense of G-d through the study of Torah and its dissemination.
9. When taught the definitive law of the forbidden and permitted, it touches the Jew so causing him to extol G-d.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Pekudei



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The Far Reaching Effects of Integrity

Torah: “These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle...”
Moshe had given a reckoning/accounting of how the materials of the *Mishkan* were invested.

Midrash: “It is written, ‘A man who is faithful (*ish emunah*) has great blessing. Whoever is trustworthy/of great integrity, G-d brings through him blessing. One who is not of integrity and hurries to amass wealth, he will not be vindicated.” The *Midrash* continues: “*Ish emunah*” is referring to *Moshe* because blessing came upon whatever he oversaw and was engaged in, because he was one of great integrity...” King Solomon is telling us that blessing emanates from an individual who is faithful, truthful and honest. Why is this so?

The *Torah* describes the Holy Ark as something that was cast in pure gold on the inside as well as on the outside. The Ark contained the tablets, the broken tablets, and the *Torah* Scroll.

Gemara: The symbolism of the Ark having an inlay of pure gold on the inside and outside is to teach us that only the person who is qualified to be classified as a

“*Talmud Chacham – Torah Sage*” is one who is as pure on the inside as he appears on the outside – a person of integrity and sincerity. It is interesting to note that gold (because of its reddish color) represents fire/the Attribute of Justice (*Midas HaDin*).

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: The *Torah* itself is referred to by King Solomon in *Proverbs* as “(Absolute) Truth.” Thus, just as *Torah* is perfect and exact, so too is the Attribute of Justice. On the other hand, the Attribute of Mercy is not Absolute Truth because, although one is deserving of punishment, G-d delays retribution and holds punishment in abeyance in order to give the individual the opportunity to do teshuvah (repent).

Torah itself has relevance only to Absolute Truth. Only the true *Torah Sage* (*Talmud Chacham*) who is pure and sincere can be the repository to contain the *Torah* which is truth. In essence the *Torah Sage* is the equivalent of the Holy Ark.

Moshe Rabbeinu is identified by King Solomon as “*ish emunos*” who had the capability to give blessing and all that was associated with him was blessed. Because

Moshe was an embodiment of truth, the pillar of *Torah*, he qualified to be the conduit of blessing. Just as all blessing emanates from G-d, whose signet is truth (*chosamoh emmes*), so too whoever reflects that characteristic will be a source of blessing. The more one lives his life in conformance with *Torah* the more he will experience G-d's blessing.

Seeing is Not Necessarily Believing

Torah: After the *Mishkan* was completed the Jewish people brought all of its parts before Moshe.

Midrash citing a verse from *Proverbs*: "The false lips which speak about the *tzaddik* shall be widowed (dispelled) and proven false."

Midrash: Moshe was engaged in the building of the *Mishkan* for a period of three months. After the *Mishkan* was completed there was a group of deprecators/scoffers (*leitzim*) who mocked Moshe saying, "We completed the *Mishkan*. Where is the *Shechina* (Divine Presence)?" Moshe explained, "The *Mishkan* will be fully erected in the month of *Nissan*, which is a special month because it was then that *Avraham* our Patriarch was informed by G-d about *Yitzchak* his son." On the first day of the month of *Nissan* G-d said, "Now the lips of those who speak falsehood shall be dispelled." All those who had initially deprecated Moshe began to transport the elements of the *Mishkan* to him."

After the Jewish people received the *Torah* at Sinai, they sinned with the Golden Calf when Moshe had not descended from the mountain. Moshe beseeched G-d on their behalf to be forgiven. Had it not been for Moshe's supplication, the Jewish people would have been destroyed and a new nation would have emanated from him. When Moshe descended from the mountain his face radiated with such an intensity of holiness (*kedushah*) that the people could not gaze upon him. Moshe was the intermediary between the Jewish people and G-d.

In addition to all of this, Moshe had taken the Jews out of Egypt and performed all of the subsequent miracles – such as the Splitting of the Sea – leading up to the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai. Despite Moshe's credibility and accomplishment, there was a segment of Jews that deprecated and questioned his capability and motive. How could this be?

Mishlei (Proverbs): "A deprecator (*leitz*) you should smite, but a fool (*pesee*)/hedonist could be made wise."

Midrash: "A deprecator (*leitz*) you should smite (*sakaeh*)" refers to the Amalekite people and "a fool (*pesee*) could be made wise (*yaarim*)" refers to *Yisro*. One cannot enter into a dialogue with a *leitz* (deprecator) because he does not have the capacity to appreciate and process properly something that has intrinsic worth. He is spiritually blocked and shut down.

Chazal: At the time of the splitting of the Sea, the Presence of G-d was palpable to the degree that even the maidservant who was present was able to sense Him as a reality. As a result of the splitting of the Sea, the nations of the world trembled and were in awe of the Jewish people. They realized that the Jews had an intimate relationship with G-d as a son has to his father. Despite this fact, the Amalekites attacked the Jewish people soon after the splitting of the Sea. How could the Amalekites consider attacking G-d's people when it was so evident and obvious that they would incur His Wrath as the Egyptians had?

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The Amalekite's attack on the Jewish people is analogous to a person entering into a scolding bath where others are too frightened to approach it out of fear of being burned. However, if a fool should immerse himself in the bath, although he is scolded, nevertheless others will perceive the bath as approachable – despite the fact that they will be scolded to no lesser degree. Similarly although the Jewish people were revered and feared by the world, who stood in trepidation of them, after they were attacked by the Amalekites the aura of the Jew was diminished.

Something that was so blatantly clear to the world, the Amalekite people did not have the capacity to process or appreciate what they had heard. The Jews that deprecated Moshe and questioned his integrity after experiencing the Sinai event and witnessing Moshe's holiness and relationship with G-d, had no capacity whatsoever to appreciate spirituality. Although the scoffers had no basis for their accusation against Moshe, there had to be a basis for their warped perception of their own reality.

Torah: "Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I can dwell in your midst." The *Mishkan* was the location in which the Divine Presence dwelled. The *Mishkan* was the medium through which G-d's Presence dwelled among the Jewish people.

The deprecators believed that since they had sinned with the Golden Calf, regardless of their repentance and *Moshe's* encouragement, they could not be reinstated to a level that G-d would dwell in their midst.

Just as they had forfeited their special spiritual status (crowns of spirituality) as a result of the Golden Calf, so too they were no longer qualified to have an intimate relationship with G-d. Therefore, *Moshe's* concept to erect a *Mishkan* within which G-d would allow His Presence to dwell was something of folly. This was confirmed in their minds when *Moshe* delayed the erection of the *Mishkan* until *Nissan*. On the first day of *Nissan* it was proven that the Jewish people were in fact reinstated. Thus, "The false lips which speak about the *tzaddik* shall be widowed (dispelled) and proven false."

The Inherent Value of Torah and Its Study

Midrash Tanchuma: "Reb Shimon Bar Yochai says, 'There is no testament other than the *Torah* itself.' As it states in the verse, "This is the Testament, the Decrees, and the Statutes..." It is analogous to a king who has a daughter. He builds for her a palace, which contains within it an inner chamber that is within seven other chambers. The King announces, "Anyone who approaches my daughter, it is as if he approaches me." (The word "*Mishkan*" is derived from the word "*shochein* – to dwell.")

The *Torah* refers to the *Mishkan* in two contexts: "*Mishkan Ha'aidus* – the Sanctuary of Testament (location that contains the *Torah/Luchos*)" and "*Mishkan Hashem* – the Sanctuary of G-d (location of the Divine Presence). G-d (the King) says, "If anyone were to disgrace My daughter (the *Torah*) it is as if he disgraced Me. If one enters into a synagogue and disgraces My *Torah*, He is disgracing My honor..."

In the Sixth Chapter of *Pirkei Avos* (*Ethics of Our Fathers*): "Reb Yehoshua Ben Levy says, 'Every day a Heavenly voice emanates from *Choreiv* (Sinai) and says, "Woe to humanity because of the disgrace of *Torah*. Whoever does not engage in *Torah* (study) is considered rebuked/shunned."

According to the *Ashkenazic* tradition, the "*Yekum Purkan*" is recited on *Shabbos*. It is a prayer that beseeches G-d to provide health, children, good eyesight, sustenance, etc. In this prayer, one requests from G-d success and good fortune in the material sense. What relevance does this prayer have to the *Shabbos*?

Reb Yehudah Chasid: *Shabbos* is a time that G-d, the King of Kings, enters into the home of every Jew. If a king enters into one's home, one would be consumed with pride and joy for having the opportunity and privilege to host the king. He would not be distracted or preoccupied with anything other than the present situation. If he would, this would be a clear indication that he does not appreciate or understand the value of the king. It is considered disrespect and thus deserving of punishment.

If a Jew has any sense or inkling of the meaning of G-d, the Omnipotent Being, gracing his home, he should be overjoyed and only occupied with the spirituality of *Shabbos*. Since the average Jew does not internalize or appreciate G-d's presence or the sanctity of the *Shabbos* in this manner, it is considered disrespect, thus causing the individual to deserve punishment. One recites the *Yekum Purkan* prayer on the *Shabbos* to beseech G-d to ensure him of the blessing despite his failing.

Reb Shimon Bar Yochai: The *Mishkan*, which contained G-d's presence is identified as "the *Mishkan* of Testament" to indicate that in essence G-d and *Torah* are one. When one engages in *Torah* it is as if he is engaging directly with G-d. If this is so, then how could one not engage in *Torah* study if it is within one's ability to do so? Thus *Pirkei Avos* teaches us that the one who does not engage in *Torah* is considered rebuked and shunned.

Torah: "I (G-d) will meet you from between the two Cherubs." The Cherubs were located on the cover of the Holy Ark (the *Aron*). Its location was the Holy of Holies which was the place where G-d's Presence dwelled. The Ark was the vessel that contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the broken tablets, and the *Torah* scroll that was written by *Moshe*. G-d communicated to *Moshe* from the location that contained the *Torah*. From this we understand that G-d communicates with the Jew through His holy *Torah*. One who engages in it properly will have an understanding of what G-d wants from the Jew.

Chofetz Chaim in *Chomas Ha'Daas* citing *Sifri*: In the first paragraph of the *Shema* it states, "You shall love G-d with all of your heart..." and then it continues "you shall teach your children (students) and speak in them (*Torah*)." What is the relevance between the *mitzvah* to love G-d and to study *Torah*? A Jew can only have a sense of G-d when he studies *Torah* because this is what gives him the capacity to appreciate G-d and to love Him.

Comprehending The Innateness of the Mishkan

Torah: Regarding the making of the Priestly Vestments (*Bigdei Kehunah*), “You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aaron your brother, for glory and splendor.” Aaron and his sons wore the Priestly vestments when they were installed as the *Kohanim* by *Moshe* on the eighth day of the *Mishkan*. Prior to this, *Moshe* acted as the *Kohen* and officiated for the first seven days of the *Mishkan*.

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: “When *Moshe* officiated as the *Kohen*, what garment did he wear? He wore a white tunic.”

Shalah HaKadosh: When *Adam* was created by G-d, his physicality was spiritualized to the degree that he radiated holiness. His radiance was such that the angels confused it with the radiance of G-d Himself. After *Adam* sinned, his radiance was dimmed and his physicality was no longer fully integrated with his spirituality. Consequently, *Adam* assumed the status of a physical being that had no relevance to his original dimension of person.

Shalah HaKadosh: Initially the vestments of man were his physicality. His physicality was the equivalent of the Holy Vestments because man was truly holy. However when *Adam* ate from the Tree of Knowledge his physical vestment became invalidated because of the impurity that was introduced into his being. Therefore he no longer qualified to stand before G-d to officiate as His *Kohen*. Thus, the Priestly Vestments were needed to compensate for the physicality of man that was invalidated.

This is what is meant when G-d said regarding the vestments that were made for *Aaron* that they were for “splendor and glory.” However *Moshe* was qualified to officiate in the *Mishkan* while only wearing a white tunic. He did not need to wear the Priestly Vestments. Why was this so? *Moshe*’s dimension of physical being was so spiritualized that he had a semblance of the status of *Adam* before the sin. His physicality qualified as the vestment for his soul. He did not need to compensate with the Priestly Vestments to validate his service.

There is similarity between the *Kohen* who officiates in the *Mishkan*/Temple and *Adam*’s state of being in the Garden of *Eden*.

Rabbeinu Asher z’tl in his commentary citing a *Midrash*: Every aspect of the *Mishkan* corresponds to the days of Creation.

Midrash: On the Fifth Day of Creation, G-d created the birds. Similarly, about the Cherubs on the cover of the Holy Ark in the *Mishkan* the *Torah* states, “their wings extended.” On the Sixth Day of Creation G-d created man. What corresponds to the creation of man? The *Torah* states, “You shall bring your brother *Aaron* close...” Thus, the installation of *Aaron* in the context of the *Mishkan* corresponds to the creation of man in the Garden of *Eden*. Meaning, the level of qualification that was required to validate the *Kohen* was similar to that of *Adam* in the Garden.

The *Kohen* needed replicate the pristine spiritual state of man, *Adam*, before the sin. This was brought about with the Priestly Vestments. We see from this that the *Mishkan* was not only a microcosm of existence but it was a replication of the original pristine Creation that was brought about by G-d. Thus, it is understandable why it was the source of such unlimited blessing.

The Evolution of Holiness

Torah: The copper that was used to make the laver (*Kiyor*) came from the copper mirrors that were used by the Jewish women in Egypt. The *Torah* refers to these mirrors as “*maaros ha’tzovos*” (the mirrors of the legions).

Rashi citing the *Midrash*: The daughters of Israel had in their possession copper mirrors, which they would look into when they would beautify themselves. Even these mirrors (that were necessary for their beautification) they did not withhold from the building of the *Mishkan*. *Moshe* detested them because they were made for the Evil Inclination.

G-d said to *Moshe*, “Accept them because these are dearest to Me of all, for by means of them, the women established many legions of offspring in Egypt. When their husbands would be exhausted from the hard labor imposed upon them by the Egyptians, the women would go and bring their husbands food and drink, and feed them. Then they would take the copper mirrors and each would view herself with her husband in the mirror, and entice him with words, saying, “I am more attractive than you.” By these means, they would bring their husbands to desire, and would cohabit with them and conceive and give birth there.”

Torah: In addition to the mirrors, the personal jewelry of the Jewish women was given for the building of the *Mishkan*; among them were bracelets, nose rings, and

other jewelry/ornaments that were worn on the lower extremities of the woman's body. The purpose of the jewelry, especially those that were worn on the lower extremities, was specifically to entice the male for cohabitation. These ornaments were smelted down and provided the gold that was needed for the *Mishkan*. Why did *Moshe* not reject these ornaments for the same reason that he had initially rejected the copper mirrors?

The foundation is the most vital element of a building or legacy. For example, the Patriarchs went to great length to ensure that their offspring married appropriate mates because of its ultimate impact on the qualitative spiritual development of the Jewish people. Canaanite women did not qualify to be the mates/spouses of the Patriarchs because they descend from *Cham* – the cursed son of *Noach*. As *Avraham* had said to *Eliezer*, “Your daughter is not eligible for my son, *Yitzchak*, because you are of cursed stock and my son is of a blessed stock (because he descends from *Shem* – the blessed son of *Noach*). Something cursed cannot cleave to something that is blessed.”

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Basera*: According to one opinion that the sons of *Yaakov*, although they were the Tribes of Israel, were permitted to marry Canaanite women. If it was considered inappropriate for the Patriarchs to marry Canaanites, why was it permitted to their children? Once the foundation of the Jewish people was established through the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, who all descended from *Shem* (the blessed son of *Noach*), the future of the Jewish people was secure. However, if the foundation of the Jewish people was flawed and deficient, then that deficiency would manifest itself and permeate the Jewish people in an adverse manner until the end of time.

The *Kiyor* (Laver) was the vessel that was used to ritualize the hands and feet of the *Kohen* so that he should be qualified to officiate the holy service of G-d (*avodah*). Even if the *Kohen* was to wear his holy vestments, if his hands and feet were not first ritualized, his service was considered invalid. Thus, the vessel that initiated the qualification of the *Kohen* was the *Kiyor*. *Moshe* believed that something so fundamental and crucial to

the qualification of the *Kohen* should not be in any way associated with anything which has relevance to the evil inclination. He therefore rejected the mirrors and considered them “detestable” in this particular context.

G-d explained to *Moshe* that had it not been for these mirrors, there would not be a Jewish people. The legions of Jews who left Egypt as G-d's people were initiated through these mirrors. Therefore it was appropriate and correct that these mirrors should be used to initiate and qualify the *Kohen* for the service. However, the gold jewelry contributed by the women was not used for building the foundation of the *Mishkan*. It was only part of the totality of the *Mishkan*.

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: “Where do we find *Mordechai* alluded to in the *Torah*?”

The *Gemara* answers: “A primary ingredient among the spices that was needed to produce the anointing oil was “*Mor dror* – pure myrrh.”

Targum Unkalus interprets, ‘*Mor dror*’ (which is Hebrew) into the Aramaic as ‘*mari dachya*.’” Thus, the *Torah* alludes to *Mordechai* through one of the essential ingredients of the anointing oil. What relevance does *Mordechai* have to the anointing oil alluded to in this context?

It is interesting to note that after the *Mishkan* was erected and all of its unique and intricate elements were completed, it only became functional after the anointing oil was applied. The anointing oil gave meaning and value to the *Mishkan*. Without the anointing oil, the *Mishkan* would be ineffective. Just as the anointing oil gave value and meaning to the *Mishkan*, it was *Mordechai* who galvanized the Jewish people in *Shushan*. He united them and instructed them to fast, do *teshuvah* (repent), and meticulously adhere to the *mitzvos*. The Jewish people under the reign of *Achashverosh* (Persian Emperor) did not fulfill even the most fundamental obligation of tefillin and circumcision. It was *Mordechai* who motivated the Jewish people to understand and appreciate their relationship with G-d and thus correct all the areas of their failings. Through *Mordechai's* leadership, the decree of *Haman* to annihilate the Jewish people was annulled.



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