

Yad Avraham Institute
WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARY SERIES
Parshas Terumah
February 22, 2007

Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita

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Putting One's Predicament into Perspective

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
February 22, 2007

B"H

Parshas Terumah

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

Dean

1. The Acquisition of Blessing

The Torah states regarding the building of the Mishkan, "...**Make for Me a Sanctuary – so that I may dwell in your midst.**" The verse in the Portion of Yisro states, "...**wherever I permit My Name to be mentioned I shall come to you and bless you.**" The Midrash tells us that the only location in which the unpronounceable Name of G'd was mentioned was within the Mishkan/Temple. It is there that the Divine Presence dwells and is the source of all blessing.

The Gemara in Tractate Bava Metzia, states, "Blessing can only come upon something that is hidden from the eye, and not upon something which is counted, measured, or weighed." The Gemara presents an application of this principle. If a farmer brings in his harvest and had not yet quantified it and he prays to G'd that blessing should come upon his harvest, it is considered a valid supplication. However, if he had first quantified his harvest prior to his supplication, it is considered a prayer in vain.

The Mishkan was an edifice that was precisely measured at a level of exactness not to be compared. There is no other blueprint that is more specific than that of the Mishkan. Its specifications needed to be met exactly in order to make it viable. Despite this level of exactness, the Mishkan was the ultimate conduit through which all blessing flowed to the Jewish people and the world. This seems to be contradictory to the principle that blessing cannot come upon that which has been quantified. How could the Mishkan be the source of all blessing if in fact it was an edifice that was so precisely measured and quantified?

Maharal of Prague z'tl explains that blessing comes upon that which is not quantified because the concept of "beracha" (blessing) is a spiritual concept. Something that is spiritual has no limitation and is not subject to time, space, or location. Thus, since blessing is of spiritual nature (unlimited) it cannot have any relevance

to something that has been subject to limitation. This is the understanding of the concept that blessing only comes upon something that is "hidden from the eye."

We can differentiate between the precision and quantification of the Mishkan and other measured items such as the bushel of grain at the time of harvest. When the farmer weighs and measures his grain he is quantifying the reality of his harvest. The value of a bushel of grain is determined simply by its consumption value. By contrast, although the specifications the Mishkan are precise and exact, nevertheless its essence and value are of an unknown nature. Its physical manifestation is only to bring about spiritual influences that are hidden. Only G'd knows the innate value of the specifications of the Mishkan vis-à-vis spirituality. Thus the Mishkan, although it was quantified in every respect by its physicality it remained "hidden from the eye." Its physicality was only a representation of a mechanism that was meant to activate forces and influences that are not to be fathomed. Therefore it was the ultimate conduit for blessing for the Jewish people and the world.

The Midrash tells us that when G'd had commanded Moshe to build the Mishkan, he had difficulty comprehending how was it possible to construct such an edifice. He had asked G'd, "If heaven and earth cannot contain Your glory, how is it possible for such a small location to be the dwelling place Your Divine Presence?" G'd responded, "You do yours and I will do Mine." Meaning, the concept of the Mishkan is so removed and incomprehensible that no mortal could ever grasp its capacity. Moshe was told by G'd to execute His Dictate and not become distracted by not understanding something that is beyond his ability. As Ramban writes in his introduction to Torah, even the greatest angel and Moshe are not able to comprehend the essence of G'd, which is infinite.

The Gemara in Tractate Bava Metzia tells us that one is permitted to alter his speech in three instances – If one asks a Torah sage (who had studied many tractates), "Is it true that you have studied so many tractates?" The

Torah sage is permitted to respond that he had not. Rashi explains that this is for the sake of humility. With our understanding of the concept of the Mishkan we are able to understand this differently.

Torah is something that is infinite because it is the Wisdom of G'd. It is the most precious commodity in all existence. If one were to quantify the amount of Torah that he has studied, he would be in effect quantifying something that is not subject to limitation. By acknowledging the amount of Torah that he had studied, the Torah sage would be diminishing the innate value of the Torah that he actually possesses because he would be quantifying something that cannot be quantified. This is the reason the Torah sage is permitted to alter his speech regarding his Torah knowledge.

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos states, "The Torah can only be acquired by the one who is willing to die for it." The value of the life of a Jew is something that is not quantifiable. As the Mishna states in Tractate Sanhedrin, "Whoever saves the life of a Jew it is the equivalent of saving the entire world." Just as one is not able to quantify all existence, so too is the value of a Jewish life not quantifiable. Therefore it is only in a setting that is not quantifiable can the unquantified be acquired – the selfless sacrifice of one's life for the sake of Torah.

2. The Profound Consequence of Torah

The Torah states, "**You shall place the Cover on the Ark from above, and into the Ark shall you place the Testimonial-tablets that I shall give you. It is there that I will set My meeting with you, and speak with you from atop the Cover, from between the two Cherubim that are on the Ark of the Testimonial-tablets...**" Sforno explains, "Just as the Divine Presence dwells in the location between the two Cherubim atop the Ark, so too, does It Dwell in any location in which there are Torah sages, whose mindset is to understand and implement G'd's Will. As it states, '...**Make for Me a Sanctuary – so that I may dwell in your midst....and you should do.**' The words 'you should do' is coming to add that not only should the Jewish people construct the Mishkan as instructed by G'd as His dwelling place, but also establish a location for G'd's Presence in future generations. As we find, the Gemara in Tractate Chagiga tells us that when the Torah sages (Tanaim) engaged in understanding the inner workings of heaven, the Divine Presence came upon them and they were escorted by angels." We see from this that the Divine Presence is not only located in the Holy of

Holies but also among those whose mind and perspective are connected to G'd.

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos tells us that Reb Yochanon had heard that there were elderly people in Babylon. He was taken aback by this fact because the second paragraph of the Shema concludes, "**In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land that G'd has sworn to your ancestors...**" Meaning, that one only merits longevity if one lives in the Land of Israel. However, if one were to live elsewhere, then one does not merit longevity. If this were so, then how were there elderly people in Babylon? Reb Yochanon was told that in Babylon the Jewish people rise early to study Torah in the study hall and leave late in the evening when they conclude their studies. Seemingly, Reb Yochanon was satisfied with this explanation. If the basis for Reb Yochanon's difficulty was the concluding verse of the Shema, that one only merits longevity in the Land of Israel, how was the explanation given to him sufficient to enlighten Reb Yochanon?

Maharsha in his commentary explains that wherever a Jew engages in Torah study, that location assumes the status of the Land of Israel. Meaning, when a Jew studies Torah it causes the Divine Presence (Shechina) to come upon that location. Just as the Divine Presence is present in Land of Israel, when one engages in Torah study outside of the Land, G'd's Presence is upon him to no less a degree than in the Land. Therefore, since the Jewish people in Babylon were dedicated to Torah study, the Divine Presence was upon them as if they were in the Land. Thus they merited longevity.

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos tells us that since the time of the destruction of the Temple, G'd's only location in the world is "within the four cubits of Halacha (normative Jewish law)." Meaning, the study hall in which people are engaged in studying Torah in a manner that leads to practical application/elucidation of the Law, His relevance to that location is no less than His relevance to the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Zohar states, "The Jewish people, the Torah and G'd are one." When the Jew engages sufficiently with the Torah, he is bonding with G'd. The Torah itself is G'd's Wisdom and through Its mitzvos, one declares G'd's Glory. Therefore, wherever one studies, G'd's Presence will be associated with that location no less than being in the Land of Israel.

3. The Criteria Needed for the Acquisition of Torah

The Torah states, **“Make for Me a Sanctuary – so that I may dwell in your midst like everything that I show you.”** Sforno explains, “G’d said to the Jewish people, ‘I will dwell in your midst to receive and accept your prayers and your service’...The structure of the Mishkan has relevance to the Cherubim. What are the Cherubim? They are the Sarophites (advanced level of angel). When the Prophets prophesize (in their sleep state) they see in their vision this dimension of angel. Some of these Sarophites are located in the ‘Holy’ and the others are located in the ‘Holy of Holies.’ They are in two groupings that are attached with clasps to serve their Creator as One. Identically the Torah sages, who are considered to be His holy ones, should attach themselves to the masses in order to give them an understanding and show them the way (of G’d.)” We find a replication of this on the covering of the Mishkan which was comprised of two sets of tapestries that were connected with gold clasps to make them one.

Sforno continues, “In the ‘Holy of Holies’ the Torah was contained within the Ark that was cast in gold on the inside and on the outside. Identically, the Torah sage who is the equivalent of the Ark (receptacle for Torah) must reflect the characteristic of the Ark. As the Gemara in Tractate Yoma states, ‘A Torah sage (Talmid chacham) whose inside is not the same as his outside is not a Torah Sage.’” Meaning, the only individual who is worthy of being classified as a Torah sage is only the one whose inner feeling and commitment is no less pure than his outer demeanor and appearance as a sage. The Torah sage is not merely a repository of Torah information. He must be genuine.

At the time of the receiving of the Torah at Sinai, the Torah states, **“Moshe spoke and Hashem responded with a voice.”** The Gemara in Tractate Berachos tells us that, based on this verse, the audibility of G’d’s voice was no louder than Moshe’s communication to the Jewish people. Meaning, when G’d had spoken to Moshe, at Sinai, the Jewish people were able to hear what was being communicated. Subsequently, Moshe had communicated what he had heard to the Jewish people.

Rambam writes in the Laws of the Study of Torah that the methodology for teaching Torah is through an intermediary, a *meturgamon* (spokesman). Although the rebbe (teacher) speaks at a level that can be heard by the students, the meturgamon repeats the words of the rebbe verbatim, without any embellishment. Furthermore, he

must speak at the same level of audibility as the teacher. When the students have a question on the material, they must pose it to the meturgamon who subsequently poses it to the rebbe. Although the rebbe hears the question as it is being asked, he does not respond directly to the questioner but rather, the answer is communicated through the meturgamon. This methodology of teaching seems to be superfluous and unnecessary.

The understanding and processing of Torah knowledge, to come upon its truth, is not based solely on one’s intellect or the teacher’s skill as a communicator. There is a spiritual component that needs to be integrated into the process for Torah to be understood properly. This spiritual component is referred to as *“siyata d’shmaya”* Divine Assistance. Because the subject matter of Torah is Divine (G’d’s Wisdom), without His involvement it could not be comprehended. Thus, unless one transmits and receives Torah as it was transmitted at Sinai, through an intermediary (meturgamon), he would not merit Divine Assistance. This methodology of transmission was chosen by G’d.

The Torah tells us that after Moshe had returned from being taught the Torah by G’d he had said to the Jewish people, **“For forty days and forty nights bread I did not eat and water I did not drink.”** The Midrash asks, “Why was it necessary for Moshe to share this with the Jewish people?” Seemingly it is irrelevant whether he ate or drank when he was in heaven receiving the Torah. Chazal explain that Moshe was saying to the Jewish people, “Just as I sacrificed my blood and fat for the sake of the acquisition of Torah, so too must you be willing to compromise on your physical/material comforts in order to acquire Torah.” Moshe was teaching the Jewish people that the formula to succeed in the acquisition of Torah must be similar to his own. Only then will one merit G’d’s Assistance to be able to comprehend it properly.

4. The Mishkan- the Replication of Sinai

The Torah states regarding the mitzvah of building the Mishkan (Tabernacle), **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me (Hashem) - so that I may dwell in their midst.”** The Jewish people were given the mitzvah of constructing the Mishkan, which was to be the location of the Divine Presence in this world.

Ramban explains in his commentary that the Mishkan itself was a replication of the Sinai event. At Sinai, G’d had brought heaven to earth and His Divine Presence (*Shechina*) dwelt on the mountain. Consequently, the level of prophecy that the Jewish people had experienced at Sinai was *“panim el panim – face to face.”*

Similarly the Mishkan created a setting that was identical to the Divine Presence at Sinai. Ramban continues to explain that just as the Torah states regarding the Sinai experience, “They (Jewish people) stood at the foot of the mountain...G’d had descended upon it ...” it states regarding G’d’s Presence in the Mishkan, “G’d’s Glory permeated and filled the Mishkan.” The Glory of G’d that was at Sinai was continuously present in the Mishkan when it was erected.

Ramban states, “In the Mishkan G’d communicated to Moshe from between the *Kruvim* (Cherubs). At Sinai the Torah states, “The words of G’d you heard from the fire...” The *Kruvim* that were situated on top of the *Aron* (Holy Ark) were fashioned from gold, which reflects the color of fire. Thus, just as the Voice of G’d came to Moshe at Sinai from the fire, so too did the Voice of G’d emanate from a comparable setting in the Mishkan. G’d wanted the experience of the Mishkan to be no less than that of the Sinai event.

Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z’tl explains that the Divine Presence only descended upon Sinai when the Jewish people encircled the mountain. The Jewish people at Sinai were the equivalent of the *K’rashim* (vertical beams of the Mishkan). When the Mishkan was transported through the desert after it was dismantled, the Shechina was not present in it. However, after the vertical beams (*K’rashim*) were erected and circumscribed their location, the Shechina entered into the Mishkan. Similarly, the Shechina/Divine Presence only descended upon the mountain when the Jewish people totally encircled and enclosed the mountain. Thus, he concludes that where there are Jews living in a community that adhere to the precepts of the Torah, the *Shechina* enters into their midst because they are the equivalent of the *K’rashim*.

Daas Zikainim Baalei Tosfos explain that during the 40 day period when Moshe had ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, G’d had commanded him to tell the Jewish people to create a setting in which His Presence could dwell in their midst. That location would house the Holy Ark, the Altar, etc. and be surrounded by the Jewish people in a manner that is similar to the way the angels in heaven encircle the Heavenly Throne. Before the sin of the Golden Calf there was no need for the *K’rashim* to encircle the location of the Mishkan. The Divine Presence would have been able to dwell in the midst of the Jewish people. Initially, the Mishkan was not intended to be the medium through which G’d would dwell in their midst. However after the sin of the Golden Calf, the Jewish people were no longer qualified to accommodate the

Shechina without the *K’rashim*. The Jewish people were no longer spiritually worthy to be the location for the Divine Presence on their own.

G’d created all existence in order to accommodate the Torah and the Jewish people. As it is stated in the Midrash, “*Bereishis Bara Elokim...For the Sake of the Torah I have created heaven and earth and for the sake of the Jewish people I have created heaven and earth...*” The Prophet states, “For My Glory I (G’d) have created it (the world) ...” When the Jewish people adhere to the Torah and thus do the Will of G’d, the purpose of creation is being fulfilled and the Shechina will dwell in their midst. Initially every Jew had relevance to having a direct relationship with the Shechina/G’d. However because of the sin of the Golden Calf, that level of relationship was no longer possible. Thus, the prohibition of “a stranger”/non-Kohen officiating came about. The Torah tells us that if one who is unqualified to be an officiant of G’d approaches the Divine Presence, he will be subject to death by heavenly decree. Contrastingly, at Sinai before the Golden Calf, every Jew was able to prophesize at the level of “*panim el panim* – face to face.”

We pray every day that the Bais HaMikdash (Temple) should be rebuilt and the Divine Presence restored to Its location. However, the words of Reb Meir Simcha z’tl teach us that although the level of G’d’s Presence in our midst is not what it had been during the time of the Mishkan, nevertheless, when a Jewish community adheres to the Torah and its principles, it becomes a setting in which the Divine Presence does dwell. The rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash (Temple), speedily in our time, will reinstate the Shechina at Its original level at Sinai.

5. *The Secret to Impact Another* (from Mishpatim)

The Torah states, “**People of holiness shall you be to Me; you shall not eat flesh of an animal that was torn in the field; to the dog shall you throw it.**” Rashi cites Chazal who explain, “G’d is saying, ‘If you sanctify and remove yourselves from meat that is not ritually slaughtered then you are Mine. If you do not, then you are not Mine.’” Meaning, if the Jewish people maintain their level of sanctity and holiness by adhering to dietary laws, they will have a relationship with G’d. However, if they spiritually contaminate themselves by violating dietary laws then they will lose their holy status and will no longer be able to be close to G’d. This is because only something of holiness can have relevance to the source of holiness, which is G’d Himself.

Sforno explains the verse differently. According to his interpretation, the verse is relating to the sanctity of the firstborn and not regarding the consequences of violating dietary laws. He writes, "The previous verse states, **'...the firstborn of your sons shall you present to Me...'** The Torah is telling us that the firstborn (bachor) has a special level of sanctity and must be offered to G'd. The following verse, **'People of holiness shall you be to Me...'** is a further explanation of the sanctity of the firstborn and how it pertains to the Jewish people. Prior to the sin of the Golden Calf, all firstborn males were qualified to officiate as the priests of G'd. However, after the sin, only the Kohen was qualified because the tribe of Levy did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. The function of the Kohen is to officiate in the Temple as well as being the disseminator of G'd's Torah to the Jewish people. As the verse states in Malachai, 'The lips of the Kohen shall safeguard knowledge. You shall seek Torah from his mouth. Because he is an agent of G'd...' If the Jewish people consecrate their firstborn and they function in their capacity (as Priests) by receiving a portion of the sacrificial meat and they are esteemed and revered as priests by the people, then the Jewish people will be holy to G'd. G'd says, 'If you designate and consecrate your firstborn to Me they will be in a position to teach Torah to the Jewish people. By esteeming the firstborn and thus being mentored by them through Torah, you will become holy to Me.' This is what is meant by the verse, **'People of holiness shall you be to Me...'**"

The Torah tells us that a Kohen is only permitted to contaminate himself to the dead with his seven closest relatives. Sforno explains in the Potion of Emor that the Kohen must maintain an elevated status in the eyes of the people. If he were to attend every funeral and contaminate himself with everyone's deceased, he will no longer be revered by the people as being special. Consequently, his ability as being the disseminator of Torah will be severely undermined. He must maintain an esteemed status in order to be effective. Thus the Jewish people would be attentive to his teachings. It is only if he is regarded and perceived as holy will the Kohen have the greatest impact on the masses. Similarly if the firstborn is designated for G'd and removed from the mundane, then he will be more effective in his dissemination of Torah.

Rambam writes in the Laws of Torah Study that one is not permitted to be in the bathhouse with his rebbe/teacher. He is not permitted to be present when his rebbe is taking a haircut. A rebbe should not joke with his students. The rebbe must maintain an elevated status regarding his students so that they will esteem him. If they do not regard him as their peer, they

will be more attentive to his teachings. Although they understand that his human needs are no less than their own, by seeing him in the human context, as themselves, it will detract from their perception of him. Similarly, the Kohen and the firstborn must maintain an aloof status to the populace.

There is a Positive Commandment to revere G'd, **"Es Hashem Elokecha tirah- You must fear G'd"** The word "Es" in itself has no meaning but functions as an adjunct to indicate that there is something else that is the equivalent to what is being discussed. Rebbe Akiva explains that the word "Es" indicates that the Torah sage should be no less revered than G'd Himself.

Maharal of Prague explains that the reason G'd wants the Torah Sage to be regarded and esteemed no less than Himself is because it is only then will one be attentive and receptive to his teachings. The only way one is able to appreciate and understand his obligations to G'd is through the teachings of the Torah sage. Therefore the Torah dictates that one should esteem and revere the Torah Sage.

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 – Nefesh HaChaim
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Avodah Zorah
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

11:15 – 12:15pm **Talmud: Taanis**
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25th FL.)
Enter on 54th Street

12:30 – 1:30pm **Talmud: Pesachim**
Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue
Between E.51st and E.52nd

Tuesday

12:15 - 1:15pm **Torah Insight Based on the Parsha**
Location: Yad Avraham

Wednesday

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

1:00—2:00 pm **Daas Tevunos**
Location: Yad Avraham

Thursday

10:30 –11:30am **Tehilim with Malbim**
Location: Yad Avraham

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Talmud: Taanis** Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25th FL)