



EVEN SHESIYA

THE TORAH OF HARAV YOCHANAN BECHHOFFER
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Titzaveh - Inching towards Actuality

Shovavim - Tat

As is well-known, these weeks of **S**hemos, **V**aeira, **B**o, **B**eshalach, **Y**isro, and **M**ishpatim have a special quality of Teshuva being readily accepted, particularly the “known sin” of “waste”. For that reason, some communities in Eretz Yisrael run refresher courses in the laws of family purity. There is a dilemma whether the weeks of Teruma and Titzaveh are a part of this process or not. The most common resolution to the dilemma is to say that **Teruma and Titzaveh are also part of this time where the gates of Teshuva are open during a leap year** such as our year 5779. This idea that has been passed down through generations is quite well-known but still needs a great deal of explanation. Why are the weeks of Shemos through Mishpatim a time for Teshuva in general and for the “known sin” in particular? What is the issue surrounding Teruma and Titzaveh regarding whether they should be part of this special time of grace or not? What difference does a leap year make? This issue is connected to a mystery surrounding Teruma and Titzaveh every year: Why do we need these Parshas if the Torah repeated everything word for word when the Jewish people actually build the Mishkan in the Parshas of Vayakheil and Pikudei? Why were they said first in the context of the plans being laid out to Moshe when he’s in heaven and again in full detail when the Jewish people build the Mishkan in actuality?

Mitigation of the Moon

Nothing creates itself. whatever exists is there because Hashem created it and continues to facilitate its existence. **What is left up to our free will is to choose between options.** We

cannot choose an option that doesn't exist. What is the origin of the possibility for things to go wrong? The mitigation of the Moon on the fourth day of creation. Initially it was “the two great luminaries...” then it was “the big luminary to reign by day and the small luminary reign by night”. Chazal tell us that initially they were the same size and then Hashem mitigated the Moon. Despite everything Hashem said to appease the moon nonetheless it's not the ideal or permanent situation and the moon will eventually be as great as the sun again. In the meantime, amongst the Korbanos of Rosh chodesh is a “**se'ir chatas l'Hashem**”-a goat for a sin offering for Hashem. Hashem is saying: “bring a Korban to atone for Me for having mitigated the Moon”! As the Maharal explains, obviously Hashem did not do any sin, but he did put a “shortcoming” in creation that makes sin possible. Obviously that's not Hashem's final intent and that's why he wants to “wash away” (Kapparah literally means to ‘wash’) the shortcoming that he placed in creation. He wants the mitigation of the Moon to be healed with the power of Kidush HaChodesh that we do month in and month out. How does the mitigation of the Moon facilitate sin and how does the Mitzvah Kidush HaChodesh works towards setting that right?

Piercing the Darkness

Light and darkness existed since the first day of creation. On the fourth day of creation Hashem created two great luminaries of “equal size” one would reign by day the other by night. **That means that “night”, the time of darkness, would be pierced by the Light of the moon to shine as bright as day.** The sun doesn't change

anything. it reigns during the day which is the “light half” of reality ever since the first day of creation. The sun gives light where light naturally belongs, the Moon gives light where light does not naturally belong. **The Moon is changing reality.** “There is **nothing new** under the sun”(Koheles) and therefore Chazal tell us that the 365 days of the solar cycle are parallel to 365 negative commandments. **The negative commandments are about keeping law and order, but they don’t make change!** The positive commandments change and bring new light to the world and that's why “aseh docheh lo ta’aseh”-a positive commandment overrides a negative commandment if it’s impossible to do uphold both of them.

The Loss

The moon's cycle is called “Chodesh” which means new. The function of the moon is to bring a new light to the world to shine where things are naturally dark. **The sun is about keeping a certain natural order, the Moon is about revolutionizing and converting what is naturally dark into light.** Mitigating the Moon means that this cannot be fully accomplished at this time. We cannot totally Vanquish “darkness” and all that “darkness” represents. We may have the will to do it, but our will is far greater than our ability which has been mitigated. This lack of ability it is that we cannot receive all the light that Hashem wants to send us for us to reflect into the darkness. Being too small and with an annual cycle 10 days smaller than the solar cycle there is power that's not being harnessed to dispel the darkness and hence “wasted”.

Missing the Target

The word “chet”- sin has two other meanings in Hebrew. It means loss or lack as Yaakov tells Lavan “**anochi achatena**” - if any of your flock is missing I will take that loss upon myself. It also means to “miss” as in “**l’hacht’ee**” – to miss. They all come from the same root. The mitigation of The Moon makes it that there is a **lack** of light at night because light that could have been reflected why the Moon **missed the**

mark and that facilitates the possibility of sin. Giving men the benefit of the doubt and assuming that their intentions are good, they can still “**miss the mark**” or **lack the ability** to do all the good they would like to do and **that's what opens up the possibility to fail.**

Pre - Exodus

Once the possibility of failure exists the wicked could **widen the rift** and choose darkness over light. That's the way the whole world was until get Yetzias mitzrayim. Until that time the world was running amok and **no nation** was interested and knowing Hashem and fulfilling his plan for Destiny, in other words: no one was interested in dispelling the darkness in reality. That State of affairs was called “Tohu”- shapelessness because the world was not in the form Hashem wanted. With Yetzias Mitzrayim began the process “so My Name should be spoken about throughout the Earth”. G-d consciousness will give a spiritual form to the world and a framework with which the world is working gradually to greater and greater Divine revelation to the point that the world metamorphosizes into a World of all good without evil. Therefore, by no coincidence the first Mitzvah we are given at the time of Yetzias mitzrayim was Kidush HaChodesh to sanctify the new moon and included in that Mitzvah is the Mitzvah to **equalize the sun and the moon** so as Pesach will always come out in the spring month. **Nisan**, the spring month, is the month of “balance” as the day and night are of equal length and the weather is not hot nor cold. During this time of balance things grow, bloom, and progress and the world is moving from the natural to the supernatural. The root of the word “**Nisan**” – is “**Nes**”- Miracle, transcending nature to a higher plane. **That's called “Geula”- redemption as the world is redeemed from being stuck in its natural state and is blossoming to a higher state!** Therefore, by no coincidence we get the Mitzva of Kidush HaChodesh to sanctify the new moon had to **keep it balanced with the solar cycle as an act of bringing out the power of the Moon to dispel**

darkness and to put it on the track of being in sync with the sun as part of the process for the eventually being as big as the sun.

Nissan to Sivan

These months of Nissan, Iyar, Sivan, are the time of balance when everything is most pleasant and blossoming and therefore by no coincidence during this time there was Yitzias Mitzrayim, Omer, and Matan Torah. From this point onwards in **thought and intent** people could be living with Hashem being the central goal with everything focused at that goal. The parshas that correspond to this time are Shemos through Mishpatim. These are the laws and ideas that we're meant to live by.

Mishkan

There is an additional challenge to **actually convert physical reality here and now. Having these ideas actually manifest within Earth is what's added with the Mishkan.** The Mishkan is a microcosm of reality itself and that's why the 39 melachos prohibited on Shabbos, because Hashem "rested" from the creation of Heaven and Earth can be derived from the Mishkan, **whatever went into the Mishkan has a parallel in the cosmos! The Mishkan was a mini perfect world, a sterile space where the Divine presence could be revealed and would have a spillover effect on the rest of reality. By no coincidence the Mishkan was inaugurated in the month of Nisan that's when the world took another step in its development towards the equalization between the sun and the Moon.**

Rosh HaShana & Yom Kippur

The months of Tamuz and Av are out of balance as the days are much longer than the nights and the weather gets too hot. During these months we had major failures. First with the sin of the golden calf and subsequently with the sin of the Meraglim. All this happened during this time of "extreme". Moshe was called up on Rosh Chodesh Elul and came down on Yom Kippur traversing through the month of Tishrei where

everything balances out again. **Hashem granted forgiveness on Yom Kippur and that was the restoration of our laws, values, and ideology - Parallel to Shemos- Mishpatim** as The Luchos were "reissued". **This is what Teshuva is about! You can't change the past, but you could change your values!** Hashem in His kindness considers your change of mind as if the bad action was undone by you and therefore it is expunged from your record. It's an ideological revival which happens in two phases: **On Rosh HaShana we accept Hashem is King and that's our new beginning and is therefore the beginning of the new year.** Rosh Hashanah means the beginning of "**Shinui**"- change. But it's only the new year on the lunar cycle! The lunar cycle is 355 days which is the numerical value of "**Shana**" exactly. The solar cycle is 10 days longer which means **the solar cycle catches up on Yom Kippur – in between were doing Teshuva to reconcile our actions with our renewed commitment – which is the significance of reconciling the sun and the moon!** As the Vilna Gaon explains: Yom Kippur is the day of great reconciliation because **the moon has more will than ability and this is where the ability catches up and that's called that the Teshuva is complete because our actions have caught up to our ideology.** The Gemara says that "**HaSatan**"-the Satan has a numerical value 364, but there are 365 days on the solar cycle - the 365th day is Yom Kippur where there is no Satan because it's the Day of Reconciliation between the lunar cycle and the solar cycle and there's no "misses", no "wedge" for the Satan to operate in.

Adar Sheini

That reconciliation is only for the moment, and then the two tracks begin to separate again. Says the Vilna Gaon: Generally, we have a leap year every third year after three sets of "**Aseres Yemei Teshuva**" **those three sets of "Aseres Yemei Teshuva" make up the 30 days of Adar Sheini!!** It is a whole year focused on reconciling the two tracks which is the idea of Teshuva.

Baseline

In a regular year our baseline are the parshas of Shemos through Mishpatim which involve which include being liberated from Egypt and getting the Torah. **The Ramchal explains that this is the baseline for the Jewish people because as low as we sink we could never sink past this line! We will never undo the spiritual achievement of being liberated from Egypt and being separated from all the other nations of the world and the Torah never be repossessed and taken back to heaven!** However, the achievement of having a Mishkan and a Beis HaMikdash we see, sadly, has been reversed many times. This advanced level will not be complete and permanent until that great day when the light of the moon will be as bright as the light of the sun.

Shovavim & Purim

During a regular year, Shemos through Mishpatim is the time of Teshuva to refresh our ideology, and thus we will not be living in vain and our efforts will not be “wasted”, they will be focused at the goal of doing everything for the sake of heaven. **We could tap into this through these parshas because that’s what these parshas brought to the world in those days.** The added level of bringing a Mishkan to the world sadly is not in reach for us doing a regular year. **However we tap into it on Purim!** As we explained last week, **Purim builds the potential for everything that becomes actual in Nissan.** Therefore, during the month of Adar, we read these Parshas which are the plan for the Mishkan which means that the Mishkan has a mental and emotional state of existence. It could exist in idea even if it doesn’t exist in physical reality. Purim renews the idea of the Mishkan parallel to Teruma & Titzaveh and in Nissan it goes from potential to actual which is from thought to action! On Purim we renewed our commitment and reaccepted Torah out of love. We built the Mishkan of the heart in preparation for Nissan which is the Mishkan manifest.

Teruma Titzaveh & Purim in Adar Sheini

Purim is a portal to the future, to be beyond the exile and that’s why Purim will be the only YomTov that we keep in the future when all the other Yomim Tovim will be annulled. A leap year is where we’re gearing towards the reconciliation of the sun and Moon, closing the Gap that’s the failure between what we want to do and what we can and actually do. During this year we gain **Teruma & Titzaveh**, the idea even here and now! **Everything is being pushed further down the line and the idea of the future can be tapped into even now!** This year, Purim in Adar Sheini is much closer to actuality than in a regular year! **It’s not a portal to the distant future - it is potential bordering on the actual, and the idea for that potential is even accessible without the “Purim Portal”!** This year of great reconciliation, where the whole year is the year of Teshuva the concept of the Mishkan is within grasp and we draw power from it even in our current state.

