

Yad Avraham Institute
WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARIES SERIES
The Portion of
Pekudei

March 6, 2008

Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita

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About the Yad Avraham Institute

The Yad Avraham is a Torah learning institute located in midtown Manhattan. Classes are offered every day during the week starting at 5:50am and throughout the day. Classes in Chumash, Halacha, Hashkofa, Gemara, and general topics are well attended by businessmen, professionals, and students. The Yad Avraham invites you to participate in our extensive offerings of classes and events.

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Yad Avraham Institute
New York
March 6, 2008

B"H

Pekudei

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

Dean

1. Understanding What We no Longer Have

The Midrash cites a verse from Psalms, “Hashem, I love the shelter of Your House and the place of the residence (Mishkan) of Your Glory...” Reb Shimon Bar Yochai explains, ‘From this we see that the lower Sanctuary corresponds to the heavenly Sanctuary....’ Reb Yaakov B’Reb Yossi said, ‘Why does King David say ‘I love the shelter of Your House...?’ It is to indicate that the Mishkan itself corresponds to the creation of existence.’ ...As it states regarding the creation of man, ‘**So G’d created Man in His image...**’ Where do we find the corresponding element for ‘Man’ in the Mishkan? It is the High Priest. (Just as Adam was created to serve G’d on earth, so too was Aaron chosen to be the officiant of G’d in the Mishkan)...’ The Midrash continues to offer many other correlations between the Mishkan and the creation of the world.

The Gemara in Tractate Megilah tells us that the joy that G’d had experienced when the Mishkan was inaugurated was no less than the joy He had at the time of creation. Based on the Midrash, we are able to understand that since the Mishkan in its essence is the equivalent of the creation of the world, G’d therefore experienced the same joy that He had at the time of Creation.

The initial intent of Creation was for G’d’s Presence to dwell in the physical realm with Man to be His officiant. However, because Adam had failed by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, physical existence was no longer fit for the Divine Presence. By sinning, Adam putrefied the world that was created to be a pristine setting for G’d. After the Jewish people had sinned with the Golden Calf, G’d forgave and reinstated them through Moshe’s supplications. Consequently, G’d said, “Build for Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell in your midst.” The Mishkan was the location in which G’d would dwell in the physical world. The Mishkan was a replication of the original setting of existence to

accommodate G’d’s Presence. Therefore, every aspect of the Mishkan had to reflect all aspects of Creation.

The Midrash continues, “Why is the Mishkan the equivalent of heaven and earth? The verse states, ‘**I call heaven and earth today to bear witness...**’ Just as heaven and earth will bear witness for the Jewish people if they are adhering to principles of the Torah, so too will the Mishkan bear witness on their behalf. As the Torah refers to the Mishkan as ‘**Sanctuary of Testimony (Mishkan ha eidus)**.’ The verse states, ‘**These are the reckonings of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Testimony...**’ Why does the Torah repeat the word ‘Sanctuary (Mishkan)’ twice? Reb Shumel explains, ‘It is alluding to the destruction of the First and Second Temple.’” If the Jewish people have the Mishkan or the Temple in their midst it is an indication that they are conforming to the principles of the Torah. However, if the Temple is destroyed, then it is a confirmation that the Jewish people have transgressed. Thus, the Mishkan/Temple is the equivalent of heaven and earth.

The Jerusalem Talmud tells us that in every generation that the Temple is not rebuilt, it is as if it were destroyed in that generation. This is because if the generation was truly worthy of having G’d’s Presence in its midst, the Temple would have been rebuilt. The only reason it has not been rebuilt is because of the lack of worthiness. Since the members of every generation, through their choices, could have had the Temple reinstated and they did not, it is considered as if they had destroyed it.

The Mishna in Tractate Yomah tells us that from the time that Shimon HaTzaddik had passed away until the destruction of the Temple, the crimson cloth that was displayed on Yom Kippur, did not turn white. Crimson representing sin, remaining unchanged, is an indication that they were not forgiven. If the Jewish people were forgiven for their sins on Yom Kippur the crimson cloth miraculously turned white. Despite the fact that they had

the Temple, the cloth did not turn white. This was an indication that the Jewish people were spiritually failing. Because they did not correct and improve their ways and continued their spiritual descent, ultimately the Temple was destroyed. The fact the Temple no longer exists is a confirmation that the behavior of the Jewish people is not sufficient for G'd to reinstate them to their original relationship.

2. The Secret to be Blessed

The Torah states, **“These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle...”** The Midrash states, “This is the understanding of the verse in Proverbs, ‘A man who is faithful has great blessings (*ish emunos rav Berachos*). Whoever is faithful/trustworthy (*ne’eman*), G'd will bestow upon him many blessings. The verse continues, ‘The one who is aggressively pursuing wealth, will not be vindicated.’ Who is the man who is trustworthy (*ne’eman*)? It is Moshe. In whatever pursuit he was involved, his handiwork was blessed. Why was it blessed? Because he was *ne’eman*. Who is the one who was consumed with the pursuit of wealth? It was Korach. Although he was a Levy, he wanted to possess more than what he was given, which was the High Priesthood.” King Solomon tells us that if one possesses the characteristic of faithfulness, he is the conduit for blessing. Why does this characteristic foster blessing?

The Torah tells us that when Moshe depicted G'd to the Jewish people in the Portion of Haazinu, he refers to Him as, **“The faithful G'd, without inequity...”** We find in the conclusion of the second blessing of the Amidah (Silent Prayer), G'd is referred to as the “*Ne’eman*.” As we say, “And You are faithful (*ne’eman*) to resuscitate the dead.” The characteristic of G'd is that He is trustworthy/fair (*ne’eman*). He is consistent in His Goodness and Faithful to His Word.

Regarding Avraham, our Patriarch, the verse in Nechemia states, “You are the G'd who had taken Avram from Ur Kasdim and found that his heart was faithful (*ne’eman*) before You.” Avraham had selflessly sacrificed for G'd. Even when G'd had asked him to take his beloved son Yitzchak, who had been born to him in his old age, as a sacrifice Avraham did not hesitate. In fact, he responded with alacrity. As it states, **“Avraham rose early in the morning...”** Despite the fact that G'd had promised him that Yitzchak was destined to be the future Patriarch of the Jewish people, Avraham did not question G'd. He followed G'd's dictate unimpeded.

Initially G'd was the only One who had the power to convey blessing. However, because Avraham had assumed His characteristic of *ne’eman* (*faithfulness*), he was established by G'd to be the one to convey blessing upon the world. This is the meaning of verse in Proverbs, “A man who is faithful has great blessings (*ish emunos rav Berachos*).” Similarly, because Moshe had been faithful to G'd, he assumed His characteristic of *ne’eman*. He was fully dedicated in every aspect of serving his Master.

The characteristic of *ne’eman* (*faithfulness*) is rooted in the characteristic Truth. One who is truthful will be faithful and trustworthy. The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos tells us “the signet of G'd is Truth.” When an individual assumes the characteristic of uncompromised Truth, he reflects the characteristic of G'd. Because of his commonality with his Maker, he becomes the source of blessing. Chazal tell us “Truth has legs, falsehood does not have legs.” Meaning, Truth will be eternal and will ultimately prevail; however, falsehood is temporary and will ultimately fail.

The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin that the word “Amen,” which is an acronym for “*Kail Melech Neeman - G'd is the Trustworthy King*.” This is the confirmation that is said after a blessing recited by another. When one assumes the characteristic of truthfulness, he will be faithful and thus be a conduit for G'd's blessings.

3. What Dictates the Psyche of Man

The Torah states, **“All of the work of the Tabernacle (Mishkan), the Tent of the Meeting, was completed...They brought the Tabernacle to Moshe, the Tent and all its utensils...”** Rashi cites Chazal, “Why did the Jewish people bring the Tabernacle to Moshe to erect? It was because of the weight of the beams that they were not able to erect it. Moshe had not participated in the building (development) of the Mishkan. G'd, therefore, reserved the erecting of the Mishkan for him so that he should complete its building. It was humanly impossible to erect the Mishkan because of the weight of the beams (*krashim*). Even Moshe initially did not understand how he would be able to lift the beams. G'd had responded, ‘You take the initiative to lift the beams and the Mishkan will be raised through a miracle.’”

The Torah tells us in the Portion of Terumah that the metals that were needed for the Mishkan were gold, silver, and copper. The Midrash tells us that the three metals allude to three settings of the service of G'd. “Gold alludes the Mishkan, which was built by Moshe because it

was beloved to G'd as gold." Another Midrash tells us, "The Mishkan is referred to as 'the Mishkan of Moshe' because he selflessly sacrificed for it." Moshe toiled for the Mishkan so that it should have the capacity to contain G'd's Presence. Every aspect of the Mishkan reflects his self-sacrifice. Since Moshe was perceived and understood to be the most spiritually attuned person, who had brought about countless miracles and was the conduit for the Torah to be given to the Jewish people, how is it possible that they would not want Moshe to be included in the building of the Mishkan? It is clear from Chazal, that if they could have erected the beams, they would have done so and completed the Mishkan without Moshe's participation. The Mishkan was only the most spiritual edifice of all the sanctuaries that were built because of Moshe's participation. If this is so obviously and clear, why was he not included?

Moshe's older brother Aaron was a uniquely spiritual and humble person whose level of self-negation was on an extraordinary level. The Mishna in Ethic of Our Fathers that Aaron, "loved peace and pursued peace." The Gemara tells us that Aaron negated himself to such a degree in the pursuit of peace that he would allow himself to be disgraced to bring it about harmony between husband and wife. There was an incident where a husband made a vow, "You cannot benefit from my possessions unless you spit in the eye of the High Priest." Aaron, becoming aware of this tenuous situation, approached the woman and told her that he had a certain eye ailment that could only be rectified with saliva. He thus asked her to spit in his would ask her to spit in his eye so that he could be healed. Although Aaron's behavior was an indication of his unusual level of humility, he did not consider including his brother Moshe in the building of the Mishkan. He did not halt its building so that his brother should be summoned to participate.

Moshe was the most humble person to ever live. He was totally negated to G'd as he had said, "*Nachnu mah?* – what are we?" Meaning, that because Moshe had recognized the omnipotence of G'd with such clarity, he was negated in His Presence. Moshe's sole focus and objective was only to bring about the greatest level of glory to G'd. Every aspect of his existence was fully invested in this endeavor. Every other Jew, regardless of his greatness and level of humility, had some degree of self-interest. Thus, his focus was occluded. Although the perspective of the Jewish people was one of spirituality, which was the sole interest of their lives, nevertheless, because of this slight degree of self-interest, they wanted to be beneficiaries of G'd's Glory. Only Moshe, because of his own humility, was able to appreciate and understand

what was in the best interest of the Jewish people. He therefore, allowed them to participate in the building of the Mishkan because he was concerned that his involvement would deny them of this spiritual opportunity. In fact, the Jewish people acted with such zeal that they had completed the Mishkan without leaving anything for Moshe to do. They would have even erected it if they would have been able to do so. G'd would not assist them in its erection because it was important for Moshe to complete its building.

The Mishna tells us in Ethics of our Fathers, "Where there are no men, you shall be the man." Meaning, if there is no one who is qualified to assume a task or responsibility on behalf of the Jewish people, one should come forth and assume that responsibility. It is not a time to display humility. If in fact there are people who are qualified to be effective, and thus one's participation is not required, then for the sake of humility he should remain in the background. This statement is relevant even within the context of spirituality. Moshe, because of his unequalled level of humility, only participated in the building of the Mishkan when it was it was absolutely necessary.

4. The Necessity of Mercy within the Realm of Spirituality

The Torah tells us that after the Mishkan was completed, the Jewish people brought it to Moshe for him to erect. The Torah states, "**Like everything that Hashem commanded Moshe, so did the Children of Israel perform all the labor.**" Meaning, Bezalel and the Jewish people had followed G'd's instructions precisely regarding the materials and specifications of the Mishkan. In addition, they had infused every aspect of the Mishkan with its proper intent so that it should function as a Sanctuary for G'd's Presence. The Torah continues, "**Moshe saw the entire work...And Moshe blessed them.**" Rashi in his commentaries explains, "Moshe had blessed the Jewish people saying, 'May it be the Will of G'd that the Divine Presence should dwell in your handiwork. May the pleasantness of G'd be upon us.'"

G'd had commanded the Jewish people saying, "**Make for Me a Sanctuary (Mishkan) so that I may dwell in your midst.**" They had adhered selflessly to all of the specifications in all that they had been instructed to bring about. They had infused the Mishkan with an intent that had established it to be a microcosm of Creation. As Chazal tell us that every aspect of the Mishkan corresponded to the seven days of Creation. The Gemara in Tractate Megilah tells us that the joy that G'd had

experienced when the Mishkan was inaugurated on the eighth day was no less than the joy He had at the time of the completion of Creation. If the Jewish people had done exactly as G'd had prescribed, then why was it necessary for Moshe to bless them in a way that would allow the Divine Presence to dwell in this holy edifice? It would seem that the natural consequence of following G'd's instruction would qualify the location to be the dwelling place for the Divine Presence. Evidently, Moshe's blessing was a necessary catalyst to bring this about. Why was this so?

The Torah tells us that on the eighth day of the inauguration of the Mishkan, when it was established on a permanent basis, Aaron began officiating as the High Priest. After he had completed the service of the sacrifices in the Mishkan, the heavenly fire that was meant to descend and consume the sacrifices did not. The heavenly fire would have been a confirmation that the Divine Presence dwelt in the Mishkan and that Aaron was the qualified officiant of G'd. Rashi cites Chazal who explain, "Aaron performed the service but the Shechina (Divine Presence) did not descend. Aaron was pained by this. He said to his brother Moshe, 'I know G'd is angry with me (because Aaron had participated in the sin of the Golden Calf). It is because I am not qualified to be the High Priest that the Fire did not descend. Moshe, my brother how could you have embarrassed me?' Moshe then said to Aaron, 'Let us enter into the Tent of the Meeting and supplicate G'd.' Consequently a heavenly fire descended and consumed the offering." Aaron had been installed as the High Priest because G'd had commanded Moshe to do so. Evidently, he was qualified for this position. If this is so, why did the Fire not descend? Why was it necessary for Moshe and Aaron to evoke G'd's Mercy to bring about what was supposed to happen? This occurred even after Moshe had given his blessing after the Mishkan had been completed.

We see that in the realm of spirituality, although G'd may Will something to be, it may not necessarily come about. As it is stated in the Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin, although G'd Willed Chizkeyahu, the king of Judah to be Moshiach, the Attribute of Justice intervened with a claim against Chizkeyahu, and therefore it did not come to fruition. Despite the fact that one adheres to G'd exactly as he is commanded to, in order to bring about the intended objective, one needs G'd's Mercy so that there should not be any degree of interference. The Attribute of Justice continuously attempts to prosecute when something of profound spiritual value is about to come into being.

The Midrash tells us that when Avraham was on the way to the Akeidah to bring his beloved son Yitzchak as a sacrifice as G'd had commanded him to do, he was confronted with many obstacles. Suddenly, satan appeared before him as a raging river. It was only as a result of Avraham's supplications that the river ceased and he was able to continue. After an angel called from heaven to Avraham saying, "**Do not stretch out your hand against the lad nor do anything to him...**" he had seen a ram caught in the thicket. Chazal tell us that the ram was there for Avraham to slaughter in the place of his son Yitzchak. The ram began running towards Avraham to be brought as a sacrifice. However, satan, understanding the far-reaching ramifications of the Akeidah, tried to intercept the ram. Thus, it was caught in the thicket.

Moshe understood that regardless of how perfectly the Jewish people had executed G'd's instructions, he needed to supplicate Him in order to evoke His Mercy so that the Mishkan could function as a proper domicile for His presence. We see that Moshe and Aaron needed to further supplicate G'd after the sacrifice had already been brought in order for the heavenly fire to descend.

King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes, "There is no tzaddik (devoutly righteous) in the land who does good and does not sin." Regardless of one's level of righteousness, the slightest imperfection can bring about prosecution. Therefore, one must continuously pray to G'd for His Mercy. The only way one can succeed and advance himself spiritually is with Divine Assistance.

5. The Moment of Truth (from Vayakhel)

The Midrash cites a verse from Ecclesiastes, "The day of one's death is greater than the day of his birth.' Where do we see this? When Miriam was born, although she was the daughter of Amram who was the leading Torah sage of the generation, her greatness was not known until the day of her death. When she passed away the wellspring (that had provided water for the Jewish people in the desert) ceased. When Aaron was born, his greatness was not known. However, when he passed away, the heavenly clouds of glory that were in his merit ceased. When Bezalel was born, his greatness was not known. However, when he was appointed to oversee the building of the Mishkan, the Jewish people appreciated his greatness. As it states, 'Greater is a good name than the most fragrant oil.' His name was greater than Nadav and Avihu, the children of Aaron, although they had been anointed with the anointing oil. (They were struck down by G'd because they had transgressed)."

The verse in Zecharya states, "I removed the three shepherds in one month..." The verse is seemingly telling us that Moshe, Aaron, and Miriam, the three shepherds of Israel passed away in the same month. The Gemara in Tractate Taanis asks, "How do we reconcile this verse with the fact that Moshe, Aaron, and Miriam did not pass away during the same month? Miriam passed away in the month of Nissan. Aaron passed away in the month of Av. Moshe passed away in the month of Adar." The Gemara answers that the verse is informing us that when each of the shepherds had passed away, the gift that had come about in their merit had ceased. However, the gift was immediately reinstated in the merit of Moshe. When Moshe passed away, all three of the gifts had ceased. Thus, it was the equivalent of Moshe, Aaron, and Miriam passing away during the same month. Only then did the Jewish people sense the loss of all the "three shepherds."

Although the Midrash tells us that the day of Miriam's death was greater than the day of her birth because the Jewish people had realized that the wellspring had come about only in her merit; nevertheless, the sense of loss was not felt until they were fully denied of that gift (with Moshe's passing). The same is true regarding Aaron. The Jewish people were able to internalize the loss of the three shepherds only after they were denied the three gifts on a permanent basis. One only truly senses the loss of a great person when the loss is accompanied by something that is denied to the person/people.

If in fact Moshe had sufficient merit for the wellspring and the clouds of glory to be reinstated, why was it necessary for them to cease? It was to give the Jewish people an understanding and appreciation for Miriam and Aaron. It was only in their merit that the water and the protection of the clouds were made available to them. In addition, it was to give an opportunity for the Jewish people to understand that the gifts that they had been given were unrelated to their own worthiness.

When the Jewish people are faced with difficulties it is a time for them to introspect and repent. Life should not be taken for granted. These moments are opportunities for one to improve his shortcomings and address one's potential. Chazal teach us that when G'd denies one something that is seen as one's entitlement, it can be perceived as something very positive. Chazal tell us that the Matriarchs and Patriarchs were initially barren only because G'd desires the supplications of the righteous. They were presented with these circumstances to be able to actualize their spiritual potential.

The Jew must take initiative to provide for his livelihood. Although one's yearly allocation is determined from one Rosh Hashanah to the next, G'd wants the Jew to supplicate Him for his needs. As the Midrash tells us, it is analogous to a king who wants his dedicated subject to approach him every day for his needs. Although the king could have provided his subject with all of his needs at one time, because the king wants his subject to visit him every day, he chooses to give it to him in small increments. What could be understood as something negative is in fact an expression of G'd's love for the Jewish people.

YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Through Friday

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos (Maharal)
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar - Derech Hashem
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud-Tractate Chulin
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna - Rabbi Rovner
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi
2:00pm	Mincha

Special Weekday Classes

Monday

11:30 - 12:30pm Talmud: Megilah
 Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25th FL.)
 Enter on 54th Street

Tuesday

12:10 - 1:10pm Torah Insight Based on the Parsha
 Location: Yad Avraham

Wednesday

11:30 - 12:30 pm Talmud: Megilah
 Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25th FL.)
 Enter on 54th Street

1:00-2:00 pm Daas Tevunos

Location: Yad Avraham

Thursday

11:00 -12:00pm Tehilim with Malbim

Location: Yad Avraham

12:30 - 1:30 pm Talmud: Megilah Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25th FL)