



“Your contribution is greater than theirs”

The Korbanos for the Inauguration of the Mizbeiach Extinguished the Negative Aspect of the Seven Midos

Aharon HaKohen Illuminated for Yisrael the Kedushah of the Seven Midos

This week’s parsha is parshas Beha’aloscha. Hence, it is fitting for us to focus on the mitzvah of the kindling of the lamps in the Mishkan and in the Beis HaMikdash (Bamidbar 8, 1): **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלותך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות, ויעש כן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה נרותיה כאשר צוה ה' את משה.”** Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, **“Speak to Aharon and say to him: ‘When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light.’”** Aharon did so; toward the face of the Menorah, he kindled its lamps, as Hashem had commanded Moshe.

Rashi asks: **Why does the Torah juxtapose the passage of the Menorah with the passage describing the contributions of the “nesiim” (the princes of the shevatim)? Because when Aharon saw the inauguration of the “nesiim,” he was disheartened, for he did not participate with them in the inauguration—neither he nor his tribe. HKBH said to him: “I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah’s lamps.”** The commentaries, each in his own way, endeavor to explain how exactly Aharon’s contribution was superior to the contribution of the nesiim.

Additionally, we will focus on the detail specified by HKB”H: **“Toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light.”** Here is the Rambam’s explanation (Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 3, 8): **“ששת הנרות הקבועים בששת הקנים היוצאים מן המנורה, כולן פניהם לנר האמצעי שעל קני המנורה, וזה הנר האמצעי פניו כנגד קודש הקדשים והוא הנקרא The six lamps affixed permanently to the six branches extending out from the body of the Menorah all faced the central lamp, which sat above the branches of the Menorah. The central lamp faced the Kodesh HaKodashim and was called the Western Lamp.**

Apparently, the Rambam’s explanation is based on the opinion of Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon (Menachos 98b) that the Menorah was positioned in the Beis HaMikdash from north to south. Now, the passuk related to the mitzvah of lighting the Menorah states (Shemos 27, 21): **“באהל מועד מחוץ לפרוכת:—אשר על העדות יערוך אותו אהרן ובניו מערב עד בוקר לפני ה'—in the Ohel Mo’ed, outside of the Parochet that is near the Testimony, Aharon and his sons shall arrange it from evening until morning, before Hashem.** This indicates that one of the lamps must **“face Hashem,”** i.e., the Shechinah located in the Kodesh HaKodashim to the west. More specifically, the middle lamp had to face west toward the Kodesh HaKodashim; hence, it is referred to as the **“נר מערבי”**—

the Western Lamp. We will elaborate to achieve a better understanding of the matter.

Yaakov Avinu Studied Torah in the Beis Midrash of Eiver Fourteen Years to Rectify the Seven Midos Twofold—Avoid Evil and Do Good

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by examining the preparations made by Yaakov Avinu when he fled from his brother Eisav. Instead of going directly to Charan, he first secluded himself in the Beis Midrash of Eiver for fourteen years studying Torah day and night. Rashi points this out in his commentary at the end of parshas Toldos. His source is the Gemara (Megillah 17a): “**דתניא היה יעקב בבית עבר—מוטמן ארבע עשרה שנה—for it was taught in a Baraisa: Yaakov was hidden away in the Academy of Eiver fourteen years.**” Rashi also points this out when the Torah informs us that Yaakov slept at the site of the future Mikdash (Bereishis 28, 11): “**And he lay down in that place**”—this expresses exclusion; in that place he lay down; however, during the fourteen years that he served in the house of Eiver, he did not lay down at night, because he engaged in Torah-study.

The commentaries are perplexed by this comment. After all, throughout the 63 years that Yaakov grew up and lived with his parents, Yitzchak and Rivkah, he studied in the Beis Midrash of Shem and Eiver. As it is written (ibid. 25, 27): “**ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים**”—**and Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents.** Rashi explains that this refers to the tents of Shem and Eiver. This begs the question: Why did Yaakov Avinu see fit to spend another fourteen years studying in the Beis Midrash of Eiver before going to Charan?

We find an intriguing answer to this question in the sacred words of the Imrei Yosef (Vayeitzei). During those fourteen years, Yaakov Avinu worked on perfecting the seven midos. During the first seven years, he learned how to annul the negative aspects of the seven midos; whereas during the second

seven years, he learned how to use them for the sake of kedushah. Hence, he remained there specifically fourteen years.

Seven Robust Cows Representing the Seven Midos of Kedushah Seven Emaciated Cows Representing the Seven Midos of Tumah

We will expand on his sacred words based on the text in parshas Mikeitz (ibid. 41, 1): “**ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים—ופרעה חולם והנה עומד על היאור, והנה מן היאור עולות שבע פרות יפות מראה ובריאת בשר ותרעינה באחו, והנה שבע פרות אחרות עולות אחריהן מן היאור רעות מראה ודקות בשר ותעמודנה אצל הפרות על שפת היאור, ותאכלנה הפרות רעות המראה ודקות הבשר את שבע הפרות יפות המראה והבריאות וייקץ פרעה.**” **It happened at the end of two years to the day: Pharaoh was dreaming and, behold—he was standing on the bank of the river, when behold! Seven cows of beautiful appearance and robust flesh emerged from the river, and they were grazing in the swamp. Then, behold, seven other cows emerged from the river after them of poor appearance and gaunt flesh; they stood next to the cows on the bank of the river. Then the cows of poor appearance and gaunt flesh ate the seven robust cows of beautiful appearance; and Pharaoh awoke.**

Here is the interpretation of the dream from the Zohar hakadosh (Mikeitz 194a): “**רבי יצחק אומר, שבע פרות הטובות דרגין עלאיין על אהרנין, ושבע הפרות הרעות דרגין אהרנין דלתמא.**” Rabbi Yitzchak teaches that the seven robust cows represent the superior human qualities and characteristics emanating from the realm of kedushah, while the emaciated, unhealthy-looking cows represent the lowly, negative qualities and characteristics emanating from the forces of tumah.

Let us elaborate. Every Jew possesses the midos of kedushah, so that he can use them to serve Hashem. With “**chesed**,” one can treat others with kindness and serve Hashem with love. With “**gevurah**,” one can overcome one’s yetzer and serve Hashem with fear and reverence. With “**Tiferes**,” one recognizes that the only true splendor in life is achieved through Torah and the service of Hashem. With “**netzach**,”

one defeats one's yetzer hara. With “**hod**,” one acknowledges and thanks Hashem for all the good one has been granted. With “**yesod**,” one attaches oneself securely to Hashem. With “**malchus**,” one affirms the sovereignty of HKB”H over all of one's limbs and sinews. In contrast, the seven midos emanating from the klipah and its forces of evil oppose the seven midos of kedushah, in keeping the pronouncement (Koheles 7, 14): “זה לעומת זה עשה” האלקים—G-d created the world with corresponding equal and opposite forces.

We will now interpret Pharaoh's dream with this understanding: “**Then the cows of poor appearance and gaunt flesh ate the seven robust cows of beautiful appearance.**” Clearly, the sole desire and goal of the klipos is to cause a Jew to sin and stumble. Instead of serving Hashem with the seven midos of kedushah, they want him to serve Hashem, chas v'shalom, with the seven midos of the klipah, living a life of earthly pleasures and debauchery. Thus, the negative, unholy midos swallow the sparks of kedushah embodied by the seven midos of kedushah; they are sustained by the kedushah.

The Seven Names of the Yetzer HaRa Correspond to the Seven Negative Midos

Upon further consideration, it appears that this helps explain what we have learned in the following Gemara (Succah 52a): “שבעה שמות יש לו ליצר הרע, הקב”ה קראו רע... משה קראו ערל... דוד קראו טמא... שלמה קראו שונא... ישעיה קראו רע... קראו מכשול... יחזקאל קראו אבן... יואל קראו צפוני.” **The yetzer hara has seven names. HKB”H called it “evil” (“rah”) . . . David called it “impure” (“tamei”) . . . Shlomo called it the “enemy” (“sonei”) . . . Yeshayah called it an “obstacle” (“michshol”) . . . Yechezkel called it a “stone” (“ehven”) . . . Yoel called it “the hidden one” (“tzifoni”), as it says (Yoel 2, 20): “And I will distance ‘the hidden one’ from you.”** The Maharsha (ibid.) explains that these appellations refer to seven distinct aspects or forces of the yetzer hara corresponding to the seven days of creation. Each name is associated with a specific category of misdeed.

He is undoubtedly referring to the seven midos—character traits—HKB”H ingrained in every human being: חסד, גבורה, תפארת, נצח, הוד, יסוד, מלכות. Each of these attributes possesses a good side related to kedushah and a bad side related to tumah. The Maharsha's explanation concurs with what is taught in Pardes Rimonim (23, 10) in the name of numerous early scholars: Each of the days of the week aligns with one of the seven midos. This is the significance of the seven names of the yetzer hara; it has seven evil forces that cause a Jew to sin with one of the seven negative midos.

This explains very nicely a statement in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b): “אמר רב יצחק, יצרו של אדם מתחדש עליו בכל יום... ואמר רבי שמעון בן לוי, יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש המיתו”—**Rav Yitzchak said: A person's yetzer renews itself against him daily . . . Rabbi Shimon ben Levi said: A person's yetzer overwhelms him every day and attempts to kill him.** It appears that they are both teaching us the same thing—that on each of the seven days of the week, the yetzer hara utilizes one of its respective forces of tumah reflecting one of its seven names. So, it is as if there is a new yetzer every day assaulting a person trying to cause him to sin each day with a different, distinct midah.

We can now better appreciate the vital lesson taught by the Imrei Yosef. Prior to departing for Charan, Yaakov Avinu secluded himself in the Beis Midrash of Eiver to study Torah for fourteen years—seven years to learn how to combat and eliminate the seven midos of the klipah—i.e., avoiding bad, improper behavior—and seven years to establish and perfect the seven midos reflecting kedushah.

Let us embellish this thought. Why was it important to Yaakov Avinu to rectify his seven midos specifically before embarking for Charan? In truth, he had already worked on the tikun of his personal midos during his 63 years prior to that. Now, however, he was embarking on a new venture—to establish the foundation of the future generations of the people bearing his name—**Bnei Yisrael**—the descendants of the twelve shevatim. Thus, they,

too, would refine their seven midos—both learning to avoid bad behavior stemming from the forces of evil and learning to perform good deeds and serve HKB”H based on the seven midos of kedushah.

The Contribution of the Nesiim versus the Contribution of Aharon HaKohen

Following this line of reasoning, we will now return to the remark HKB”H makes to Aharon HaKohen to appease and encourage him: **“I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah’s lamps.”** It is important to note that the korbanos brought by the nesiim consecrated the external mizbeiach located in Ezras Yisrael. Aharon HaKohen, on the other hand, kindled the Menorah located in the Heichal, an internal, holier location.

Furthermore, the Arizal (Eitz Chaim, 50, 7) teaches us that we were commanded to offer animal korbanos, because human sin originates from man’s animalistic soul—his **“נפש בהמית”**. Now, this part of the **“nefesh”** is a mixture of good and evil. Hence, by sacrificing an animal to atone for the influence of the **“nefesh habeheimit,”** we are symbolically incinerating the negative, evil part of our being to Hashem.

Our teacher, the Arizal, also explains this in Ta’amei HaMitzvos (Vayikra): **“ולכן כשאדם חוטא, מקריב קרבן נפש בהמה של בעלי חיים, שהם גרמו לו לחטוא, ונחית את גבוה ושורף אותן העבירות, ואז שורף נפש בהמי שבאדם נמשך לו ניקוי וזכות, כי הכל הוא משורש אחד חוצבו ומתכפר האדם.”** **A sinner sacrifices an animal as a korban, because the animalistic soul caused him to sin. Thus, a heavenly fire descends and incinerates those aveiros. Then, the root of the animalistic soul in the person is cleansed and purified, because everything is hewn from one source, and the person receives atonement.**

We will now present the inspirational words of the esteemed Rabbi Chaim of Sanz, zy”a, in Divrei Chaim (Vayikra), related to the passuk (Vayikra 1, 2): **“אדם—כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה’ מן הבהמה מן הבקר מן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם—when a person from among you will bring a korban to Hashem, from the cattle and from**

the flocks you shall bring your korban. Here is a translation of his sacred insight:

The matter of the korban is well-known. The Almighty does not need to consume it. In His infinite wisdom, He issued this decree to bring a human being closer to Hashem. They of blessed memory explain that the kedushah of the fire on the mizbeiach consumes the material tendencies of the animal; this affects a corresponding change in the person’s animalistic soul. As a result of his teshuvah and contrition in the presence of Hashem while the korban is being sacrificed, the person’s animalistic force and tendencies are shattered and burnt. Thus, he connects with the force of kedushah . . . This is the implication of the passuk: “When a person from among you”—namely, when a Jew offers a korban, he should have in mind to sacrifice that portion within his being to Hashem . . . Thus, the korban consumes the corruption of the animalistic soul within him and elevates the human portion within him to Hashem.

Applying this to the korbanos brought by the nesiim to consecrate the mizbeiach, they intended to imbue all Jews with the ability to resist the seven midos of the klipah, enabling them to avoid bad behavior—**“סוד מרע”**. Therefore, their contribution was offered on the external mizbeiach in the Ezras Yisrael. This exemplifies the teaching in the Gemar (Sanhedrin 43b): **“כל הזוכח את יצרו ומתודה עליו, מעלה עליו הכתוב: כאילו כיבדו להקדוש ברוך הוא בשני עולמים העולם הזה והעולם הבא, דכתוב: זוכח תודה יכבדנני.”** **Whoever slaughters his yetzer and confesses on its account, Scripture considers it as if he has honored HKB”H in both worlds, Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa; for it is written (Tehillim 50, 23): “He who offers confession honors Me.”** In other words, whoever conquers his yetzer hara, it is viewed as if he slaughtered it.

In contrast, Aharon HaKohen kindled the Menorah in the Heichal, the inner chamber. Thus, he illuminated for all of Yisrael the seven midos through a light of kedushah imbuing them with the

capacity to do good—“**asei tov.**” To substantiate this explanation, let us refer to the teachings of the author of the Tanya in Torah Ohr (Vayeishev). He writes that the seven lamps correspond to the seven midos; the lamps are the midos. Every midah has a corresponding part both in the klipah and in the realm of kedushah. In fact, the midos of the klipah are nourished from the kedushah. Ahavah of kedushah degenerates into material lust. Similarly, yirah of kedushah degenerates into negative fear and anger. It is incumbent on us to refine the midos and transform them into elements of kedushah, so that all of the midos serve Hashem.

This explains very nicely HKB”H’s words of encouragement to Aharon: **“I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah’s lamps.”** Indeed, the nesiiim offered korbanos on the mizbeiach to abolish the negative, evil side of the seven midos and imbue Yisrael with the quality of **“סוד מרע.”** Your contribution, however, is superior to theirs. By preparing and lighting the lamps, you infused the seven midos with kedushah imbuing Yisrael with the exemplary, admirable quality of **“עשה טוב.”**

The Middle Lamp Represents the Midah of Netzach the Ability to Defeat the Yetzer HaRa

Continuing on this sacred journey, we will now focus on the command of HKB”H: **“Toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light.”** According to the Rambam, this means that the six lateral lamps had to be affixed so that they all faced the central Western Lamp. I would like to suggest an explanation for the special significance of the middle lamp, which can also be described as the fourth lamp. Now, if the lamps align with the seven midos, then the middle lamp represents the midah of **“netzach,”** the fourth midah. This midah is the attribute of victory.

In a sense, one could argue that **“netzach”** is the most crucial of all the midos. For, as we have learned: **“יצרו של אדם מתחדש עליו בכל יום”—a person’s yetzer hara renews its efforts against him each**

day. Accordingly, this means that a person must battle the yetzer hara constantly to survive. From this perspective, the midah of **“netzach”** is the central and most important of the midos, since a person must overcome and defeat the yetzer hara daily in order to serve Hashem with the other six midos.

This explains fantastically why the Noam Elimelech and the Ohev Yisrael teach that the seven lamps of the Menorah align with the seven holy shepherds: **Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and David.** According, to this scheme, the fourth lamp corresponds to the fourth shepherd, namely Moshe Rabeinu, the personification of the midah of **“netzach.”**

To clarify the association of Moshe Rabeinu with the midah of **“netzach,”** we will refer to a teaching in the Gemara (ibid.). HKB”H says to Yisrael: **“בני בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תכלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו—My son, I created the yetzer hara, and I have created Torah as its antidote. If you engage in Torah-study, you will not be delivered into its hand.** In other words, the only way to defeat the yetzer hara is through Torah-study. Now, as we know, Moshe Rabeinu transmitted the Torah to Yisrael, as it is written (Devarim 33, 4): **“תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב—the Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov.** Hence, Moshe Rabeinu personifies the midah of **“netzach,”** because victory over the yetzer hara can only be achieved with the Torah, which he transmitted to Yisrael.

Let us add an intriguing tidbit. The passuk at the beginning of the parsha says: **“Aharon did so; toward the face of the Menorah, he kindled its lamps, as Hashem had commanded Moshe.”** Why was it necessary to reiterate **“as Hashem had commanded Moshe”?** This goes without saying! There is no question that Aharon did precisely what HKB”H had commanded him to do through Moshe.

Nevertheless, in keeping with this discussion, we can suggest that the passuk is hinting to us that Aharon HaKohen had in mind to light the lamp so

that it faced the middle candle associated with Moshe Rabeinu. In other words, Hashem wanted all the other lamps and midos to relate to Moshe Rabeinu, the personification of “**netzach**,” to emphasize to the people that only with the power of the Torah transmitted to them by Moshe is it possible to defeat the yetzer hara.

We now have cause to rejoice. It should be clear now why the middle lamp faced the Kodesh HaKodashim. After all, the two “luchos haBris” were housed in the Aron located in the Kodesh HaKodashim. The Torah was disseminated from there to all of

Yisrael, as it is written (Shemos 25, 22): “וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שָׁמָּה: וְדִבַּרְתִּי אִתְּךָ מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרוּבִים אֲשֶׁר עַל אַרְוֹן הָעֵדוּת אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה אוֹתְךָ אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל—**it is there that I shall arrange audience with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the “Kapores,” from between the two “keruvim” that are on the Aron of the Testimony, and it is all that I shall command you pertaining to Bnei Yisrael.** Therefore, the middle lamp representing the midah of “**netzach**” faced the Kodesh HaKodashim to emphasize the fact that it is impossible to defeat the yetzer hara without engaging in the study of Torah.



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