

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

by Shlomo Katz

Parshas Vaera

Design and Implementation

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Today's Learning:
Eduyot 2:10-3:1
O.C. 61:14-16
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Nedarim 15
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Megillah 28

As our parashah opens, G-d tells Moshe, *"I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov as 'Kel Shakkai,' and My Name 'Hashem' I did not reveal to them."* R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (mashgiach of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; author of Einayim La'mishpat) explains G-d's message as follows:

"Kel Shakkai," referring, as it does, to G-d's precise measurement of creation, alludes to the Attribute of Strict Justice, which demands strict measure-for-measure accounting. This is the highest form of Divine Providence; indeed, in the beginning, G-d's "design" called for the entire world to be subject to Strict Justice. He knew, however, that the world could not exist under that Attribute, so He paired it with the Attribute of Mercy [see Rashi to Bereishit 1:1]. Nevertheless, G-d did act pursuant to Strict Justice with the Patriarchs, for they were on a sufficiently lofty level.

[R' Arieli explains in passing that the difference between G-d's "design" and His implementation is

alluded to by the verse (Tehilim 145:17): "Hashem is righteous in all His ways, and magnanimous in all His deeds." G-d's true "ways" are based on righteousness, i.e., differentiating between right and wrong - Strict Justice. However, His deeds are magnanimous, i.e., tempered with Mercy.]

R' Arieli continues: The level of Providence that was applied to the Patriarchs is reached by serving G-d with love, as it is written (Yeshayah 48:8), "The seed of Avraham, My beloved." No person ever reached this level except they. For their sons, in contrast, Providence is tempered with Mercy, manifested by the fact that the Exodus occurred before its time, i.e., before the 400 years passed.

In fact, Yaakov asked that his descendants merit to deserve Hashem's favor even when subjected to Strict Justice - "May 'Kel Shakkai' show you mercy" [Bereishit 43:14]. Had that occurred, the redemption from Egypt would have been the complete and final redemption. Instead, however, the difficulty of the subjugation required that Hashem apply Mercy that was undeserved and end the exile early. (Midrash Ariel)

"Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon 'vay'tzavem' / and He commanded them regarding Bnei Yisrael and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt." (Shmot 6:13)

This verse seems redundant in light of the surrounding verses which describe Moshe and Aharon's mission. What exactly is this verse adding to the command that Hashem already gave Moshe and Aharon?

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) offers several answers, among them the following:

This verse is not referring to any specific command that Hashem gave Moshe and Aharon. Rather, it is teaching that a leader must feel a sense of "tzivui" / obligation towards the people he leads.

Alternatively, the word "vay'tzavem" - translated above as, "He commanded" - may be related to the word "tzavta" / fellowship. The verse teaches that, unlike a person who is not a leader, who is free to feel and act like a loner, a leader must feel a fellowship with his people and act on the basis of that feeling. (Chochmat Ha'Torah Vol. XIV p.192)

"Hashem said to Moshe, 'See, I have made you a master over Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your navi'." (Shmot 7:1)

Although the word "navi" is commonly translated "prophet," in this context it means "spokesman." Rashi z"l explains that the term derives from the verse (Yeshayah 57:19), "Niv / utterance of the lips."

R' Yechezkel Abramsky z"l (av bet din in London and rosh yeshiva in Israel; author of Chazon Yechezkel on Tosefta; died 1976) once observed:

There are some Torah scholars who sit and study in a quiet corner all day long and appear to have no influence over their surroundings. However, that appearance is misleading. The mere fact that Jews are studying Torah in a state of holiness causes love of Torah and a state of holiness to spread among the Jewish People.

How do we know this? R' Abramsky asked rhetorically. We learn it from a statement by Rambam. He writes in his Mishneh Torah (Hil. Yesodei Ha'Torah 7:7) that there are two kinds of nevi'im (plural of navi). Some nevi'im are sent with missions to direct a city or a nation on the correct path, while other nevi'im prophecy for themselves alone, i.e., to raise their own spiritual states.

How can this be? asked R' Abramsky. As Rashi writes (above), the word "navi" comes from the phrase "niv / utterance of the lips." A navi is a spokesman! How then can somebody who prophesies only to himself be called a navi?

We see from here that even when a person appears to be improving only his own spiritual situation, he is, in fact, influencing his surroundings. He is, in reality, speaking quite loudly. (Quoted in Peninei Rabbeinu Yechezkel)

"For if you refuse to send out, and you continue to grip them - behold! The hand of Hashem is on your livestock that are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the cattle, and on the flock -- a very severe epidemic. Hashem shall distinguish between the livestock of Yisrael and the livestock of Egypt, and not a thing that belongs to Bnei Yisrael will die.' . . . Pharaoh sent and behold, of the livestock of Yisrael not even one had died -- yet Pharaoh's heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people." (Shmot 9:2-4, 7)

R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and rosh yeshiva) asks: Why is so much emphasis placed on the fact that the flocks of Bnei Yisrael were not struck by the plague? We already know that the plagues struck Egyptians, not Jews. Indeed, it appears from the last verse quoted above that the fact that the animals of the Jews were not struck was a compelling argument for releasing Bnei Yisrael from slavery, "yet Pharaoh's heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people." What was so compelling about the fact that the animals of Bnei Yisrael were not struck?

R' Gruenwald explains: Pharaoh argued that Moshe and Aharon could not be the emissaries of G-d to save Bnei Yisrael because it was not yet time for the Exodus. Hashem had told Avraham that his descendants would be in a foreign land for 400 years, and so far Bnei Yisrael had been in Egypt only (just under) 210 years. Therefore, Pharaoh argued, he was legally entitled to hold Bnei Yisrael as his slaves. [Commentaries offer many explanations for why the Exodus did, in fact, take place early.]

Moshe responded to Pharaoh: If you are correct - "if you refuse to send out, and you continue to grip them," i.e., you claim that you are entitled to hold on to them - then the halachic principle that

"Whatever a slave Acquires belongs to his master" should be applicable. Slaves cannot own property, and any flocks in the possession of Bnei Yisrael would be yours. The test of ownership will be whether the flocks of Bnei Yisrael die in the plague as well.

When Pharaoh saw that not even one of the sheep of Bnei Yisrael died, his argument that he was legally entitled to hold Bnei Yisrael as his slaves was defeated. Nevertheless, the verse says, "Pharaoh's heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people." (Haggadah Shel Pesach Chasdei David)

Shemittah

This week we conclude our discussion of the sanctity of the fruits of shevi'it / the seventh year. Specifically, we discuss this week the permitted uses of produce other than eating and drinking.

The halachot below are taken from chapter seven of Sefer Ha'shemittah by R' Yechiel Michel Tikochinski z"l.

One is permitted to rub produce on his skin even if the produce is edible, so long as the produce is fit for skin care as well. Specifically, this refers to certain oils. However, one may not rub oil that is fit for eating either on animals or on utensils.

One may use even edible produce as fuel provided it is normally used as such (again, referring to certain oils). However, this is permitted only if the pleasure (i.e., light or heat) is derived simultaneously with the oil being destroyed. Therefore, one would not be permitted to pour edible oil into a bonfire, which destroys the oil without providing a noticeable benefit. Also, one may not use edible oil (of shemittah) for Chanukah candles, for yahrzeit candles, or for the ceremonial candles that stand in front of the chazzan at shul since one does not derive physical pleasure from those lights.

One may not use shemittah produce to make laundry detergent if the produce is fit for any other purpose (eating, drinking, perfuming, and dyeing).

Produce that has no use other than to be smelled also has sanctity of shevi'it. [This includes some flowers.] Once there is no aroma remaining, they produce may be disposed of.

Produce that was planted solely for use in mitzvot - i.e., lulavim, hadassim and aravot - do not have sanctity of shemittah. [However, etrogim do, as they are edible. This topic will be discussed in Hamaayn before next Sukkot.]

Flowers that have no aroma and are grown for beauty have no sanctity of shevi'it. (Like any other plant, one may not plant them during the shemittah; here, we deal only with the consequences if they did grow.)

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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