

Yad Avraham Institute
Weekly Torah Commentaries Series
The Portion of
Tetzaveh

February 14, 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
February 14, 2008

B"H

Tetzaveh

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

Dean

1. Torah- The Mechanism For Spiritualization

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

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

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

We pray every day in the blessing for the Davidic Reign (es *tzemach David avdecha*) in the Amidah (Silent Prayer) that G’d should bring the Moshiach, speedily in our day. The Gemara tells us that when Moshiach will come, G’dliness in existence will become so evident that one’s level of free choice will effectively become almost non-existent. The primary focus of humanity will be to address and advance their spirituality. Rambam writes in the Laws of Repentance that one’s deservingness of reward is based on one’s ability to choose between right and wrong. However, if one is no longer in conflict because he is compelled to do good because of its obviousness, then one is no longer deserving of reward. If the coming of Moshiach will bring an end to the setting of free choice, which is the ultimate objective of creation, then why do we pray for his coming?

We pray for the coming of Moshiach because when G’d’s Presence is not experienced and felt, it becomes a setting for a desecration of His Name. We are willing to forego and deny ourselves, for His sake, the purpose of our own existence, which is spiritual advancement. Why would Moshe, who had dedicated his life selflessly to G’d’s Glory, deny the Jewish people their final redemption to bring about the greatest glorification of G’d?

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

2. *Reciprocation- a Prerequisite to Reinstatement*

The Midrash explains the basis for every aspect of the Mishkan, “Rav Bisna says, ‘G’d said to the Jewish people: My Children, I want you to do for Me as I have done for you. Just as I sustained you in the desert with the Manna, I want you to sacrifice before Me a lamb every morning (daily communal sacrifice). Just as I cleansed you with water, you should make for Me a Laver (*kiyor*). Just as I anointed you with oil, you should bring the anointing oil (*shemen ha’mishchah*). Just as I have cloaked you in elaborate embroidered vestments, you should make for Me an embroidered curtain (*Paroches*)...Just as I adorned you with ornaments, you should make the Holy Ark and its crown. Just as I adorned you with earrings/nose rings/jewelry, so too should you cover the Ark with a gold covering...Just as I provided you with the pillar of fire that accompanied you at night in the desert, so too should you kindle the Menorah...” What is the significance of the Jewish people reciprocating for what G’d had done for them as a people? G’d, being Complete in an absolute sense, does not need anything.

Ramban explains that the Mishkan was a replication of Sinai. The intensity of G’d’s Presence in the Holy of Holies in the Mishkan was the equivalent to that of the Sinai event. Just as G’d communicated to Moshe and the Jewish people at Sinai, He spoke to Moshe from between the Cherubs on the Holy Ark that was located in the Holy of Holies. Ramban presents many correlations, (based on verses) that indicate that the Mishkan was the equivalent of Sinai.

The Gemara in Tractate Avodah Zorah explains that when the Jewish people had unequivocally accepted the Torah at Sinai with the declaration “*Naaseh v’nishma* – we will do and we will listen” they were reinstated to the level of spirituality of Adam, before the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. A consequence of their new spiritual status was that they had overcome all of their physical handicaps (if one were blind he was able to see etc.) The Jewish people were no longer subject to death. They had reverted to the state of Adam before the sin, which was eternal. It was only after the Sin of the Golden Calf that they regressed to the post-sin status of Adam.

The Mishkan was a symbol of the reinstatement of the Jewish people after they had sinned with the Golden Calf. The Mishkan was the medium through which G’d dwelt in their midst. As it states, “**Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I shall dwell in your midst.**” In order

to replicate the setting for the Divine Presence to dwell, the Jewish people needed to meet certain criteria.

The Torah tells us that the materials that were given by the Jewish people for the building of the Mishkan needed to be given “through the generosity of their hearts” (not as an obligation). If one felt obliged to contribute the materials to the Mishkan, it did not qualify. The materials for the Mishkan needed to be given with the same selfless dedication as the Jewish people had embraced the Torah at Sinai with their declaration of “*Naaseh v’nishma.*”

The Torah tells us that when G’d confronted Adam regarding his eating the fruit of the Tree, He asked him “**...Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?**” Adam replied, “**The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me of the tree...**” Chazal tell us that Adam’s response to G’d’s question was an expression of an ingrate. Rather than being thankful and appreciative for the wife that G’d had created for him, who was essential to actualize his potential, Adam chose to blame G’d for his failing. He had said that as a result of this woman that G’d had given him, he ate of the tree. When the Jewish people complained about the Manna in the desert, which was essential for their survival and spiritual development, G’d quantified them as “ingrates.” He said, “You are ingrates who descend from an ingrate (Adam).” The innate negative characteristic of lack of appreciation emanates from Adam, the father of mankind.

In order for the Mishkan to be able to facilitate the Divine Presence in its midst, the Jewish people had to address the innate failing of Adam. After eating of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam had demonstrated the negative characteristic of being an ingrate. The materials, which G’d had instructed the Jewish people to donate, acted as a medium through which they would express their gratitude for everything that G’d had provided for them from the time they had left Egypt until the present. Through this reciprocation they addressed and corrected the failing of Adam, thus allowing themselves to be worthy of a relationship with G’d that was similar to what had existed before the sin.

In order for a Jew to have greater relevance to the Divine Presence, he must continuously be appreciative for all that G’d provides. One must recognize that even his own initiative is a gift from G’d.

3. Man's Value in G'd's Eyes

The Midrash cites a verse from Eyov, “ ‘You should call and I will respond. And You desire the accomplishments of Your handiwork.’ The Jewish people said to G'd, ‘Master of the Universe, call to us and we will respond. Whatever You decree upon us, we will fulfill.’ An individual desires the labor of his own hands. Similarly, G'd desires the accomplishments of His Creation. G'd carries the world in its entirety. As it states in Yeshaya, ‘I made, I carry, and I tolerate.’ Nevertheless, You commanded the children of Kahas to carry the Holy Ark. You sustain the entire world, yet You command the Jewish people to bring sacrifices to You...You illuminate all creation, yet You command us to kindle the lights of the Menorah. Reb Meir says, ‘G'd said, ‘The lights that Aaron had kindled are more beloved to Me than the luminaries that I have set in the heavens.’ Why is this so? When all of the Tribes were asked to bring gifts and offerings to participate in the inauguration of the Mishkan, the Tribe of Levy was excluded. As a result, Aaron was taken aback and was in a state of melancholy. He had said, ‘All of the Princes were asked to participate in the inauguration of the Mishkan, but I have no share in the offerings.’ G'd responded to him, ‘Their participation was only one time; however, you will have your own special inauguration by kindling the lights of Menorah.’ This is because G'd desires the actions of His Creation.”

Man is naturally self-absorbed. In order for one to do anything that is outside of his self-interest or for the sake of to another, he must go against his own inclination. If one were to take an initiative that was not motivated by self-interest (although it may be minor) it is considered to be a great accomplishment, because it demonstrates that he was able to subordinate his innate inclination of self-interest. Although G'd carries the world, He commanded the family of Kahas to carry the Ark to present them with an opportunity that allowed them to express their reverence and dedication to G'd. The Holy Ark, is only considered to be special and holy because it contains the Torah, which is G'd's perspective of life for the Jewish people. Although G'd illuminates the world, He wanted the Jewish people to bring about illumination through the kindling of the Menorah. Once again, this is to allow the Jewish people to revere G'd and to declare what is primary and what is secondary to them.

The special value of Aaron's kindling of the Menorah was attributed to his sense of feeling denied and pained for not being worthy to participate in the inauguration of the Mishkan. The Gemara in Tractate

Megillah tells us that on the day that the Mishkan was erected, G'd's joy was the equivalent of brining the world into existence. Aaron experiencing disappointment and pain for not being included in this special moment, was a confirmation of his spiritual focus and essence. He had only lived for the sake of the glorification of G'd. Man is naturally inclined to be pained when he incurs a loss of something of material value or is denied a personal need that he considers important. However, Aaron experienced disappointment and anguish when he was denied the service of G'd. Consequently, G'd endowed him with the opportunity and right to kindle the Menorah in the Sanctuary of G'd's Temple.

The Torah describes every aspect of hospitality that Avraham had provided for the angels. It is described in great detail. This is because every aspect of his hospitality was valued by G'd to the degree that the Jewish people in the future would be beneficiaries of its merit. Although Avraham had devoted his entire life to performing acts of kindness and hospitality, this particular event vis-à-vis the future was considered to be the most significant. The Torah tells us that on the third day after Avraham's circumcision, which is the most difficult day of recovery, he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. Chazal explain that from the beginning of existence until that moment there was no hotter day. G'd had taken the sun out of its sheath in order to discourage wayfarers from coming to Avraham so that he should be able to recuperate. Despite G'd's attempt to create a setting of respite for Avraham, he was disturbed and pained that he could not offer his hospitality to people for the sake of espousing monotheism. Because he had experienced this level of disappointment for not being able to glorify G'd, G'd provided him with the greatest opportunity of hospitality. He presented him with three guests who were angels in the form of human beings. Because of the dimension and caliber of the recipients of his hospitality, its value had unlimited consequences that were beneficial to the future of the Jewish people. Despite Avraham's state of infirmity he demonstrated through his anguish that his own condition was only a circumstance of life rather than its primary focus.

When one goes against his natural inclination of being preoccupied with his own needs and dedicates his life to G'd, his initiative will reflect the Jewish people's participation in the Mishkan.

4. *The Unique Characteristics of the Dove*

The Midrash cites a verse from The Song of Songs (*Shir ha'Shirim*), “ ‘How beautiful is my beloved! Your eyes are like the eyes of doves...’ This is referring to the Sanhedrin (High Court) which is compared to the dove. What is the meaning of ‘your eyes are like those of the dove?’ Just as one follows his eyes, so too do the Jewish people follow the rulings of the Sanhedrin....Another interpretation is: just as the dove returns to its coop and perch because it recognizes it, so too does every one of the students of Torah among the Jewish people recognizes his place (capacity). Another interpretation is: just as the dove, when it identifies its mate, remains loyal to it for the rest of its life, so too when the Jewish people recognized G’d they remain loyal to Him until the end of time. They will not move from Him. Another interpretation is: every type of bird fights and tries to resist when it understands that it will be slaughtered’ with the exception of the dove which submits itself to its slaughterer without any struggle. There is no other nation, other than the Jewish people, who have willingly sacrificed their lives for the sake of G’d. The Jewish people are continuously being put to death for the sanctification of G’d’s Name.”

The Midrash continues, “ ‘Reb Yitzchak says, ‘G’d said to the Jewish people: your characteristic is similar to that of the dove.’ The Torah tells us that when Noach was in the Ark, he had first sent out the raven which returned to him. After waiting a period of a week, Noach sent out the dove, which returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. Just as the dove returned to the Ark with light, so too do the Jewish people bring light to the world. (The olive represents the oil that was used to kindle the Menorah). G’d said to the Jewish people, ‘You, who are compared to the dove, you should bring for Me olive oil and kindle the light of the Menorah.’”

It is interesting to note that when Noach had sent out the dove, it returned with the olive leaf at a time when the world was not ready to be inhabited after the Great Flood. It was only later when Noach had sent it out again that the dove did not return. Chazal tell us that before existence came into being there were a number of things that G’d had created in concept/potential. For example, the Torah was created over 900 generations before the existence of the world. The concept of repentance and the potential of having a Jewish people were also created pre-existence. As a prerequisite for creation there needed to be the potential for Torah, repentance, and the Jewish people to manifest themselves. The dove was sent out into world before it had become inhabitable. Noach, leaving the Ark

with all that it contained was the equivalent of the beginning of a new existence. Thus, when the dove was sent out it was in a setting of preexistence. The dove returning with the olive leaf in its mouth was a symbolism of the Torah and the Jewish people pre-existing creation.

The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin tells us that in the time of Chizkeyahu (the King of Judah), the Assyrian King, Sancherev, approached Jerusalem with millions of troops to destroy the city and the Holy Temple. The Gemara tells us that it was “in the merit of the oil” that the camp of Ashur (the Assyrians) was miraculously annihilated in one night. What is the meaning that it was “in the merit of the oil” that the kingdom of Judah was not conquered? When Chizkeyahu ascended the throne and became king, he had taken a sword and a Torah scroll and placed them next to one another and he said to the people, “Either you live by the Torah or you will be pierced by the sword.” As a result of this ultimatum, an unusual standard of spirituality was established. Every Jewish man, woman, and child from Dan to Beersheba was proficient in all the laws pertaining to spiritual purity.

The Jewish people are the only nation that possesses the characteristic of the dove. The Jew will never leave G’d, just as the dove never leaves its mate. The Jew submits by giving his life to sanctify G’d, as the dove submits itself to be slaughtered without resistance. Just as the dove brought the olive leaf in its mouth, so too are the Jewish people responsible for kindling the Menorah, with olive oil that brings illumination into existence.

5. *Infusing the Mundane with the Spiritual*

The Torah states regarding the making of the Menorah, “**You shall make a Menorah of pure gold, hammered out (*mikshah*) shall the Menorah be made.**” Rashi cites Chazal who explain that the term “*mikshah* – **hammered out**” means that the Menorah needed to be formed out of a block of pure gold. It was not to be made of parts and then attached together.

Sforno explains, “After the Torah establishes the two crowns – the crown of Torah, which is symbolized through the Holy Ark, and the crown of Kingship, which is symbolized through the golden table with the showbread, it establishes the symbolism of the Menorah. It should be hammered out of one block of pure gold (*mikshah*). The lights of the Menorah unify to become one. The wicks on the right side and the left side of the Menorah bend towards the center wick so that they will all illuminate

together as one. The configuration of the wicks of the Menorah connotes the understanding that is derived from the Torah as well as the way one actualizes his life through mitzvah performance and other good deeds. In order for one to derive an understanding of how must live his life to be in conformance with the Torah, he must look towards the center light (which is representative of the Torah itself). When the actualization of the mitzvah is coalesced with the intellectual understanding of its value, true illumination will emanate. This perspective is alluded through the formation of the Menorah as well as the configuration of its wicks/lights. All are unified as one. It is when the actions of the Jewish people will correspond to their understanding of the Torah, they benefit from the great light.”

The Torah states in the Book of Devarim, **“Moshe said to the Children of Israel: And Now (v’atah), O Israel, what is Hashem, your G’d, asking of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G’d, to go in all His ways and to love Him, and serve Hashem, your G’d will all your heart and with all your soul, to observe the commandments of Hashem and His decrees...”** Chofetz Chaim in his work Ahavas Chesed cites a Sifri that explains that the term “v’atah - now” is referring to repentance. He asks, “How does the word ‘now’ allude to the concept of ‘repentance’?” He answers that a Jew must lead his life in a specific and deliberate manner. He must continuously ask himself, “What does G’d want from me at this moment (now)?” A Jew must be cognizant continuously of his behavior; whether it is in conformance with the Will of G’d or not. If one’s mindset is preoccupied with the question of “now,” he will be involved in the repentance process. He will be conscious of his successes and his failings- thus causing him to introspect and repent.

If one is engaged in the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos, it is understood that he will have the sensitivity to be in touch with his own spirituality. This individual’s behavior, because of his understanding of the Torah, will be in conformance with G’d’s Will. However, a person who is engaged in the mundane, although he may also study Torah, if he does not ask himself the question, “what does G’d want from me now?” will not create a perspective that will cause his actions to be spiritualized. It is only when one’s behavior and understanding of the objective of existence to do the Will of G’d, will he reflect the construct and function of the Menorah. Consequently, he will benefit from the great light of the Divine Presence.

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)