

# "YITZCHAK EFFECT" IMPACTS THE MISHKAN / SCENTS OF SACRIFICE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #981 – Accepting Shul Donations From Non-Shomrei Shabbos Good Shabbos!

## The "Yitzchak Effect" Impacted The Mishkan Service For All Future Generations

The first day of Nisan is a very important date in Jewish history. On that date the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was first set up. In truth, the entire construction of the *Mishkan* was finished on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev. Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Mt. Sinai on Yom Kippur and announced that *Hashem* had forgiven the people for the sin of the Golden Calf. On the day after Yom Kippur -- 11 Tishrei -- Moshe gave *Klal Yisrael* the *mitzvah* to build the *Mishkan*. The building of the *Mishkan* was in fact the topic of the last five *Parshiyos* of *Sefer Shemos* -- *Terumah*, *Tezaveh*, *Ki Tisa*, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*. The process took place during the end of the month of Tishrei, throughout the month of Cheshvan and was ultimately completed on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev.

The *Mishkan* sat unassembled in its component parts during the end of Kislev, throughout Teves, Shvat, and Adar all the way until Rosh Chodesh Nisan. The Medrash Tanchuma comments on this delay in setting up the *Mishkan*: Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nachman states that the *Mishkan* was completed in less than 3 months, but sat unassembled for another three months. Why was this so? It is because G-d wanted to mix the *simcha* (rejoicing) of the day in which the *Mishkan* would first be set up with the *simcha* of the day in which Yitzchak Avinu was born. Yitzchak Avinu was born on Rosh Chodesh Nisan!

The Medrash goes on to say that the scoffers of the generation were mocking and saying "Why is there such a delay? Why isn't the *Mishkan* being set up right away when it was completed?" (Some things never change -- the *kibitzers* always find something to focus on to express their cynicism.) The Medrash states about these scoffers "But they didn't know that the Almighty had a Master Plan". Concerning this plan King David said "For you have gladdened me, *Hashem*, with Your deeds; at the works of Your hands I sing glad song. How great are Your deeds, *Hashem*, exceedingly profound are Your thoughts." [Tehillim 92:5-6].

The Medrash interprets "For you have gladdened me, *Hashem*, with Your deeds" refers to the Tent of

Meeting (*Ohel Moed*); "at the works of Your hands I sing" refers to the *Beis HaMikdash*; "How great are Your deeds, *Hashem*, exceedingly profound are Your thoughts" refers to the fact G-d planned to mix one joy with that of another (i.e. -- the setting up of the Tabernacle with the birthdate of Yitzchak). The next verse goes on to say: "A boor cannot know, nor can a fool understand this" [Tehillim 92:7]. The clueless did not get the great significance of the convergence of these two joyful dates. The scoffers who wanted to know why the *Mishkan* was not set up when it was first completed did not understand the Divine Thought Process which waited until Nisan 1 to first set it up. G-d had a plan -- to set up the *Mishkan* on the very day that the Patriarch Yitzchak was born.

Rav Dovid Kviat raises two difficulties with this Medrash:

- 1) The rule of thumb normally is that we do not mix one joyous event with another (*ayn m'arvin simcha b'simcha*).
- 2) What does the birth of Yitzchak have to do with putting up the *Mishkan*?

He suggests that Yitzchak is the "pillar of *Avodah*". He is the patriarch that represents Divine Service. Yitzchak himself was a "*korban*" -- he was about to be sacrificed. Not only was he "about to be sacrificed" against his will, he did it willingly! He did it joyfully (*b'simcha*). He set the tone of Divine Service performed with joy. Chazal tell us that he wanted to make sure that he would not be accidentally invalidated and asked his father to bind him tightly to make sure he did not move and thereby make the sacrifice *pasul* (invalid).

When one is contemplating putting up a *Mishkan* -- which is all about *korbonos*, the *Ribono shel Olam* wanted the influence of Yitzchak Avinu and his joyful approach to Divine Service to be present as a *segulah* (fortuitous omen) for the initial erection of the Tabernacle.

In Judaism, as we all know, dates on the calendar are not merely commemorative. What happened on a particular day in history has impact on all future generations. The Yom Tov of Pessach is the Time of Freedom and every single year on Pesach there are emanations of holiness and redemption that we can also take part in. When the Torah was given on Shavuot emanations of Torah learning potential are forever more present on that date which is the reason we make extra efforts to learn on Shavuot -- to seize those Heavenly emanations. Likewise, the fact that Yitzchak was born on Rosh Chodesh Nisan and *b'simcha* went to do the *Avodah* (Divine Service of Sacrifice) made an effect on the first day of Nisan for all future generations. Therefore when G-d established a *Mishkan*, he wanted that effect -- the "Yitzchak effect" to lend character to the Service that would take place in this *Mishkan* during all future generations.

So therefore even though the normal rule of thumb is that "*ayn m'arvin simcha b'simcha*" -- here there is no difficulty understanding why G-d decided to set aside this rule. The rule means we do not take two disparate reasons for rejoicing (e.g. -- rejoicing on a holiday and rejoicing over taking a new bride) and mix them by, for example, getting married during a Jewish holiday. But here we are talking about the same "*simcha*" -- the "*simcha* of *Avodah*" (joy of Divine Service). Here there is no

conflict. On the contrary G-d wanted to take this Divine Influence which existed within creation (by virtue of Yitzchak's birth on Nisan 1) and place it within the *Mishkan*, so therefore the *Mishkan* was first erected on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, to mix one joy with another -- the joy of the new Tabernacle with the joy of the day in which Yitzchak was born.

### **A Novel Interpretation of the Term "*Ray-ach Nichoach L'Hashem*"**

I saw in the sefer HaKsav V'HaKabbalah a beautiful observation. There is a recurrent theme throughout Sefer Vayikra: When the Torah speaks of the burnt offering, it refers to it quite often as *olah, eeshay, ray-ach nichoach L'Hashem* -- an olah-offering, a fire-offering, a pleasing fragrance to Hashem. Most of us understand that the term *ray-ach nichoach* (a pleasing fragrance) refers to the sacrifice. For some reason, the *Ribono shel Olam* gets some type of pleasure from the aroma of *Korbonos*.

HaKsav V'HaKabbalah brings from a sefer called Ma'aseh HaShem an opinion that this is incorrect. He interprets that the term *ray-ach nichoach L'Hashem* is not referring to the *Korban*. It is referring to the person who brings the *korban*. To what can the matter be compared? Erev Shabbos most of us walk into our homes and we smell something delicious. Maybe it will be the chicken soup coming to a boil, maybe it will be freshly baked Challah, maybe it will be the chicken that is roasting in the oven. Whatever it is going to be, when one walks into the door of a traditional Jewish home on Erev Shabbos -- even if one is on a different floor, even if he is 50 feet away from the kitchen -- Aaah! It smells so good!

Smell, to use an idiom from the business world can be called "a leading economic indicator." This means that one does not have to taste the chicken soup, one does not even have to see the chicken soup to know that "tonight I am going to have a delicious meal." I know I am going to have fresh challah and kugel and chicken soup and it is all going to be *geshmak!* I know that already without having tasted a morsel, because I smell it. The nature of smell is that it is anticipatory. Our sense of smell allows us to anticipate what it going to be.

HaKsav v'HaKabbalah writes that when a person brings a *korban* he wants to do *Teshuva*. It is not the *korban* that the Almighty wants so much -- it is what the *korban* is going to bring out in the person. *Korban* comes from the word *karev* -- which means coming closer. When a person brings a *korban* that says he wants to be better. Either it is a sin offering and he wants to bring atonement for what he has done or it is a burn offering (*olah*) or a peace offering (*shelamim*). In any event his bringing the *Korban* is an anticipatory act. He thereby anticipates what is going to happen by virtue of him having brought the sacrifice. The *ray-ach nichoach L'Hashem* is that now the *Ribono shel olam* sees -- smells, if you will -- from this activity of bringing a *korban* that this person is going to be better in the future.

The *Korban* is the "smell" that indicates what is going to be. His offering is indicative of what he is going to do and who he is going to be in the future. That which is going to happen in the future is always referred to as smell. One "smells it" before one is actually there. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* loves

the smell of the person who wants to become better and who wants to become closer to Him. That is why a *korban* is "*ray-ach nichoach l'Hashem*" -- the person, not the animal.

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