

Potomac Torah Study Center
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NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Now available: recording of Dr. Michael Matsas' interview on The Illusion of Safety – the Nazis' tragic slaughter of 87% of the Jews of Greece during World War II. Listen on YouTube at https://youtu.be/F_hgB0ExYRo Copy of Dr. Matsas' book also at Beth Sholom library.

Four of the final five portions of Sefer Shemot concern the Mishkan, the structure that God directed Moshe to have B'Nai Yisrael build and dedicate, and to keep with them in the Midbar. Once dedicated, God would bring His presence to dwell among the people, near or above the Mishkan. Tetzaveh, which continues without a break from Terumah, focuses on the special garments that the Kohenim, especially the Kohen Gadol, would wear when performing their duties. (For some drawings of the garments, see pages 472-73 of the Stone Chumash.) (During a non-leap year, we read Tetzaveh the week including 7 Adar, Moshe's birthday. The special garments at King Achesverus's party in Shushan in the Megillah are among the themes connecting Tetzaveh to Purim, which comes the week after Tetzaveh during a non-leap year.)

Chabad Rabbi Aharon Loschak (see below) discusses the eight special garments that the Kohen Gadol wore when performing his holy service in the Mishkan and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Rabbi Loschak directly addresses a common issue for Jews today: how are we to relate to these special garments that are so alien to us more than 2200 years since the destruction of the Temple? His answer is that Judaism is not merely a list of do and don't commands. Rather, it is about building a relationship with God and bringing that relationship to every aspect of our lives. The tzitz, worn on the forehead, is a sign of building a relationship with our Creator. The Tefillin Shel Rosh (also worn on our head) sends the same message today. While virtually no person can think about God at all times, we wear the bottom line, the symbol of our belief, on our forehead to show our connection with Hashem. Both the special clothes of the Kohen Gadol and our Tefillin today express this connection. Rabbi Yehoshua Singer (see below) adds to this message by explaining that the Me'il reminds us to avoid lashon horah (evil speech) in multiple ways. Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky summarizes all these lessons by explaining how the three primary items of the garments of the Kohen Gadol combine to show the unity of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, connects the lifestyles of many great thinkers to the Mishkan. Great masters of intellectual creativity, including Beethoven and Trollope (two of my favorites), led very disciplined lives with daily rituals that they followed strictly. Within their very structured lives, they set aside specific times each day for creativity. We Jews do something similar, with daily rituals of Shacharit, Mincha, Maariv, the food we eat, the way we behave, and the aspects of holiness (mainly set out in Tetzaveh and Sefer Vayikra). The structure of Torah Judaism sets aside regular times to connect with Hashem through our davening and our study. The structured times set aside for these regular activities enable us to build our creativity and our connection with Hashem. The messages of Rabbis Sacks, Loschak, Singer and Wisniefsky send us very similar messages, all showing ways in which the Mishkan and the garments of the Kohen Gadol connected to the essential messages of the Mishkan.

These lessons relating to the Mishkan also connect to two recent incidents affecting Jews. Dr. Michael Matsas, a Greek born retired dentist who survived World War II thanks to the Resistance, was the subject of a fascinating interview about his newly released book, *The Illusion of Safety: The Story of the Greek Jews During the Second World War*. The

interview is now available on You Tube at https://youtu.be/F_hgB0ExYRo The resistance enabled Jews from numerous backgrounds and countries to survive in the mountains for the last few years of World War II. The unfortunate tragedy is that because the Allies kept the story of Hitler's final solution a secret during that time, 87% of the Jews in Greece, those who believed the official propaganda and censored news reports, perished as the Nazis sent them to the concentration camps during the final years of the war.

Very recently, a school board in Tennessee banned the highly praised *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman, a retelling of the Holocaust story (with cats as Nazis and mice as Jews). (Our feline family members dislike the book for an obvious reason.) What interests me is that this book, which my kids read and enjoyed when they were young, is now, a quarter century later, banned in part of Tennessee. A few years ago, I visited Whitwell, TN and had the honor of visiting the Paper Clip Project, where school children in a small, rural area with no Jews living anywhere near them, collected millions of paper clips and housed them in a building as a memorial to the Holocaust. (Look up Paper Clip Project on the Internet to learn more.) One group in the state bans a book about the horrors of the Holocaust. Meanwhile, anyone who wishes can drive nearby to explore a moving memorial by local school children who honored six million Jews who perished for no reason other than being born Jewish and living in Europe at the wrong time.

Rabbi Hayyim Angel's book review of Rabbi Haim Jachter's *Bridging Traditions* (see below) discusses Halachic issues that arise when Sephardic and Ashkenaz Jews daven together. Rabbi Jachter demonstrates that the staggering unity of all Jewish traditions, despite millennia of groups living apart, vastly swamps the differences even among Sephardic and Ashkenaz traditions and minhagim. Jewish traditions, even those that initially seem foreign to us today (such as details relating to the Mishkan), bring Jews together. Connections among Jews are vastly more significant than differences among Jews from different cultures, degrees of Jewish background, or ways of life.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned the thought that the Torah may have moved chapter 18 (Yitro's visit to Moshe) earlier in the Torah sequence (rather than leaving it later, in chronological order), in part to contrast Jews' experiences with honorable non-Jews (like Yitro) compared to evil ones (like Amalek). The difference between the school board that banned *Maus* and the school children who collected millions of paper clips to recall the Holocaust makes the same point. Some non-Jewish groups treat us honorably while others do not. (The school board members apparently voted to ban *Maus* because of a concern that it was too graphic for young children. A better solution would have been to restrict the book to high school libraries and to request that public libraries shelf the book in a Young Adult rather than Children's section.) My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, encountered both honorable and misinformed (even dishonorable) non-Jews in the Potomac community during his years as Rabbi at Har Shalom. We who were members during those years remember instances of both. As we spend these weeks studying the Mishkan and its meaning for Jews today as well as throughout Jewish history, we also recall our own experiences during our adult lives. May the results of our study help us bring lessons to our own children and grandchildren.

Shabbat Shalom,
Alan & Hannah

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Yehoshua Mayer HaLevi ben Nechama Zelda, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, Dovid Meir ben Chaya Tzippa; David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, Ramesh bat Heshmat, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers. I have removed a number of names that have been on the list for a long time. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Drasha: Tetzaveh: Inconspicuous Assumption

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky © 1998

[Please remember Mordechai ben Chaya for a Mishebarach!]

In this week's portion Moshe is charged to prepare every detail of the priesthood for his brother Aharon and his descendants. In intricate detail, the sartorial traits of every one of the priestly vestments are explicated, down to the last intertwined threads.

And though Moshe is in charge of setting up the administration and establishing the entire order of service while training his brother and nephews, his name is conspicuously missing from this portion.

Our sages explain the reason for the omission. When Hashem threatened to destroy His nation, Moshe pleaded with Him: "And now if You would but forgive their sin! — but if not, erase me now from Your book that You have written" (Exodus 32:32). As we all know, Moshe's plea were accepted. The nation was spared. But Moshe was not left unscathed. His request of written eradication was fulfilled in one aspect. He was left out of one portion of the Torah Tetzaveh. Thus the words of the tzadik were fulfilled in one aspect. But why this portion?

Though this English-language publication is not wont to discuss Hebrew etymological derivations, it is noteworthy to mention a thought I once heard in the name of Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef. Moshe's plea "erase me now from Your book," bears an explanation. The word sifr'chah, "your book" can be broken down to two words sefer chaf — which means the twentieth book. Thus Moshe was removed from this portion of Tetzaveh, the twentieth portion of the Torah. [emphasis added]

But why would Moshe intone such omission in this, of all the portions of the Torah? Why not omit his name in the portions that declare the tragic outcome of sin or the calamities of insurrection? Wouldn't that be a better choice for omission? Why did Moshe allude to having his name omitted in the week he charges Aharon with all the honor and glory that is afforded the High Priest?

Rav Yitzchak Blaser was once seated at a gathering of the most prominent sages of his generation that was held in his city of St. Petersburg.

Among the Talmudic sages present was Rabbi Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik of Brisk, world renown for his Talmudic genius. Rabbi Soloveitchik presented a Talmudic question that his young son, Reb Chaim, had asked. After posing the question, a flurry of discussion ensued, each of the rabbis offering his own answer to the riddle, while other rabbis refuted them with powerful rebuttals. During the entire repartee, Rabbi Blaser, who had a reputation as a Talmudic genius, sat silently. He did not offer an answer, nor did he voice approval to any of the answers given by the Rabbis.

When Rabbi Soloveitchik ultimately offered his son's own solution, Rabbi Blaser sat quietly, neither nodding in approval nor shaking his head in disagreement. It seemed as if he did not comprehend the depth of the insightful discourse. It was as if he was not even there! Bewildered, Reb Yosef Dov began having second thoughts about the renowned Rabbi Blaser. "Was he truly the remarkable scholar that the world had made him out to be?" he wondered.

Later that evening, Rabbi Soloveitchik was in the main synagogue where he got hold of the book "Pri Yitzchok," a volume filled with Talmudic exegesis authored by none other than Rabbi Blaser himself.

After leafing through the large volume he saw that the afternoon's entire discourse, his son's question, the offered and reputed responses, and the final resolution, were all part of a dissertation that Rabbi Blaser had himself published years earlier!

"Now I realize," thought Rabbi Soleveitchik, "Rabbi Blaser is as much a genius in humility as he is in Talmudic law!"

Our sages tell us that actually Moshe was to have been chosen as the Kohen Gadol in addition to the leader of the Jewish nation. It was his unwavering refusal to accept any of those positions that lost him the opportunity to serve as Kohen Gadol. Instead, Hashem took it from him and gave it to Aharon.

Many of us would have always harped on the fact. How often do I hear the claims "I got him that job!" "I could have been in his position!" "I started that company! Had I stayed, I would be the one with the stock options!" "That was really my idea!"

Moshe, too, could have injected himself as the one who propelled and engineered Aharon's thrust to glory — especially after a seemingly tainting experience with the Golden Calf. In his great humility, Moshe did just the opposite.

Moshe did not want to diminish Aharon's glory in any way. He wanted the entire spotlight to shine on Aharon and his great service to Klal Yisrael. Therefore, in the portion in which Moshe charges, guides, and directs the entire process of the priesthood, his name is conspicuously omitted.

One of the greatest attributes of true humility is to let others shine in their own achievement without interfering or announcing your role in their success. The greatest educators, the wisest parents, and most understanding colleagues know when to share the spotlight and when to let another friend, colleague, sibling, or child shine in their success or accomplishment. They know exactly when to be conspicuously or inconspicuously "missing from the book."

Good Shabbos

Response to Failure

By Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg *

As a parent or an educator, there is a challenge which can come up routinely. When our child or our student misbehaves, what should we do?

There are different strategies and approaches that one can take. One can be critical. One can get upset. In this week's haftarah, God has a similar challenge and takes an interesting approach. The Jewish people have been enmeshed in sin. God instructs the prophet Ezekiel to share a vision with them (Ezek. 43:10-11). A future vision of what the Third Temple will look like, in great detail with its measurements and vessels.

God's goal is to make the Jewish people feel ashamed of their actions. When they see that in spite of their sinning, God not only loves them but has a great plan in store for them, it will hopefully take them from a place of shame to a place of positive action. The action of ultimately building the Third Temple.

This is a really counterintuitive strategy. It's telling you that when someone has failed, you shouldn't tell them that they failed or that they did wrong. You need to tell them all the good things that are going to happen in their life moving forward. There might be some shame that they did wrong, but you still believe in them.

The Torah is beautifully indicating that this can lead towards feelings of positivity. They will realize that they did mess up, but if you believe in them, then they believe in themselves. It's a really beautiful message for parents, for educators, and for all of us. If you are someone who's ever erred or sinned in your own life, remember that there are people and God that

love you and have great things in store for you. It's a really profound counterintuitive message in this week's haftarah for Parsha Tetzaveh.

Always a pleasure learning with you. More next week.

* Executive Director at Penn Hillel, Rabbi Greenberg received semicha from YCT in 2012.

** From Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah: Friends, it has been my true privilege these many years to share with you my thoughts on the parsha, both in written form and more recently as videos. Now the time has come to pass the baton over to our amazing rabbis in the field. I know that we will be enriched by their insights and unique and distinct perspectives, as they bring the Torah, refracted through the lens of their rabbinates and the people they are serving, to all of us. We start with Rabbi Gabe Greenberg, executive director of Penn Hillel.

<https://library.yctorah.org/2022/02/tetzaveh22/>

Are You a Pronoun?

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine * © 2022

This week's Parsha is unique in that the name of Moshe cannot be found. This is unique because from the time that Moshe was introduced to us in Parshas Shimos until Chumash Devorim when Moshe will review the Torah, there is no Parsha totally missing his name, except this Parsha. Instead, Hashem uses a pronoun to refer to Moshe, "And you shall command the Jewish people..."

A variety of commentaries address the uniqueness of Moshe's missing name. Some observe that this Parsha occurs at the same time of year as Moshe's yartzeit, the seventh of Adar. It would seem that somehow Moshe's missing name is like a praise, a eulogy. What message is there in Moshe being referred to by a pronoun?

A pronoun is a unique type of communication which presupposes a significant relationship, to the point that people will be able to figure out who is being referred to. When a teacher says, "You'd better behave, or I'm going to call him," we all realize that the person referred to is someone of authority in the school or in the child's life. When the Torah refers to Moshe with the statement, "You shall command the people..." and the Torah knows that we will know who the "You" is, it is a great praise for Moshe. It expresses the idea that Moshe is the trustworthy communicator of G-d's law, and even if a pronoun is used we know exactly to whom it does refer.

Sometimes in life a person can acquire pronoun-status among their friends as they develop a special role in people's lives. When on a communal level, "Oh, yes, he took care of it," is accepted to refer to a certain person, that person has attained pronoun-status. It is no longer necessary to give all the identifying information for people to know to whom you refer. Such is their level of dedication; such is their relationship.

I am reminded of the status that Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (d. 1986) held in the Jewish world during his lifetime. "Reb Moshe," as he was fondly known, was a premier Torah scholar, who was so approachable, and so capable of applying Torah law to new cases in biology, science, and technology. On his shoulders rested much of the tradition that was successfully transferred from Europe to the United States. His name was a household name, as he was known as the Posek Hador (Halachic authority of the generation).

On one occasion a group of yeshiva students heard that Reb Moshe had been hospitalized. They wanted to pray for the Rabbi, but couldn't recall the name of Reb Moshe's mother so as to recite the traditional Mi Shebeirach prayer. One of the group stated perceptively, "In heaven, just as on earth, they must know who Reb Moshe is, even if we don't mention a last name, or his mother's name. Just pray for 'Reb Moshe.' Hashem knows who we mean."

I believe that every person has the ability to become a pronoun to others by the way they conduct themselves. There may be an elderly person you look out for, or a child who needs some extra encouragement. When you develop a relationship,

and they refer to you to others gratefully with the words, "He called today," or "She stopped by," you know that you have made a difference in someone's life in such a profound way that it became unnecessary to identify you by your full name. In your own way, you have followed in the trustworthy footsteps of our teacher Moshe. You have become a pronoun.

With best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Rhine, until recently Rav of Southeast Congregation in Silver Spring, is a well known mediator and coach. His web site, Teach613.org, contains many of his brilliant Devrei Torah. RMRhine@Teach613.org. **Teach613 recently started a new Shulchan Aruch Zoom class this week. For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.**

In Search of a Real Tzaddik/Tzaddek: Thoughts for Parashat Tetsaveh

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

An ad in a recent issue of our local Jewish newspaper announced that "a Tzaddik" was coming to town, and that he would be speaking at a certain time and place. The ad included a picture of the "Tzaddik" — a man with a long beard and black hat, with his eyes gazing soulfully heavenward.

Several months ago, I received a copy of a synagogue bulletin that also featured a picture of a "Tzaddik" who was to visit the synagogue. This "Tzaddik" had the appropriate beard and black hat, along with long sidelocks, and of course, his eyes were gazing soulfully heavenward.

Indeed, during the past year or so I've noticed a number of ads and fliers announcing the forthcoming visits of "Tzadikkim," all of whom were bearded men, dressed in black, with eyes gazing soulfully heavenward.

Whenever I see such ads, I wonder: what genuine "Tzaddik" would be brazen enough to make his righteousness public? Which real "Tzaddik" would allow himself to be marketed in such a way? Wouldn't a real "Tzaddik" be a humble person who would be deeply embarrassed to pass himself off as a "Tzaddik," who would be mortified to be pictured in ads that imply that he has holy powers? And are all "Tzadikkim" men with beards, black hats and "spiritual" eyes?

Obviously, there is a demand among elements of the Jewish public for "Tzadikkim." People want to believe that there are individuals who have reached a profound level of holiness and who can somehow impart their spiritual powers to benefit those who listen to them. Regrettably, we have read of various "Tzadikkim" who have been found to be charlatans and outright criminals. Instead of praying for their supporters, they have preyed on their supporters.

I fully believe there are Tzadikkim and Tzadikot in our world; but I also believe that these very righteous and pious people are humble and private. They don't pose as saints, and they don't let others market them as holy people with great spiritual powers. They don't seek to make money by commercializing their righteousness.

In this week's Parasha, we read of the "ner tamid," the eternal light that was to be lit in the Mishkan. Our synagogues have adopted this symbol and have placed a "ner tamid" in front of the holy ark. The "ner tamid" is not an ostentatious torch, but is a humble steady light. It reflects spiritual power by its very gentleness and constancy, not by shouting out its holiness and not by trying to call attention to itself. The "ner tamid" suggests basic qualities of spirituality — humility, quietness, constancy.

Alan Watts, a popular writer on Eastern religion, offered a keen insight: "The most spiritual people are the most human. They are natural and easy in manner; they give themselves no airs: they interest themselves in ordinary everyday matters, and are not forever talking and thinking about religion. For them, there is no difference between spirituality and usual life..." ("The Supreme Identity," p. 128).

Each of us has a thirst for connection with the Almighty. Each of us feels spiritual uplift when we are in the presence of truly good and pious people. But we ought to be very suspicious of those who presumptuously present themselves as

being “Tzadikim,” or who seek to raise funds from us as a means of our gaining blessings from the “Tzadikim.” It is not by accident that Jewish folk tradition refers to the 36 “Tzadikim Nistarim” — hidden saints — upon whom the world depends. The truly righteous are “hidden,” and even they themselves are too modest to imagine that they are among this group of Tzadikim.

We each should want to be in the presence of genuine Tzaddikim. The proper thing is not to look for such Tzaddikim in newspaper ads or fliers, and not in cult-like gatherings. The proper thing is for each of us to strive to be a Tzaddik or Tzaddek, to live as fully and deeply with a spirit of righteousness, humility, and constancy.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/search-real-tzaddiktzaddekthoughts-parashat-tetsaveh>

** The Angel for Shabbat column is a service of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, fostering an intellectually vibrant, compassionate and inclusive Orthodox Judaism. Please join our growing family of members by joining online at www.jewishideas.org

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Book Review: Rabbi Haim Jachter, Bridging Traditions

By Rabbi Hayyim Angel *

Rabbi Haim Jachter, a dayyan (rabbinic judge) on the Beth Din of Elizabeth (New Jersey), and also the rabbi of the Sephardic Congregation Shaarei Orah of Teaneck, New Jersey, has written a phenomenal and valuable book.

Rabbi Jachter brings together his vast erudition, coupled with over 20 years of experience leading a diverse Sephardic congregation. He elucidates a wide array of matters of halakhah, custom, and ideology in a clear and accessible manner.

Conveying a reverence of Jewish tradition, sacred customs, and the great rabbinic leaders throughout the generations, Rabbi Jachter helps Jews of different backgrounds understand their respective traditions. He guides readers through complex halakhic issues when Sephardim and Ashkenazim live and pray together. What must Jews do to accommodate guests of varying backgrounds during the year and on Passover, when there are meaningful differences in halakhic observances? How should Ashkenazim pray when in Sephardic synagogues, and vice versa?

Often, Rabbi Jachter educates by explaining the rationales of the diverse traditions of our people. Instead of viewing different customs as strange or wrong, people will appreciate variegated traditions that have flourished in communities worldwide.

Rabbi Jachter gets to the roots of the views of Rambam (1138-1204, Spain-Egypt) and Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575, Tzefat), which often form the backbone of Sephardic practice. He also traces the positions of Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rama, 1530-1572, Poland), who generally reflects widespread Ashkenazic practice.

However, halakhic traditions did not freeze centuries ago with these seminal works. Mysticism, particularly through the influence of Rabbi Yitzhak Luria (Ari, 1534-1572, Tzefat) and his students, left its imprint on a myriad of practices. Later major Sephardic rabbis, such as Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai (Hida, 1724-1806, Livorno), Rabbi Yosef Hayyim (Ben

Ish Hai, 1832-1909, Baghdad), and Rabbi Yaakov Hayyim Sofer (Kaf HaHayyim, 1870-1939, Baghdad, Jerusalem), sifted through and ruled on dominant practices.

In the 20th century, no Sephardic halakhic decisor had more influence than Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef (1920-2013), who unsurprisingly plays a dominant role in Rabbi Jachter's book. Other leading figures, such as Rabbi Shalom Messas (1909-2003) and Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu (1929-2010), offered dissenting views and Rabbi Jachter carefully explains each position.

Various communities, such as Moroccan Jewry and Yemenite Jewry, remained faithful to their own traditions and practices, despite efforts by Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef to unify Sephardic observance in Israel. Rabbi Jachter explores several examples of these distinguishing practices.

Rabbi Jachter regularly emphasizes that although the many divergences in halakhah and custom between Jewish communities must be explored and appreciated, these differences are eclipsed by the staggering unity shared by all Jewish traditions despite millennia of living apart and often with limited contact.

Bridging Traditions will benefit scholars and lay people alike. It particularly is a must-read for rabbis and Jewish educators, who will appreciate the spiritual wealth we gain and impart to our students and communities by teaching the wholeness of the Jewish people.

Book Review: Rabbi Haim Jachter, Bridging Traditions: Demystifying Differences Between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews (OU Press-Maggid, 2021, 513 pages)

* Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/article/book-review-rabbi-haim-jachter-bridging-traditions>

Tetzaveh – Remove the Grudge You Never Had

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer * © 2022

When Hashem begins instructing Moshe in the making of the priestly garments, there is an unexpected phrase. Hashem says to Moshe, "And you should bring Aharon your brother close to you and his sons with him to make them priests for Me." (Shemos 28:1) In what sense was Moshe to draw Aharon close to him?

The Medrash Rabbah explains that when Moshe came down from Har Sinai and saw the tragedy of the Golden Calf, he gazed upon his brother Aharon and saw Aharon banging on the calf with a hammer to fashion it. The Medrash tells us that Aharon had taken the lead role in fashioning the form of the calf in order to be in a position to delay the completion of the calf, hoping that Moshe would return before the calf was fully completed. Moshe, though, did not realize this at first and suspected Aharon of being a full partner in the creation of the Golden Calf. Moshe, therefore, had a measure of ill will in his heart towards Aharon. It was this ill will that Hashem was addressing now by saying, "Bring Aharon your brother close to you." Hashem was telling Moshe to remove the ill will he felt towards Aharon because Aharon's intentions were entirely pure. (Shemos Rabbah 37:2)

The idea that Moshe should be holding any ill will towards Aharon over the Golden Calf is extremely difficult to understand. There is a Torah obligation to judge people favorably. When dealing with a righteous person who has an established track record of going above and beyond, that obligation applies even when it seems obvious that the person had done wrong. Aharon certainly deserved the benefit of the doubt. Indeed, the Torah tells us that Moshe immediately asked Aharon what the nation had done to force his hand and Aharon explained himself. (Shemos 32:21-24) Aside from this obligation, Moshe certainly trusted his older brother and wanted to believe in his innocence. Moshe held a tremendous love and respect for his older brother. Our rabbis teach us that when Hashem first asked Moshe to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, he asked Hashem to send Aharon instead, because he didn't want to lead over his older brother. He was willing to forgo all of the great spiritual heights and the unique relationship which G-d had with him and the great merit of being called Moshe Rabbeinu – Our teacher – Moshe would have given all that up in order not to hurt

his older brother. (Medrash Tanchuma Shemos 27) Moshe's closeness with Aharon was as close as brothers could be. The Medrash tells us also that when Moshe anointed Aharon and he saw the oil dripping down Aharon's beard, Moshe felt such joy for Aharon that it was as though the oil was flowing down Moshe's own beard. (Even though this was after Hashem told Moshe to draw Aharon close, Moshe certainly must have had deep feelings for Aharon beforehand to be able to reach such a depth of closeness so quickly.) (Vayikrah Rabbah 3:6)

Our rabbis teach us that the Torah uses extreme language when dealing with great people to highlight minor emotions. (See Rambam on Bereishis 29:31) It would seem that this principle applies here, as well. Certainly Moshe did not have strong feelings against Aharon, and he deeply believed – and wanted to believe – in Aharon's innocence. Nonetheless, deep within Moshe's heart was a memory of a shocking first impression from that moment when he saw Aharon appearing to be fully involved in the Golden Calf. That painful memory had left its imprint and Moshe still felt a twinge of angst deep within towards Aharon. It was this twinge that Hashem was instructing Moshe to remove. As great as their love was, it was not as complete as it could be. Hashem wanted their love for each other to be as complete as was humanly possible.

This Medrash is a powerful insight into *v'ahavta l'rei'acha kaocha* = "Love your friend as yourself." No matter how deep our love for another Jew is, Hashem wants us to strive for more – to see the good in others and see beyond their flaws. The mitzvah is to truly aim to love another as completely as I love my own self.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD.

Parshas Tetzaveh – Understanding Unity

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer * © 2021

Unity is indisputably one of foundational principles of Judaism. Unity was a prerequisite for the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Charity and caring for those in need is a fundamental element of every Jewish holiday. At the beginning of the Yom Kippur service we make a public declaration allowing all to join the service, for a fast day is only complete when we include the sinners and wicked among us into our group. The primacy of unity is clear in the mitzvos of Purim, as well. The Megilla is ideally supposed to be read in a public fashion, maintaining a national awareness of our identity. The Purim festive meal is ideally shared with friends, and we are required to at least share food with friends through Mishloach Manos, and to spread the joy to those in need through Matanos L'evyonim – Gifts to the Poor.

It is equally indisputable that slander and hurtful speech is anathema to a Torah lifestyle as it is the basis for so much strife and destruction. Indeed, we find that one of the garments of the High Priest, the Me'il – the outer robe, was intended as an atonement specifically for this singular sin. (Erchin 16a) Rav Shmuel Greiniman quotes the Chofetz Chaim giving a detailed illustration of this atonement. The Me'il was made of techeiles, a bluish green thread, intended to remind us of the sky and G-d's Heavenly throne, where our words of slander would be judged, and that the slander itself is brought before G-d's Throne of Glory. The lip of the garment was folded inward, reminding us of the value of holding our words in, and how doing so can quell arguments before they explode out of control. There is a weaver's work around the lip, instructing us to utilize our power of imagination in controlling our desire to speak – we should imagine as if our lips are woven shut on the outside, using the visual imagery to calm the urge to speak freely without care. The lip was folded over to strengthen it so it shouldn't tear, reminding us that silence is the key to avoiding tears in our relationships. When we ignore barbs and insults they slow down, when we respond in kind they only increase. Pomegranate shapes of thread and ringing golden bells were woven along the bottom, indicating a time for silence and a time for noise. Speech of Torah and growth is to be lauded, but otherwise silence is best. Every aspect of the Me'il is intended to illustrate the evils of slander and the importance of care and concern in this area.

There is a well-known quip that the best place to hide something is in plain sight. In the introduction to the Mesillas Yesharim -- Path of the Just -- Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato zt"l teaches us that this applies to philosophies, as well. Just as we don't look closely at items that are lying out in the open, so too we don't carefully study concepts that are widely accepted and known to be true. However, just as the item lying in public view may be more than it seems, so too, widely accepted concepts can be much more subtle and nuanced than they appear. With this in mind, it is worth considering why we find such a singular focus on the importance of unity and the evil of slander. While they are certainly significant and important, there are many important concepts. Why has this issue been chosen as a central theme of a Torah true

lifestyle and a critical focus of a G-d fearing individual? Why of all sins is slander spoken of as rising up before G-d's Throne of Glory?

Perhaps part of the answer can be found in the mitzvos of Purim. In order to properly celebrate our survival and G-d's redemption and love, we need to share our joy with others. If we fail to properly share the joy, then it seems we are missing the essence of our celebration. On Purim, we are not simply celebrating our own existence, but rather the existence of our nation as a whole and the privilege of being part of that whole. Every member of our nation is a unique and critical part of that whole. If there are rifts between us, then we are all incapable of being who we truly are. Only when we put aside our individual pride or pain for the sake of communal unity and success are any of us able to achieve what each of us is meant to accomplish.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Note: Because Rabbi Singer's new Dvar Torah did not make my deadline for the early edition, with his permission, I am sharing his Dvar Torah on Tetzevah from last year (when Purim came shortly after Shabbat.)

Another Dvar Torah That Relates To Football

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *

Words are never what they seem. Language takes many twists and turns with all kinds of mirages. We think we occupy one place when we really live in another (or maybe even in both).

Let's take the word "Mitzvah" -- usually translated as "commandment," a term usually designated for forceful authority that brings to mind a law backed up with a threat of punishment if not followed (like any state law). But a different color to this term is when the Talmud translates it as "connection" or "take pleasure in" when it says that the world was created so Hashem could "tzavos" with the righteous.

So when God tells Moshe to "tzav" Israel with the lighting of the Menorah this week, a correct translation could be either "Command Israel to crush the olive oil to light the Menorah" or "Tell Israel to create a connection to me by crushing the olive oil for the Menorah." Both sentiments would fit well with other statements in the Torah where it describes our connection to God both as a loving relationship and as a king/lawgiver.

What about the word "Torah?" We would usually translate this as "instruction," as it comes from the same root as "Morah" or teacher in Hebrew. This term gives the Torah's words the color of a list of directives that we must or should follow to live a worthy life.

However, this week I came upon another translation that surprised me. And it came from a Dutch Historian named Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), considered the father of modern cultural history and an outspoken, jailed critic of his country's Nazi occupiers in World War II.

Huizinga points out that the word "Torah" can mean participation in a game or playful contest. Let's look at Megillat Esther Chapter 2 where Achashverosh gathers women from around the kingdom to compete for the grand prize of becoming his queen or primary wife. In verses 12 and 15, the Megillah uses the word "Tor" translated as "turn" or the time in which the contestant had the chance to showcase her affections and talents for the prized position.

Using this translation, the word Tor could apply to the turn of an Olympic athlete or maybe even substitute for the word "possession" in football. (Feel free to use that last statement for your Super Bowl Halftime Dvar Torah.)

Therefore, a new translation of "Torah" could be "a space in time or physical location where certain guidelines delineate how participants in this space act in order to play out a desired ritual, contest, or game." Like the translation "instruction," it is general and tells us nothing about the purpose and contents of what we colloquially call the Torah.

However, it does give us a more colorful and experiential image of what it is we do when it comes to enacting the mitzvot or various methods of connection towards God, our families and communities in our life.

Both translations of Torah can be useful to us. We've experienced many Sabbaths and sometimes we relate better to the more prescriptive "instruction" image. In other words, we just want to know all the rules. ("Just tell me what to do Rabbi!")

At other times, though, the "Tor" image will serve us. We can see Shabbat as a sacred space where we "play with the Divine" (like the Midrash describes God as playing with the Leviathan). We demarcate this time/space not through the whistles of the referee but by Kiddush and Havdalah. We follow the directives to abstain from creative work to allow us to focus on other sometimes neglected aspects of our lives – such as uninterrupted sit-down meals, family, community and a more introspective prayer.

There's no need to work to maintain a correct image over another because both are valid options. It depends on the person. It depends on the Sabbath. It depends on different times within the same Sabbath.

On Passover, we focus more on the "Tor" image because the mitzvah is to create a space where you and everyone around your table see themselves as literally going out of Egypt. You need to have a sense of play imagination for that. And we're coming up on Purim also. If ever there was a Jewish "holiday of play," it's Purim. It's even evolved into Yeshivot and most Jewish organizations doing a "Purim shpiel," where not even rabbinic authority is safe from being played with. (Click here to see a rap battle between Rav Yoseph Ber Soloveichik and the Lubavitcher Rebbe done at the 2014 Yeshiva University Purim Shpiel) How fitting then that Purim is the source for our "Tor" translation of Torah. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stlusp4Jg0w>

Questions to ponder this week:

- 1) How does this idea of "playing with the Divine" extend to the Tabernacle and Temple with all the colorful clothes the priests wore and the extensive and elaborate rituals?
- 2) Does designating something as play mean that it's not important? Can something be playful but still have gravitas or be consequential? Is the outcome of the Super Bowl or National Championship important, consequential, both, or none? I've said so many different words to try to pinpoint the play idea but they still never are what they seem.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Moshe Rube

Reading Suggestions: See the book Homo Ludens by Johan Huizinga for an in-depth discussion of these and more questions about the play element in culture.

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Rav Kook Torah **Tetzaveh: The Sanctity of the Temple Mount**

With the Jewish people's return to the Land of Israel, the question of the Halakhic status of Har HaBayit — the plot of land where the Temple once stood in Jerusalem – became a hot topic. Does it still have the unique sanctity that it acquired when Solomon consecrated the First Temple? Does a person who enters the area of the Temple courtyard (the azarah) while ritually impure (tamei) transgress a serious offence, incurring the penalty of karet?¹

Or did the Temple Mount lose its special status after the Temple's destruction?

This issue was the subject of a major dispute some 900 years ago. Maimonides noted that the status of Har HaBayit is not connected to the question about whether the Land of Israel in general retained its sanctity after the first exile to Babylonia. The sanctity of the place of the Temple is based on a unique source — the Divine Presence in that location – and that, Maimonides argued, has not changed. "The Shekhinah can never be nullified."²

Maimonides buttressed his position by quoting the Mishnah in Megillah 3:4: "Even when [your sanctuaries] are in ruins, their holiness remains.

However, Maimonides' famous adversary, Rabbi Abraham ben David (Ra'avad), disagreed vehemently. This ruling, Ra'avad wrote, is Maimonides' own opinion; it is not based on the rulings of the Talmud. After the Temple's destruction, the Temple Mount no longer retains its special sanctity. A ritually-impure individual who enters the place of the Temple courtyard in our days does not incur the penalty of karet.

Rav Kook noted that even Ra'avad agrees that it is forbidden nowadays to enter the Temple area while impure. It is not, however, the serious offence that it was when the Temple stood.³

What is the source of this disagreement?

Like a Tallit or Like Tefillin?

In Halakhah there are two paradigms for physical objects that contain holiness. The lower level is called tashmish mitzvah. These are objects like a garment used for a Tallit, a ram's horn used for a Shofar, or a palm branch used for a Lulav. All of these objects must be treated respectfully when they are used for a mitzvah. But afterwards, they may be freely disposed of (covered and then thrown in the garbage). Their holiness is only in force when they are a vehicle for a mitzvah. The holiness of a tashmish mitzvah is out of respect for the mitzvah that was performed with it.⁴

But there is a second, higher level, called tashmish kedushah. These are objects which have an intrinsic holiness, as they are vessels for holy writings. This category includes Tefillin, Sifrei Torah, and Mezuzot. It also includes articles that protect them, such as covers for Sifrei Torah and Tefillin boxes. Unlike tashmishei mitzvah, these objects may not be simply disposed of when no longer used. They must be set aside (genizah) and subsequently buried.

For Ra'avad, the land under the Temple falls under the category of tashmish mitzvah. It facilitated the many mitzvot that were performed in the Temple. Without the Temple, however, the area no longer retained its special kedushah. It became like an old Tallit, no longer used to bear tzitzit.

Maimonides, on the other hand, categorized the Temple Mount as a tashmish kedushah. This area was the location of the unique holiness of the Shekhinah, an eternal holiness. Like a leather box that once contained Tefillin scrolls, even without the Temple this area retains its special level of kedushah.

"Sanctified by My Honor"

All this, Rav Kook suggested, boils down to how to interpret the words "וְנִקְדַּשׁ בְּכַבְדִּי" — "sanctified by My Honor" (Exod. 29:43). The Torah describes the holiness of the Tabernacle — and later the Temple:

"There I will meet with the Israelites, and [that place] will be sanctified by My Honor (Kevodi)."

What does the word Kevodi mean?

We could interpret Kevodi as referring to the honor (kavod) and reverence that we give this special place. The Tabernacle and Temple were deserving of special respect (like the mitzvah of mora Mikdash). But without the Temple functioning, it no longer retains its former kedushah — like the opinion of Ra'avad.

On the other hand, the word Kevodi could be understood as referring to Kevod Hashem — the Shekhinah, God's Divine Presence in the Temple (see Rashi ad loc.). As the verse begins, "There I will meet with the Israelites." This would indicate an intrinsic holiness which is never lost — like the opinion of Maimonides.

In his Halakhic work Mishpat Kohen, Rav Kook explained our relationship to the place where the Temple once stood:

"The Temple is the place of revelation of the Shekhinah, the place of our encounter with God. We do not mention God's holy Name outside the Temple due to the profound holiness of His Name; so, too, we do not ascend the Mount nor approach the Holy until we will be qualified to do so. And just as we draw closer to God by recognizing the magnitude of our inability to grasp Him, so too, we draw closer to the Mount precisely by distancing ourselves from it, in our awareness of its great holiness." (p. 204)

(Adapted from Igrot HaRe'iyah vol. III, letter 926.)

FOOTNOTES:

1 Karet, literally “cutting off,” is a spiritual punishment for serious transgressions. Karet can mean premature death, dying without children, or a spiritual severing of the soul’s connection with God after death.

2 Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Temple, 6:16

3 What would Ra’avad do with the Mishnah in Megillah that Maimonides quoted? He could explain that this homiletic interpretation is only an *asmakhta*, and reflects a prohibition of the Sages. Or the Mishnah could be referring to other laws, such as the mitzvah of *mora Mikdash* — the obligation to show respect and reverence to the Temple area by not entering the Temple Mount with one’s staff, shoes, or money belt; by not sitting in the Temple courtyard; and so on. (See Berakhot 54a; Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Temple, chapter 7).

We might have expected a reversal of positions — that Ra’avad would argue for its eternal sanctity, given that Ra’avad was a Kabbalist, unlike Maimonides the rationalist. Especially considering that Ra’avad explicitly notes that his position is informed by inspired wisdom — “God confides in those who fear Him” (Psalms 25:14).

In fact, it could well be that Ra’avad’s opinion is based on his understanding of the distinct spiritual status of each Temple. Solomon foresaw the higher spiritual state of the Third Temple, so he intentionally limited the sanctity of the First Temple. He conditioned its sanctity to expire with the Temple’s destruction, in order to enable the future Temple to be established on a higher state of *kedushah*.

4 This is the explanation of Nachmanides, quoted by the Ran in Megillah, chapter 3.

<http://www.ravkooktorah.org/TETZAVEH-78.htm>

Inspiration & Perspiration (Tetzaveh 5776)

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z”l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.*

Beethoven rose each morning at dawn and made himself coffee. He was fastidious about this: each cup had to be made with exactly sixty beans, which he counted out each time. He would then sit at his desk and compose until 2:00pm or 3:00pm in the afternoon. Subsequently he would go for a long walk, taking with him a pencil and some sheets of music paper to record any ideas that came to him on the way. Each night after supper he would have a beer, smoke a pipe, and go to bed early, 10:00pm at the latest.

Anthony Trollope who as his day job worked for the Post Office, paid a groom to wake him every day at 5:00am. By 5:30am he would be at his desk, and he then proceeded to write for exactly 3 hours, working against the clock to produce 250 words each quarter-hour. This way he wrote 47 novels, many of them 3 volumes in length, as well as 16 other books. If he finished a novel before the day’s 3 hours were over, he would immediately take a fresh piece of paper and begin the next.

Immanuel Kant, the most brilliant philosopher of modern times, was famous for his routine. As Heinrich Heine put it, “Getting up, drinking coffee, writing, giving lectures, eating, taking a walk, everything had its set time, and the neighbours knew precisely that the time was 3:30pm when Kant stepped outside his door with his grey coat and the Spanish stick in his hand.”

These details, together with more than 150 other examples drawn from the great philosophers, artists, composers and writers, come from a book by Mason Currey entitled Daily Rituals: How Great Minds Make Time, Find Inspiration, and Get to Work. [1] The book’s point is simple. Most creative people have daily rituals. These form the soil in which the seeds of their invention grow.

In some cases they deliberately took on jobs they did not need to do, simply to establish structure and routine in their lives. A typical example was the poet Wallace Stevens, who took a position as an insurance lawyer at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company where he worked until his death. He said that having a job was one of the best things that could happen to him because “It introduces discipline and regularity into one’s life.”

Note the paradox. These were all innovators, pioneers, ground-breakers, trail-blazers, who formulated new ideas, originated new forms of expression, did things no one had done before in quite that way. They broke the mould. They changed the landscape. They ventured into the unknown.

Yet their daily lives were the opposite: ritualised and routine. One could even call them boring. Why so? Because – the saying is famous, though we don't know who first said it – genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration. The paradigm-shifting scientific discovery, the path-breaking research, the wildly successful new product, the brilliant novel, the award-winning film, are almost always the result of many years of long hours and attention to detail. Being creative involves hard work.

The ancient Hebrew word for hard work is *avodah*. It is also the word that means “serving God.” What applies in the arts, sciences, business and industry, applies equally to the life of the spirit. Achieving any form of spiritual growth requires sustained effort and daily rituals.

Hence the remarkable aggadic passage in which various Sages put forward their idea of *klal gadol ba-Torah*, “the great principle of the Torah.” Ben Azzai says it is the verse, “This is the book of the chronicles of man: On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1). Ben Zoma says that there is a more embracing principle, “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” Ben Nannas says there is a yet more embracing principle: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Ben Pazzi says we find a more embracing principle still. He quotes a verse from this week's parsha: “One sheep shall be offered in the morning, and a second in the afternoon” (Ex. 29:39) – or, as we might say nowadays, *Shacharit*, *Minchah* and *Maariv*. In a word: “routine.” The passage concludes: The law follows Ben Pazzi.[2]

The meaning of Ben Pazzi's statement is clear: all the high ideals in the world – the human person as God's image, belief in God's unity, and the love of neighbour – count for little until they are turned into habits of action that become habits of the heart. We can all recall moments of insight when we had a great idea, a transformative thought, the glimpse of a project that could change our lives. A day, a week or a year later the thought has been forgotten or become a distant memory, at best a might-have-been.

The people who change the world, whether in small or epic ways, are those who turn peak experiences into daily routines, who know that the details matter, and who have developed the discipline of hard work, sustained over time.

Judaism's greatness is that it takes high ideals and exalted visions – image of God, faith in God, love of neighbour – and turns them into patterns of behaviour. *Halachah* (Jewish law) involves a set of routines that – like those of the great creative minds – reconfigures the brain, giving discipline to our lives and changing the way we feel, think and act.

Much of Judaism must seem to outsiders, and sometimes to insiders also, boring, prosaic, mundane, repetitive, routine, obsessed with details and bereft for the most part of drama or inspiration. Yet that is precisely what writing the novel, composing the symphony, directing the film, perfecting the killer app, or building a billion-dollar business is, most of the time. It is a matter of hard work, focused attention and daily rituals. That is where all sustainable greatness comes from.

We have developed in the West a strange view of religious experience: that it's what overwhelms you when something happens completely outside the run of normal experience. You climb a mountain and look down. You are miraculously saved from danger. You find yourself part of a vast and cheering crowd. It's how the German Lutheran theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) defined “the holy”: as a mystery (*mysterium*) both terrifying (*tremendum*) and fascinating (*fascinans*). You are awed by the presence of something vast. We have all had such experiences.

But that is all they are: experiences. They linger in the memory, but they are not part of everyday life. They are not woven into the texture of our character. They do not affect what we do or achieve or become. Judaism is about changing us so that we become creative artists whose greatest creation is our own life.[3] And that needs daily rituals: *Shacharit*, *Minchah*, *Maariv*, the food we eat, the way we behave at work or in the home, the choreography of holiness which is the special contribution of the priestly dimension of Judaism, set out in this week's parsha and throughout the book of *Vayikra*.

These rituals have an effect. We now know through PET and fMRI scans that repeated spiritual exercise reconfigures the brain. It gives us inner resilience. It makes us more grateful. It gives us a sense of basic trust in the Source of our being. It shapes our identity, the way we act and talk and think. Ritual is to spiritual greatness what practice is to a tennis player,

daily writing disciplines are to a novelist, and reading company accounts are to Warren Buffett. They are the precondition of high achievement. Serving God is avodah, which means hard work.

If you seek sudden inspiration, then work at it every day for a year or a lifetime. That is how it comes. As every famous golfer is said to have said when asked for the secret of his success: "I was just lucky. But the funny thing is that the harder I practice, the luckier I become." The more you seek spiritual heights, the more you need the ritual and routine of halachah, the Jewish "way" to God.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Mason Currey, *Daily Rituals*, New York, Knopf, 2013.

[2] The passage is cited in the Introduction to the commentary HaKotev to Ein Yaakov, the collected aggadic passages of the Talmud. It is also quoted by Maharal in *Netivot Olam*, Ahavat Re'a 1.

[3] A point made by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in his essay, *Halakhic Man*.

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/tetzaveh/inspiration-perspiration/>

It's OK Not to Be Inspired (Right Now)

By Aharon Loschak * © Chabad 2022

I recently had lunch with a team of highly experienced educators and writers. One member of the team, a relative newbie, was questioning some of the policies his team adheres to in their publications.

The team produces textbooks for teachers and students, and the language and style in the teachers' manuals they produce is very different from the style employed in the student textbook.

"It doesn't make sense!" he declared. "How can you have inconsistencies in the same set of books?!"

The other, long-tenured members in the room vehemently pushed back as I looked on in amusement. "You think we just came up with this yesterday?" one shot back. "This policy is the product of much thought, feedback, and deliberation! We're not flying blind here!"

As I listened, I thought about that idea: Once you've gone through a legitimate process and come to a good conclusion, sometimes that's really all you need.

The Tzitz

Parshat Tetzaveh details the eight garments the High Priest wore during his Temple service, including the "tzitz" — a golden plate engraved with the words "holy to G d," worn on the forehead:¹

*It shall be upon Aaron's forehead . . . It shall be upon his forehead constantly to make them favorable before G d.*²

Why is it so important to point out that this particular garment must always be worn, more than any of the other pieces of clothing? And what does it mean to be "constantly favorable before G d?" What is it about the tzitz being constantly on the High Priest's forehead that carries favor before G d?

Do I Really Believe in this Stuff?

According to the Chassidic masters, bearing the tzitz on the forehead is symbolic of the process every Jew must undergo to ensure that he or she is "constantly being favorable before G d." In other words, the tzitz and its continuous presence on the forehead is a larger story about how to preserve a constant commitment to G d.

To explain.

Judaism is not just a list of dos and don'ts. While it may seem that way, that's just lazy thinking. At its core, Judaism is about forging a relationship with G d and bringing that relationship to bear in every aspect of one's life.

Now, relationships are never easy. It's hard enough to keep up with your social media account, so it's certainly no small feat to create a meaningful and ongoing relationship with G d Himself. The good news is that a Jew is naturally inclined to be in that relationship, as he or she possesses a soul that is literally part of G d³ and organically attracted to its G dly source.⁴

The even better news is that Judaism is full of things to nurture that relationship. That's one of the reasons we pray, study Torah, and do holy things. These acts are not just "things we do" or cultural quirks from millennia ago, but the bread and butter of our relationship with G d, the glue that brings us together.

Take prayer, for example. Say you do it properly: You take the time to study something inspirational, you reflect on it, and keep it in your mind and heart throughout your prayers. As you sway back and forth, you're inspired, and you come to a real, well-informed full-throttled commitment.

The not-so-good news is that sushi, ESPN, the daily news, and mortgage payments get in the way of that relationship. After you're done with prayers and you're at the office, in your car listening to a random podcast, or in the gym, all that deep thinking and passionate holy stuff is a distant memory.

Now you've got a real problem: You can't drop everything and go for an intense prayer or study session in the middle of your meeting or morning jog.

Is all lost? Are you to abandon G d until you next have the time and are actually in the mood of plugging into your spiritual side?

Wear on Your Forehead

This is where the tzitz comes in. If you recall, the Torah instructs that it be worn constantly on the forehead. Not over the heart, but specifically on the forehead, where everyone can see it. The emphatic declaration, "Holy to G d," is worn on the outside, on a visible part of your body.

The message it imparts is that it's OK not to engage in deep reflection at all hours of the day. But you need to carry the conclusion, the bottom-line commitment, with you all day. Put that on your forehead, program a reminder on your phone, and you're good to go. Then, you'll be "constantly favorable before G d."

If someone challenges your relationship with G d, or you question it yourself throughout the day, you don't need to worry that a deep and passionate reply isn't ready from the hip. "Oh no, do I really believe in this stuff? Does my relationship with G d mean anything right now? And if it does, why am I feeling so desensitized and cynical about the whole thing?" you ask yourself.

These can be disturbing thoughts, and if you're not fully in touch with the reality of the situation, they can threaten the bedrock of your religious relationship. But don't worry: just because you're not passionate about prayer right now doesn't mean you're no longer a believer.

Remember that your decision and your commitment is not primitive or ill-informed. You made it with great gusto and authenticity a few days ago when you were blown away by something you learned. Pretty soon, you'll be back there — when you have the time and mindspace. You're operating on the conclusion today — and that's enough for now.

The Human Relationship Mirror

And so it is with our human relationships. Suppose you're deeply connected with someone, in a long and committed relationship. The wisdom of the tzitz states that you don't need to go into a deep romantic session every day, at every moment of the day. That is neither practical nor wise.

Of course, periodically, you absolutely should do just that. Dedicate time to engage in real moments of connection and commitment, when your feelings for each other aren't just fleeting or the product of convenience or habit. Take the time to nurture and develop a real connection, and during those moments, recall and reestablish your firm, loving, and well-informed commitment.

And then, carry the conclusion of your commitment with you throughout the days, weeks, and months that follow. Wear it on your forehead constantly, so that you can easily recall it. "Why am I doing this?" you ask yourself. "Because I thought and felt about it many times, and this is real," is your answer.

You're operating on the conclusion today — and that's great.⁵

FOOTNOTES:

1. Some say it was worn just on top of the forehead. See Tosafot HaRosh, Gittin, 7a.
2. Exodus 28:38.
3. See Tanya ch. 2.
4. See Tanya ch. 18.
5. This essay is based on Torah Ohr, Tetzaveh 83c-4.

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https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5390111/jewish/Its-OK-Not-to-Be-Inspired-Right-Now.htm

The Inner Meaning of the Breastplate

From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; adapted by Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky * © Chabad 2022

Into the Breastplate of Judgment you shall place the urim and tumim: The word urim means "lights," while the word tumim is related to the word for "sincerity" and "devotion" (temimut).¹

In terms of our Divine soul, the urim denotes its brilliant awareness of its Divine source and its fiery yearning to dissolve in it. The tumim denotes its wholehearted sincerity and thorough devotion to fulfill the commandments. This devotion counterbalances the urim experience, dragging it down from its rapture to engage the mundane and elevate it to Divinity.

Thus, the urim and tumim thus express the dynamic of "run and return,"² the ongoing give and take between ecstatic rapture and humble submission that characterizes the spiritual life.³

* * *

The urim and tumim lost their ability to make the Breastplate function as an oracle after the destruction of the First Temple.⁴ In general, the Second Temple imparted a palpable Divine awareness to those who entered it precisely as the First Temple did. However, unlike the First Temple, the Second Temple was not able to radiate that awareness abroad, to influence the mundane realm. Similarly, the Breastplate remained intact during the Second Temple era, but its ability to render judgment for all mankind through the urim and tumim did not.

In a larger sense, this situation defines the general condition of exile. The Divine consciousness, goodness, and perfection of the messianic era lie dormant, although intact; only the pretentious façade of the supposedly immutable laws of nature is apparent. The two exist within the same reality.

The ineffectuality of the Breastplate is thus a metaphor for the overall condition we know as "exile." This is alluded to by the fact that the word for "Breastplate" (חֹשֶׁן) shares the same numerical value as the words for "snake" (אֲרִיִּס) and

“Messiah” (משיח).⁶ The primordial snake, which brought sin and confusion to the world, and the Messiah, who will bring clarity of purpose, are, of course, diametric opposites. Yet that is the paradox of Exile: the messianic reality is implicit within exile; our job is just to reveal it.

Allegorically, then, our challenge in exile is to restore the urim and tumim to the cosmic Breastplate — to “decode” the implicit messianic perception, goodness, and perfection within the snakeskin of reality — so that it can assume its proper, revealed role.⁷

FOOTNOTES:

1. Yoma 73b.
2. Ezekiel 1:14.
3. See Sefer HaArachim – Chabad, vol. 4, p. 264.
4. Yoma 21b.
5. Sha’ar HaMitzvot and Ta’amei HaMitzvot, both in Tetzaveh.
6. Me’orei Or, s.v. choshen, citing Rabbeinu Ephraim (of the Tosafot); Chomat Anach.
7. Likutei Sichot, vol. 11, pp. 137-138.

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https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/4650474/jewish/The-Inner-Meaning-of-the-Breastplate.htm

Jewish Unity

By Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky * © Chabad 2022

The Necessity for Jewish Unity

Thus, the unity of the Jewish people is reflected on the three primary garments of the high priest: The names of the tribes that were engraved on the stones of the **Breastplate**, which rested on the high priest's heart, signified the righteous among us.

The names of the tribes that were engraved on the stones affixed to the straps of the **Ephod**, which mainly covered the high priest's back, signified formerly estranged Jews who have returned to full Jewish observance.

The bells and pomegranates of the **Robe** signified those Jews still struggling with their evil inclinations, yet are full of merits like seeds in a pomegranate. All of these Jews must be represented when the high priest enters the Sanctuary, for he must invoke the merit that is common to all his people.

Similarly, when we see people in need of a spiritual boost, we must first make them aware of their inherent worth: that they possess a soul that is truly a part of G-d. By welcoming them back into Jewish observance, we help them reconnect with their true selves. After this, we can help them shed whatever negativity remains in their lives and increase their performance of deeds of light and goodness.

* — from *Daily Wisdom*

Gut Shabbos,

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
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Shabbat Parashat Tetzave

5782 B"H

Covenant and Conversation

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

The Ethic of Holiness - With parshat

Tetzaveh, something new enters Judaism: Torat Kohanim, the world and mindset of the Priest. Rapidly it becomes a central dimension of Judaism. It dominates the next book of the Torah, Vayikra. Until now, though, priests in the Torah have had a marginal presence.

This week's parsha marks the first time we encounter the idea of a hereditary elite within the Jewish people – Aaron and his male descendants – and their role to minister in the Sanctuary. For the first time we find the Torah speaking about robes of office: those of the priests and the High Priest worn while officiating in the sacred place. For the first time too we encounter the phrase, used about the robes: *lekavod ule-tiferet*, "for glory and beauty" (Ex. 28:2). Until this point, *kavod* in the sense of glory or honour has been attributed only to God. As for *tiferet*, this is the first time it appears in the Torah. It opens up a whole dimension of Judaism – namely, the aesthetic.

All these phenomena are related to the Mishkan, the Sanctuary, the subject of the preceding chapters. They emerge from the project of making a "home" for the infinite God within finite space. The question I want to ask here, though, is: do they have anything to do with morality? With the kind of lives the Israelites were called upon to live and their relationships to one another? If so, what is their connection to morality? And why does the priesthood appear specifically at this point in the story?

It is common to divide the religious life in Judaism into two dimensions. One the one side, the priesthood and the Sanctuary, and on the other, the prophets and the people. The priests focused on the relationship between the people and God, *mitzvot bein adam leMakom*. Prophets focused on the relationship between the people and one another, *mitzvot bein adam lechavero*. The priests supervised ritual and the prophets spoke about ethics. One group was concerned with holiness, the other with virtue. You don't need to be holy to be good. You need to be good to be holy, but that is an entrance requirement, not what being holy is about. Pharaoh's daughter, who rescued Moses

when he was a baby, was good but not holy. These are two separate ideas.

In this essay I want to challenge that conception. The priesthood and the Sanctuary made a moral difference, not just a spiritual one. Understanding how they did so is important not only to our understanding of history but also to how we lead our lives today. We can see this by looking at some important recent experimental work in the field of moral psychology.

Our starting point is American psychologist Jonathan Haidt and his book, *The Righteous Mind*.^[1] Haidt posits that in contemporary secular societies our range of moral sensibilities has become very narrow. He calls such societies WEIRD – Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic. They tend to see more traditional cultures as rigid, hidebound, and repressive. People from those traditional cultures tend to see Westerners as strange in abandoning much of the richness of the moral life.

To take a non-moral example: A century ago in most British and American (non-Jewish) families, dining was a formal, social occasion. The family ate together and would not begin until everyone was at the table. They would begin with grace, thanking God for the food they were about to eat. There was an order in which people were served or served themselves. Conversation around the table was governed by conventions. There were things you might discuss, and others deemed unsuitable. Today that has changed completely. Many British homes do not contain a dining table. A recent survey showed that half of all meals in Britain are eaten alone. The members of the family come in at different times, take a meal from the freezer, heat it in the microwave, and eat it watching a television or computer screen. That is not dining but serial grazing.

Haidt became interested in the fact that his American students reduced morality to two principles, one relating to harm, the other to fairness. On harm they thought like John Stuart Mill, who said that "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others."^[2] For Mill this was a political principle but it has become a moral one: if it doesn't harm others, we are morally entitled to do what we want.

The other principle is fairness. We don't all have the same idea of what is fair and what is not, but we all care about basic rules of justice:

what is right for some should be right for all, do as you would be done to, don't bend the rules to your advantage and so on. Often the first moral sentence a young child utters is, "That's not fair." John Rawls formulated the best-known modern statement of fairness: "Each person has an equal right to the most extensive liberties compatible with similar liberties for others."^[3]

Those are the ways WEIRD people think. If it's fair and does no harm, it is morally permissible. However – and this is Haidt's fundamental point – there are at least three other dimensions to the moral life as understood in non-WEIRD cultures throughout the world.

One is loyalty and its opposite, betrayal. Loyalty means that I am prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of my family, my team, my co-religionists and my fellow citizens, the groups that help make me the person I am. I take their interests seriously, not only considering my own self-interest.

Another dimension is respect for authority and its opposite, subversion. Without this no institution is possible, perhaps no culture either. The Talmud illustrates this with a famous story about a would-be proselyte who came to Hillel and said, "Convert me to Judaism on condition that I accept only the Written Torah, not the Oral Torah." Hillel began to teach him Hebrew. On the first day he taught him *aleph-bet-gimmel*. The next day he taught him *gimmel-bet-aleph*. The man protested, "Yesterday you taught me the opposite." Hillel replied, "You see, you have to rely on me even to learn the *aleph-bet*. Rely on me also about the Oral Torah" (Shabbat 31a). Schools, armies, courts, professional associations, even sports, depend on respect for authority.

The third arises from the need to ring-fence certain values we regard as non-negotiable. They are not mine to do with as I wish. These are the things we call sacred, *sacrosanct*, not to be treated lightly or defiled.

Why are loyalty, respect, and the sacred not considered key strands of ethics in the typical view held by liberal elites in the West? The most fundamental answer is that WEIRD

By Sari & Russell Mayer, Avi, Atara, and Arella on the occasion of the *yahrzeit* (11 Adar Aleph) of Sari's father,
Dr. A. Abba Walker, z"l
(Avraham Abba ben Shlomo)

By Esther & Ari Jacobs
in memory of Esther's mother,
Anita Bogopulsky, a"h, (Yocheved bas Tzvi)
whose *yahrzeit* is 17 Adar

societies define themselves as groups of autonomous individuals seeking to pursue their own interests with minimal interference from others. Each of us is a self-determining individual with our own wants, needs and desires. Society should let us pursue those desires as far as possible without interfering in our or other people's lives. To this end, we have developed principles of rights, liberty, and justice that allow us coexist peacefully. If an act is unfair or causes someone to suffer, we are prepared to condemn it morally, but not otherwise.

Loyalty, respect, and sanctity do not naturally thrive in secular societies based on market economics and liberal democratic politics. The market erodes loyalty. It invites us not to stay with the product we have used until now but to switch to one that is better, cheaper, faster, newer. Loyalty is the first victim of market capitalism's "creative destruction."

Respect for figures of authority – politicians, bankers, journalists, heads of corporations – has been falling for many decades. We are living through a loss of trust and the death of deference. Even the patient Hillel might have found it hard to deal with someone brought up on the 1979 Pink Floyd creed: "We don't need no education, we don't need no thought control."

As for the sacred, that too has been lost. Marriage is no longer seen as a holy commitment, a covenant. At best it is viewed as a contract. Life itself is in danger of losing its sanctity with the spread of abortion on demand at the beginning and "assisted dying" at the end.

What makes loyalty, respect, and sanctity key moral values is that they create a moral community as opposed to a group of autonomous individuals. Loyalty bonds the individual to the group. Respect creates structures of authority that allow people to function effectively as teams. Sanctity binds people together in a shared moral universe. The sacred is where we enter the realm of that-which-is-greater-than-the-self. The very act of gathering as a congregation can lift us into a sense of transcendence in which we merge our identity with that of the group.

Once we understand this distinction, we can see how the moral universe of the Israelites changed over time. Abraham was chosen by God "so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just" (tzedakah umishpat; Gen. 18:19). What Abraham's servant looked for when choosing a wife for Isaac was kindness, chessed. These are the key prophetic virtues. As Jeremiah said in God's name: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom, or the strong of their strength, or the rich of their wealth but let one who boasts, boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord,

who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness (chessed mishpat utzedakah) on earth, for in these I delight." Jer. 9:22-23

Kindness is the equivalent of care, which is the opposite of harm. Justice and righteousness are specific forms of fairness. In other words, the prophetic virtues are close to those that prevail today in the liberal democracies of the West. That is a measure of the impact of the Hebrew Bible on the West, but that is another story for another time. The point is that kindness and fairness are about relationships between individuals. Until Sinai, the Israelites were just individuals, albeit part of the same extended family that had undergone Exodus and exile together.

After the Revelation at Mount Sinai, the Israelites were a covenanted people. They had a sovereign: God. They had a written constitution: the Torah. They had agreed to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). Yet the incident of the Golden Calf showed that they had not yet understood what it is to be a nation. They behaved like a mob. "Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies" (Ex. 32:25) That was the crisis to which the Sanctuary and the priesthood were the answer. They turned Jews into a nation.

The service of the Sanctuary performed by the Kohanim in their robes worn le-kavod, "for honour," established the principle of respect. The Mishkan itself embodied the principle of the sacred. Set in the middle of the camp, the Sanctuary and its service turned the Israelites into a circle at whose centre was God. And even though, after the destruction of the Second Temple, there was no more Sanctuary or functioning priesthood, Jews found substitutes that performed the same function. What Torat Kohanim brought into Judaism was the choreography of holiness and respect that helped Jews walk and dance together as a nation.

Two further research findings are relevant here. Richard Sosis analysed a series of voluntary communities set up by various groups in the course of the nineteenth century, some religious, some secular. He discovered that the religious communes had an average lifespan of more than four times longer than their secular counterparts. There is something about the religious dimension that turns out to be important, even essential, in sustaining community.[4]

We now also know on the basis of considerable neuro-scientific evidence that we make our choices on the basis of emotion rather than reason. People whose emotional centres (specifically the ventromedial prefrontal cortex) have been damaged can analyse alternatives in great detail, but they can't make good decisions. One interesting

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experiment revealed that academic books on ethics were more often stolen or never returned to libraries than books on other branches of philosophy.[5] Expertise in moral reasoning, in other words, does not necessarily make us more moral. Reason is often something we use to rationalise choices made on the basis of emotion.

That explains the presence of the aesthetic dimension of the service of the Sanctuary. It had beauty, gravitas, and majesty. In the time of the Temple it also had music. There were choirs of Levites singing psalms. Beauty speaks to emotion and emotion speaks to the soul, lifting us in ways reason cannot do to heights of love and awe, taking us above the narrow confines of the self into the circle at whose centre is God.

The Sanctuary and priesthood introduced into Jewish life the ethic of kedushah, holiness, which strengthened the values of loyalty, respect and the sacred by creating an environment of reverence, the humility felt by the people once they had these symbols of the Divine Presence in their midst. As Maimonides wrote in a famous passage in *The Guide for the Perplexed* (III:51), "We do not act when in the presence of a king as we do when we are merely in the company of friends or family."

In the Sanctuary people sensed they were in the presence of the King.

Reverence gives power to ritual, ceremony, social conventions, and civilities. It helps transform autonomous individuals into a collectively responsible group. You cannot sustain a national identity or even a marriage without loyalty. You cannot socialise successive generations without respect for figures of authority. You cannot defend the non-negotiable value of human dignity without a sense of the sacred. That is why the prophetic ethic of justice and compassion, had to be supplemented with the priestly ethic of holiness.

[1] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2012.

[2] *On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 13. [3] *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005, p. 60.

[4] "Religion and Intragroup Cooperation: Preliminary Results of a Comparative Analysis of Utopian Communities," *Cross Cultural Research* 34, no. 1 (2003), pp. 11–39.

[5] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, p. 89.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Moses and Aaron were the two great leaders of the Israelites in the desert; prophet and priest.

Moses, the master prophet, seems to have arisen to leadership not because he came from a prominent Hebrew family – indeed, the Bible introduces him merely as a child of "a man from the house of Levi who took a Levite woman as a wife" (Exodus 2:1-2), and his

adoptive mother with whom he lived his most formative years in the palace of Pharaoh was a gentile Egyptian princess.

The Bible relates three incidents in which Moses fought against acts of injustice – his slaying of an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Hebrew, his berating of a Hebrew raising his hand against another Hebrew, and his protecting a Midianite shepherdess (who later became his wife) from unfair treatment by other Midianite shepherds. Apparently, Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites not because of his ancestral pedigree, but rather because of his Abrahamic character of compassionate righteousness and of a universal sense of moral justice.

Prophetic leadership apparently depends not on who your parents and grandparents were, but rather on who you are.

Aaron, the high priest, is of very different typology.

Firstly, the priesthood is all about genealogy – priesthood comes exclusively from being born into a family of priests. Hence, in our portion of Tetzaveh – the only portion in the biblical books from Exodus to Deuteronomy in which Moses's name doesn't appear – the task of setting up the menorah is given to "Aaron and his sons" (Exodus 27:21). The Bible lists them by name, "Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron," and states that they are to be brought forward to serve as priests. Aaron and his sons comprise a unit of familial inheritance from father to son, a phenomenon completely absent in the case of Moses.

The kohanim have special vestments, which they must wear while performing the Sanctuary (or Temple) service: four specific garments for the regular kohanim, and eight specific garments for the high priest. Indeed, if a priest is without his unique garb, he must vacate the Temple Mount – which leads the Talmud to declare that the sanctity of the kohen seems to reside in his external garb. However, the prophet has no distinguishing garment whatsoever.

Apparently, the prophet is a charismatic leader whose only qualification is that he is inflamed with the fiery passion of the spirit of the Lord; the kohen inherits his position, which relies on priestly vestments to bestow "honor and glory" and inspire the masses with prideful religious fervor.

In order to understand the different and complementary roles each of these officiates must play in the drama of Israelite leadership, we must first understand the essence of our Jewish mission. The first task of religion – and the fundamental search of most philosophers from earliest times – is to provide a stable and unchanging constancy in a world of frightening flux, to give people the sense that

they are participating in experiences and rituals which were there before they were born and will continue after they die. This allows transient mortals to grasp eternity, and to feel that they are in the presence of God.

Herein lies the power and the noble task of the priest, the guardian of our ancient religious traditions.

The verse which most defines him is: "Remember the days of old, understand the years of past generations. Ask your father and he will tell you, your grandfather and he will say to you" (Deut. 32:7). His primary function is to safeguard the rituals; he must hand over the exact structure of the ritual, the precise text of the prayer or legal passage, from generation to generation.

His expertise lies in his mastery of the external form – and preserving it at all costs.

But the root of every religion is the sense of awe at being in the presence of God, the passionate commitment to Divine command in the here and now! What happens when parts of the ritual lose their relevance, when people get so caught up in the form that they lose the essence, so involved in the precise structure of the Divine service that they forget that the real Divine service lies in their human sensitivity? Then it is the prophet who must come forth, speaking as the mouthpiece of the Voice of the Living God, reminding the religionists that all their ritual is of no value if they forget the poor, the orphan, the widow and the "chained" wife-widow, the other, the stranger, and the proselyte knocking at our door. The prophet's message must insist that God despises our rituals (Isaiah 1:11-17), unless "moral justice rolls forth like the waters and compassionate righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24).

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand **Ringling Cloth Bells Teach Us to Perform Kodesh Humbly**

The pasuk in Parshas Tezaveh says "You shall make the Robe of the Ephod entirely of turquoise wool." [Shmos 28:31] One of the garments of the Kohen Gadol was the Meil, a kind of robe. The Torah describes how the Meil is to be made and then it says "You shall make on its hem pomegranates of turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, on its hem all around, and gold bells between them, all around." [Shmos 28:33] On the hem of the robe, there were little balls in the form of multi-colored pomegranates. Additionally, there were golden bells which alternated with the pomegranates around the hem of the garment. The Torah emphasizes that the sound of these bells would be heard whenever Aharon would come into or leave the Sanctuary. [Shmos 28:35]

This is the simple reading of the pesukim and this is how Rashi interprets the reason for the alternating bells and pomegranates. The Ramban argues with Rashi's interpretation that

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between every two bells there was a pomegranate. If the configuration were as Rashi suggested, there would seem to be no point to the pomegranates. The Ramban understands that there were cloth pomegranates and inside each pomegranate was this pseudo bell, made also out of material in the shape of a bell. It was simply cloth against cloth and it did not ring!

Rav Chavel in his commentary on the Ramban notes that according to this interpretation it is hard to understand what kind of sound the "bells" made. What does the pasuk then mean when it writes "And the sound of him will be heard when he comes into the Holy"? Cloth hitting cloth does not make noise! Rav Chavel suggests an answer based on the Pesikta: It was a miracle that sound emanated from these cloth bells as if they were made of gold. Even though based on physics and acoustics the sound of cloth against cloth should have been inaudible, miraculously a sound was heard.

Still, we must ask: Why? Why did HaKadosh Baruch Hu need to make such a miracle in the Beis HaMikdash? Of course, miracles occurred in the Beis HaMikdash on a daily basis – but they all served an understandable purpose. For example, there were never flies around the slaughtered animal meat and the smoke from the Mizbeach ascended directly to Heaven. But, if there was a need to have a sound announcing the Kohen Gadol's entry into the Beis HaMikdash, why not use a real bell? Why use a miraculous sound that emerged from "cloth banging against cloth"?

My son, Reb Yakov, told me a very nice explanation in the name of Rav Yosef Flamm. There is a message here: When someone enters the Kodesh – the Holy – he should not be the party that is making the noise! In Avodas HaKodesh, do not look to make a lot of noise: Do it quietly, do it humbly, do it without a lot of bells and whistles. But the result will nevertheless be "and the sound of him shall be heard when he enters into the Holy." The Ribono shel Olam will make it known. He will publicize the matter. You do not need to make the noise yourself.

When you come into the Kodesh, do not look to make a lot of headlines. "Hatzneah leches..." [Michah 6:8] – Walk quietly! Do not worry that you are not making a strong enough impression in your spiritual activities. The Ribono shel Olam will make sure it gets known: "V'Nishma Kolo b'vo'oh el haKodesh" (And his sound will be heard when he enters the Kodesh.) This is the message, according to the Ramban of the cloth bells on the Robe of the Kohen Gadol.

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel **Encyclopedia of Jewish Values*** **Titzaveh – the Real Meaning of Tzniut-Modesty**

Since this Parsha is THE Torah portion that concentrates on almost exclusively on clothing,

those of the Kohanim and the Kohen Gadol-High Priest, many schools, especially girls schools, often choose this Parsha to concentrate on teaching proper and improper clothing and dress, since that is the essence of the laws of Tzniut or modesty. I believe that all these educators are mistaken.

The truth is that Jewish concept of Tzniut has little or nothing to do with clothing. The proof that Jewish modesty cannot possibly be a function of clothing is derived from the Talmudic passage (Eruvin 100b) that says that had the Torah not taught the Jewish people modesty, this Jewish concept would have been learned from the cat. Since nearly all cats in the world walk around at all times stark naked, devoid of any clothing whatsoever, the true meaning of modesty in Judaism could not possibly be related to dress. There are only two references in the entire Tanach-Bible to the Hebrew word for modesty, *Tzniut*. One reference (Proverbs 11:1-2) speaks of modesty as a form of wisdom and intelligence, while the other, more famous verse (Micah 6:8), speaks of the way a person should behave and walk with God -- modestly. Neither Biblical reference has anything remotely to do with clothing. Clearly, then, Jewish modesty is a general concept that affects all parts of a person's life and is not exclusively clothing related. What, then, is the Jewish concept of modesty? How can we identify a modest person -- in the Jewish sense? And which other concepts in Judaism is modesty related to?

First, the Jewish concept of modesty relates to holiness. If we assume that the Hebrew term *Tzniut* and the general idea of modesty is in some way connected to the idea of covering up and hiddenness, then the Torah connects the concept of modesty to the concept of holiness. When Moses, as a shepherd, first encounters God by the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai, God informs Moses that the place he is standing upon is holy ground. Moses' first reaction to this statement is that he hides his face (Exodus 3:5-6). Thus, hiddenness and privacy seems to be the reaction to holiness.

The holiest Jewish book, the Torah, is not kept on public display in the synagogue, in the main lobby in a glass case so everyone can view it. Rather, it is unseen, hidden in the Holy Ark, and only removed for public reading on special occasions. Numerous laws relating to a Torah scroll teach us that we treat this scroll as we do a human body. Thus, we bury a damaged scroll that is no longer usable, in the ground, as we would a dead human body. It is interesting that in describing the need to cover up and not handle the scroll, the Talmud refers to someone who touches the Torah scroll directly (without an intermediary) as touching the "naked" Torah (Megillah 32a). The Talmud (Sukkah 49b) also points out that the learning of Torah should ideally take place in private, in a hidden manner. Even the giving of the Torah, as Rav Soloveitchik explained (public Shavuot lecture 1981), should have been a private affair (like the

Second Tablets), but was given publicly so the non-Jews would be aware of its content. Rav Soloveitchik even says that Torah-Tablets HAD to be destroyed because it was given so publicly, as Rashi clearly states saying regarding the giving of the Torah - privacy is appropriate as an act of Tzniut-modesty (Rashi Commentary, Exodus 34:3). Thus, the relationship between holiness and hiddenness is very connected.

The relationship between holiness and modesty-hiddenness can also be seen later in the Bible when the angels were about to pronounce the blessing of holiness upon God. Today we have incorporated their blessing in the prayer service as Kedusha (Holiness) because they pronounced three times Holy! Holy! Holy! (is God). Immediately before pronouncing these words, the prophet describes these angels possessing six wings. While two of the wings were used to fly, the other four were used to cover the faces and legs of these angels (Isaiah 6:2). Once again, we see that where holiness exists, modesty and hiddenness also exist.

Why? What is that connection between holiness and hiddenness? When someone possesses something special, such as jewelry, it, too, like the Torah, is hidden away and only brought out for special occasions. If it were worn daily, then that jewelry would no longer be considered special. This, then, is holiness in Judaism -- something special and set aside, and only used and shown on rare occasions. Keeping jewelry hidden except to show off on rare and appropriate occasions, can be expanded into a general attitude about how Jews should treat all their precious possessions such as their talents, beauty, and intelligence. Jewish modesty, then, demands that we do not publicly flaunt anything that people admire. Like jewels and the Torah, these should be preserved only for special and appropriate occasions. Unlike the philosophy of the 1960's, exhorting people to "let it all hang out," Jewish modesty exhorts the Jew to "let it all hang in." One should not show off all one's abilities. Modesty demands that Jews should not try to constantly impress people with intelligence or the ability to know everything about every subject, even when people do know quite a lot about very many issues. A person should not constantly volunteer to play a musical instrument or show off a particular talent, even when he or she has a unique ability in a particular area. People will appreciate a person and his or her talent more if it is "shown off" only on rare occasions when it is appropriate.

The same can be said about the human body and its attitude about modesty. Judaism does admire physical beauty. However, like any another special quality given by God, it should not be shown off with revealing clothes except on special occasions, which Judaism defines as in the bedroom with one's spouse. Sarah, Abraham's wife, remained in the tent when strangers came to visit (Genesis 18:9), despite the fact what she was exceedingly beautiful. Western culture instructs husbands to "show off"

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the beauty of their wives. Yet, because Sarah stayed inside the tent, the Talmud calls the beautiful Sara modest (Bava Metzia 87a). Using that special quality only on an occasional basis and in the proper context, is what makes that talent more appreciated, not less appreciated. Because the mountain did not symbolically try to "show off" how great it was, Mount Sinai was called modest and was chosen as the site of the giving of the Torah. Thus, hiding one's special talent except for special occasions (as part of Jewish holiness) is one important aspect of Jewish modesty.

Another aspect of Jewish modesty, *Tzniut*, is related to another Hebrew word often translated into English as modesty, *Anavah*. *Anavah* is synonymous with humility and Jewish modesty. What exactly is Jewish humility? Many people mistakenly believe that a humble person is one who thinks very little of himself or herself. But this cannot possibly be proper. It is written in the Torah (Numbers 12:3) that Moses was the humblest of all men on the face of the earth. It would be very difficult to claim that Moses thought of himself of a very simple, low person, who was no better than anyone else. Moses was certainly conscious that God chose him to be the Jewish leader to take the Jews out of Egypt, which Moses did after initial reluctance. Could it be possible that Moses actually thought he was no better or no more spiritual than anyone else? After all, it was Moses himself who wrote down these words (dictated by God) that he was the humblest of all men! Clearly, Moses knew he was a great man. Therefore, Jewish humility cannot be defined as self-worthlessness. What, then, is Jewish humility?

What made Moses truly humble is that he did not ascribe any of his greatness to himself. He understood that all his greatness came from the Almighty. This is true humility: acknowledging one's greatness, talents, and achievements in a realistic manner, but attributing all of life's achievements to God, and not to oneself. Even though we must work hard to develop the talents and intelligence we were given, without these innate gifts (physical or spiritual) from God, all the hard work in the world could not help us achieve greatness. When Moses did sin when he hit the rock, his sin, according to Nachmanides quoting Rabbi Chanelel (Commentary of Nachmanides on Numbers 20:8), was that Moses caused the people to think that it was he and not God, who performed the miracle of extracting the water from the stone. That is the meaning in the verses which explain the sin (Numbers 20:12 and Deuteronomy 32:51) "that you ... did not sanctify Me (God) in the eyes of the people." Therefore, it is this quality -- understanding that one's achievements do not only come from self, but are attributable to others as well, especially God. This reminder, that it is not solely our efforts that allow us our achievements, can be seen in the difference between the wording of a college diploma or doctorate and the Rabbinic ordination document, Semicha. While every diploma lists only that person's name, signifying that the

achievement is solely due to that person's efforts, the Semicha lists a person as the son of the father. This signifies that a person is a product of an upbringing, and that all achievement is not only due to that person, but also to the parents (and others) as well. Perhaps, this concept of Jewish humility and modesty is best expressed in the verses in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 9:22-23) that exhorts the rich man not to be haughty in his wealth, the wise man not to be haughty in his wisdom or the hero not to be haughty in his heroism. One may only be "haughty" in recognizing and understanding God and in how it is He who helps man achieve his greatness. This, too, is part of Tzniut

Thus, it is possible today even for a famous athlete, musician, or star actor to still be humble. Although greatly admired, this "star" can achieve humility if he or she attributes all of the admiration and achievements to the talent given by God or to others who have helped get the person attain the heights achieved. Thus, when the Most Valuable Player of the World Series or Super Bowl thanks God for letting him achieve this pinnacle, or even thanks teammates and coaches (if truly sincere), then this is an act of Jewish humility and Jewish modesty. It is all too easy in the twenty first century, with all of man's inventions and accomplishments, to think of man as the source of all achievement. Jewish modesty teaches man to recognize God in all his or her achievements, whether they are public and on display or even private achievements on an everyday level.

***This column has been adapted from a series of volumes written by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel "The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values" available from Urim and Amazon. For the full article or to review all the footnotes in the original, contact the author at nachum@jewishdestiny.com**

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot

"Special Assignments"

Our Sidra of this morning manifests certain stylistic peculiarities which are deserving of our attention. Surprisingly, the name of Moses is not once mentioned in this Sidra. Instead, three times in succession God addresses Moses using the pronoun v'attah, "and thou," as if to emphasize some special assignment given to Moses by God. Thus we read, v'attah tetzaveh, "and thou shalt command" the Children of Israel to bring olive oil for the Menorah; v'attah hakrev, "and thou shalt draw near" Aaron and his children to dedicate them to the priesthood; and v'attah tedaber, "and thou shalt speak" to all skilled artisans to prepare the vestments of priests and the furnishings of the Temple.

The Zohar too recognized the unusual construction of this passage, and attributed to the repetition of the pronoun v'attah great mystical significance, a raza ilaah, a supernal mystery whereby Moses was able to commune more directly with the Shechinah. In other words, the Zohar acknowledges, in mystical

idiom, that we are here confronted by a special assignment given to Moses. What Divine secrets is the Torah trying to reveal to us? Let us analyze each of these cases briefly and see what the Torah says to us today--openly, not esoterically.

Let us begin with the last case: v'attah tedaber el kol hakhmei lev, "and thou shall speak to all the wise-hearted" to use their skills in the prescribed manner in order to prepare the vestments and the Temple furnishings. Actually, a modern reader encountering this passage for the first time might well be astounded. For our Sidra, to be truthful, probably appears to the eyes of the unacquainted with Judaism as little more than a manual for carpenters, weavers, and tailors. Such a person might justifiably ask: What business is it of Moses to instruct the artisans and artists in their work? What business, indeed, is it of religion to deal at all with art and crafts? Let Moses commission the artists, sublet the contract, and not interfere in the creative labors of the hakhmei lev.

Such protest makes eminently good sense in the context of modern secularism. Secularism teaches that life and society are to be viewed in segments, by compartmentalization. There is the category of the sacred and the category of the profane, and they should not be confused. On one side we have religion, and on the other side all else. Secularism does not deny the right of religion to preach its doctrine, nor does it deny to it legitimacy; it does not really care at all. It does insist, however, that religion is irrelevant to any activity that is not concerned with the other world. Let religion deal with theology, with heaven and hell, with paradise--but let it not interfere with or pronounce judgment upon society and its varied problems. A secularist, therefore, would concur in a protest against Moses and the Bible in their concern with the hakhmei lev, the artists and artisans.

Yet this is precisely what the Torah wants to tell us: that this whole doctrine is false! Judaism cannot concern itself only with the Other World. In fact, it has precious little about the Other World, except that it exists and that it is a fine place in which to spend eternity. Our major concern is with this world, with poverty and wealth, with peace and war, with love and hate, with ambition and competition, with the daily grind, and grime, and guts of earthly life. That is why the Torah emphasizes the point: v'attah, "and you," Specifically you, Moses, who are the embodiment of Torah and revelation, v'attah tedaber el kol hakhmei lev, it is you who must incorporate into the realm of Torah the art of the artist and the skill of the artisan. It is you who must break down all artificial boundaries and declare as limitless the horizons of Torah and the people of Torah. So does the "Keli Yakar" interpret our verse: K'dei she'yekablu atzilut or ha-sekheh mimekha, the very inspiration and skill of the hakhmei lev must derive from the intellectual and spiritual genius of Moses and Torah. It is quite conceivable that Moses himself was not a skilled artist, that he could not even

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draw a straight line; but in the circle of Moses' universal interests, his atzilut, he included art and science and commerce and each and every expression of human creativity.

I am therefore disappointed when I hear of very Orthodox Jews who prefer to retrench to the comfort and security of the Synagogue or the Shtibel, or the Yeshiva or the Kollel, and ignore all the rest of the world. This is an instance of succumbing to an anti-Jewish view, to the divorce of the v'attah of Moses from the hakhmei lev of the modern world.

I am therefore grieved when American Jews deny to Orthodox thinkers the right to be heard when they express an authentically Jewish view, issuing from the Halakhah, on the great social, ethical, and moral problems of our day, whether on the problems of peace or those of the proposed abortion law. I am both amused and saddened when people on the one hand chastise Orthodoxy for not being involved more in contemporary life, and on the other chastise us even more when we attempt to pronounce an authentically Jewish view which may not agree with all their prejudices. Are we, then to be reduced to the areas of service, and Sabbath, and Kashruth exclusively, offering no moral opinions on matters of life and death--and leaving that only to the consensus of the ignorant or the moral authority of the politicians?

I therefore am happy, and delighted, and proud when some consummately obnoxious non-entity, supported by a great majority of his white Protestant neighbors, in Wayne County, N.J., accuses Jews of being prejudiced in favor of more education. I gladly plead guilty to the fact that the culture and religion of Judaism are predisposed to educate as a moral necessity for all people. It is true that I am amused and faintly irritated by the astonishment experienced by so many Jews who found their illusions in shambles--illusions that because their Gentile neighbors greeted them politely every morning this indicated the end of all anti-Semitism, even the latent variety, among New Jersey WASP's. But I am happy that Jews stand accused of provoking Jew-hatred because they favor culture and learning. I much prefer this to the revealing interview granted by a German Cardinal earlier this week in which, on the eve of accepting a Christian-Jewish Brotherhood award, he blamed Jewish assertiveness in provoking Hitlerian anti-Semitism. The senility of the old Prince of the Church was just sufficient to strip him of his hypocritical veneer of post-conciliar ecumenical euphoria and reveal the ugly inner forces of the legacy of centuries of anti-Semitism, a Jew-hatred which survives even his own earlier attempts to become a civilized human being in the face of Nazi bestiality. If we have to suffer anti-Semitism, then let it be forthcoming for such reasons which enhance the glory of our heritage and our loyalty to it. For we are not a private cult, out of the mainstream of life. Moses and all he stands for, the v'attah that we

represent today, includes the aspirations of all hakhmei lev.

The second instance of v'attah is the one with which our Sidra begins: v'attah tetzaveh et benei Yisrael ve'yikhu elekha, "and thou shalt command the Children of Israel and they shall take to you" pure, beaten olive oil for illumination in the Temple. Our Rabbis were intrigued by the word elekha, "to you." They said that God meant this rather specifically: elekha ve'lo li, "to you, Moses, and not for Me," because lo l'orah ani tzarikh, "I, God, do not need their light--but you and they and all mankind do."

When the Talmud meant to tell us by this is that we must never think we are doing God a favor by observing Judaism. To imagine that through our observances we are fulfilling a divine need is to revert to paganism and primitivism. The true Jew realizes that God does not need our gifts; that a religious life is not a question of spiritual trade and religious commercialization.

Unfortunately, this is not always the underlying assumption of our lives. You will not detect this primitive aspect of religion in the person who, when asked to contribute even more of his time and substance and energy to Torah, will respond with annoyance, "Haven't I already done my share?", as if what he has done so far has been a tribute exacted of him by an avaricious God who should have had His appetite satiated by now. When such a person suffers reverses, his question is always, "Didn't I do my duty?" Why did I deserve this?"

Therefore, the Talmud interprets the words of the Torah clearly: elekha, ve'lo li: The Torah, with all its difficulties and demands and disciplines, is a gift by God to man, and our observance of the Torah is no gift by us to God. That is why, too, the Torah uses the word ve'yikhu, "and they shall take." When we perform the genuine religious act, whether it be giving charity or lighting candles, we do not really give; we take. Paradoxically, it is a law of nature and of Torah: when we give, whether it be love or happiness or charity, we really take; the more we transmit, the more we transcend; the more we do, the more we are.

Thus it is that one commentator, perhaps speaking tongue in cheek but alluding to matters of utmost seriousness, says that in this case the Torah uses the expression v'attah, "and thou shalt command" to emphasize that God wishes Moses to instruct the Children of Israel in gathering the olive oil, in his own name, rather than God issuing the command by Himself: so that the Children of Israel should not foolishly believe that God needs the light, but rather understand from the command of Moses that it was meant for their good.

The third v'attah tells us of a sublime psychological principle that demanded of Moses that he scale the very heights of ethical and moral perfection. V'attah hakrev et Aharon ahikha v'et banav ito mi-tokh benei Yisrael

le'k'hahno li, Nadav va-Ahivu, Elazar v'Itamar, benei Aharon, "and thou shall draw near to thee Aaron thy brother and his children with him from amongst the children of Israel to minister unto Me; Aaron and Nadab and Ahihu and Elazar and Itamar, the children of Aaron."

How difficult it must have been for Moses to preside at this dedication of Aaron and his sons as the founder of Jewish priesthood. His own children, Gershom and Eliezer, are of no importance in Jewish history. Shortly after their birth is mentioned, they slip into total obscurity, lost to Scripture and Judaism and to world Jewry. What a prominent father--and what obscure sons!

At the very beginning of the career of these two brothers, Aaron manifested great heroism. He was the oldest, Moses the youngest in the family. It would normally have been expected that Aaron be charged with the mission of being the teacher, the leader, the law-giver. But it was Moses, the youngest, who was chosen, and Aaron was to be subordinate to him. Yet the Torah tells us, with prophetic revelation, that ve'raakha ve'samah be'libo, when Aaron saw Moses after being informed of the Divine mission, he was happy in his heart. Not only did Aaron demonstrate outwardly satisfaction, but inwardly he experienced simhah, true joy at the greatness that was accorded to his brother. No matter that he was now to be the disciple of Moses, the assistant, secondary to him, yet Aaron succeeded in restraining his quite natural sibling rivalry towards the youngest of his family. He did not begrudge Moses the greatness to which he might legitimately have laid claim.

Now the tables were turned. Moses was called upon to rise to the occasion and not to begrudge to his brother that special historic "nachas" which he, Moses, was denied. Hence, v'attah hakrev, "and thou draw near thy brother Aaron and his sons," it is your opportunity, Moses, to show your greatness, a greatness that transcends even that of Aaron towards you, and bestow eternal priesthood on all his children, on Nadav va-Avihu, Elazar v'Itamar, benei Aharon. Do not allow your personal disappointments in your own children to stand in the way of family joy and pride; witness and participate in, without any pang of regret, the special pride with which Aaron is now blessed.

It was a psychologically impossible task, but Moses was commanded to do it, and Moses succeeded in this v'attah as well. No wonder that the priestly vestments, the mark of distinction of the children of Aaron, are regarded by our Sidra as le'khavod u-le'tiferet, the signs of honor adornment. Indeed--they were a tiferet, an ornament for the children of Aaron; but they were the sign of kavod, true sublime honor, for Moses who was able to preside at this investiture without at all begrudging this special joy to his brother Aaron.

The Zohar, then, was right: these three principles, summarized in the three pronouns v'attah, serve to bring man into communion

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with the Shechinah, they allow man to grow intellectually, religiously, morally. They teach us the comprehensiveness of Torah; that Torah was meant for our good; and that we must erase every taint of selfishness from our hearts and never begrudge another his joys.

May I conclude by exercising some homiletic license. The first verse of our Haftarah begins with the charge of the Almighty to the prophet Ezekiel: Attah ben adam haged et bet Yisrael, "You, O son of man, tell the houses of Israel" to produce with the building of the Temple. Let us re-interpret that: haged et bet Yisrael, tell the House of Israel that if they will remember the attah, the special lessons incorporated in the pronoun "thou" told to their teacher Moses, then they will reach the very limits of humanity, and they will rise to the fulness of the stature of ben adam.

Excerpted from Rabbi Norman Lamm's Derashot Ledorot: A Commentary for the Ages--Exodus co-published by OU Press, Maggid Books, and YU Press; edited by Stuart W. Halpern

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Moses is Missing...Really?

David Nekrutman

The observational humor of Jerry Seinfeld has made audiences laugh for decades. His take and comic delivery on human behavior has even caused an existential crisis for many who buy donut holes. "Millions of people eat donut holes, but what are they? You can't sell people a hole," he fervently insists. "A hole does not exist! Words have meanings!"

Although Pentateuch in Judaism is called the Five Books of Moses, one will notice that in this week's Torah portion Moses' name is absent from it. In his commentary on the Torah, Ba'al Haturim, Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher (1269-1340) addresses this issue:

The name Moses is not mentioned in this sidra (Torah portion), a phenomenon that does not occur elsewhere in Chumash (the Five Books of Moses), for from Moses' birth [and onward], there is no sidra in which he is not mentioned. The reason [he is not mentioned in this sidra] is because he said to God, "And now if You would forgive their sin [Golden Calf] -- but if not, erase me from Your Book that you have written (Exodus 32:32). The curse of a sage will always be fulfilled even when it was given conditionally. And so, [Moses' curse] was fulfilled [by his name being erased from this sidra].

The absence of Moses from the parsha -- and why this particular Torah portion was selected for its omission -- is the subject of many Jewish commentators' writings. But it's not that Moses is missing in the Torah portion. In fact, all the verses in Parshat Tetzaveh that say "you" is referring to Moses as God speaks to him -- it's just that his name is not mentioned. No one is bothered when Moses' name is not mentioned in the Deuteronomic readings of Ekev, Re'eh, Shofetim, or Ki-Tetze, and his

name is only mentioned once in the previous Torah portion of Terumah. Shouldn't a Torah portion at least have Moses' name mentioned twice?

It seems that the minimum standard to satisfy our need to mention Moses' name is at least one time in a parsha. Why not extend Parshat Tetzaveh to include the beginning of Parshat Ki Tisa, which begins with "God spoke to Moses" – problem solved! Moses' name is missing from the Torah portion because someone decided that Parshat Tetzaveh ends where it ends. Have we not bought into the "donut hole" of the Missing Moses by creating all this commentary where none is needed?

There is no question that at the time of Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher, there was a firm tradition of 53 parshiyot[1] as part of our annual reading of the Torah. However, there was no official list at the time of the Talmud as to which Torah texts would be part of a weekly Torah portion.

The obligation to publicly read the Torah on Shabbat, Mondays, Thursdays, the holidays, and on the New Moon is sourced in the Jerusalem Talmud[2] and a Beraita (non-canonical Mishnah) in the Babylonian Talmud.[3] Both Moses and Ezra are credited for the enactment.[4] In Talmudic times, Jews living in Israel would complete reading of the Torah every three and half years[5] while Babylonian Jews completed it every year.[6] It seems that some Jewish communities kept the "triennial cycle" even during Rambam's time.[7] In the travels of Benjamin of Tudela, he writes that there were two synagogues in the Cairo area:

The number of Jewish inhabitants is about 7,000. Two large synagogues are there, one belonging to the men of the land of Israel and one belonging to the men of the land of Babylon. The synagogue of the men of the land of Israel is called Kenisat-al-Schamiyyin, and the synagogue of the men of Babylon is called Kenisat-al-Irakiyyin. Their usage with regard to the portions and sections of the Law is not alike; for the men of Babylon are accustomed to read a portion every week, as is done in Spain, and is our custom, and to finish the Law each year; whilst the men of Palestine do not do so, but divide each portion into three sections and finish the Law at the end of three years. The two communities, however, have an established custom to unite and pray together on the day of the Rejoicing of the Law (Simchat Torah), and on the day of the Giving of the Law (Shavuot)[8]

While the Mishnah[9] references special Sabbath and holiday readings such as Shekalim, Zachor, etc..., there was no official list as to which Torah texts are to be read each Shabbat. It is the Rambam who provides the first complete list of all 53 parshiyot along with their Haftorot.[10] In my discussion with Rachamim Sar Shalom,[11] who has written extensively on this subject, he believes that the list of parshiyot and the texts to be included in

these weekly portions were developed sometime during mid Geonic period (589-1038CE). Proof of this theory is based upon Rabbi Amram Gaon's (810-875CE) prayer book since he provides certain parshiyot regulations such as the custom to read Parshat Tzav prior to Passover and Parshat Devraim to be read before Tisha B'Av. However, Sar Shalom argues that Torah text included in each parsha as presented to us today in our current Chumashim is much later date (probably 17th or 18th centuries).

The point is that what we know as a parsha today took centuries of development within Judaism. Furthermore, I found that Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai (1724-1806) considered Parshat Terumah and Parshat Tetzaveh as one long parsha,[12] which means Hashem did not take out Moses from Parshat Tetzaveh, but rather, it was the "canonizers" of our weekly Torah portions who omitted him.

My use of the Seinfeld's donut joke was simply a strategy for you to read this Parshat Hashvua tidbit all the way to the end and provide insight into the development of our parshiyot today. In no way am I putting myself on the level of Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher. It is clear from his commentary that his Parshat Tetzaveh mesorah (tradition) was a stand-alone parsha not associated with the previous one. The point Rabbi Asher is making is the power of a sage's curses as sourced in Talmud,[13] where Rabbi Avahu said: The curse of a scholar, even with a condition, will always come true (although the condition was not met). This is proven from an incident where Eli the Priest told Samuel that he should be cursed if he conceals anything from him. And although Samuel told him everything, Eli's curse was fulfilled when Samuel's sons did not follow in his ways.

For Rabbi Asher, there is no textual evidence that Moses' curse was fulfilled when he uttered the words "erase me from Your Book that you have written." Since his birth, Moses is in every book. To demonstrate the power of words and fulfill what the Talmudic dictum, the "canonizers" brilliantly created a parsha without the mention of Moses' name. They created a real donut hole.

[1] Today, we have 54 Parshiyot

[2] Jerusalem Talmud Tractate Megillah 4:1

[3] Babylonian Talmud Tractate Bava Kama 82a

[4] Tractate Sofrim 10:1

[5] There is a debate as to how many sedarim there are in a triennial cycle and whether a triennial cycle is 3 years or 3 1/2 years. In the Mikraot Gedolot edition the total number of Sedarim is 154. The Midrash of the opening to Esther Rabbah mentions 155, Bamidbar Rabbah at the beginning of Parshat Korach mentions 175.

[6] Babylonian Talmud Megillah 29b

[7] Rambam Laws of Prayer and Priestly Blessing 13:1 (Rambam does say the common custom is completing the Torah cycle in one year)

[8] Marcus Nathan Adler, The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary, Vol. 1 (Philipp Feldheim Incorporated, 1907) 70.

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[9] Mishnah Megillah 3:4-6

[10] Rambam Sefer Ahava Order of Prayers

[11] Rachamim Dar Shalom (2020) Division of Parshiyot interviewed by David Nekrutman, 27/2

[12] Chaim Yosef David Azulai Devash Lefi 80:3

[13] Babylonian Talmud Makkot 11a

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Weekly Parsha TETZAVEH 5782

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

In the Torah reading of this week, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the preparation of the oil that will be the fuel for the flames of the great Candelabra that existed in the Tabernacle and, later, in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Torah emphasizes that the oil to be used must be of the purest kind, refined to produce only illumination. Through this verse, the commentators attempt to explain why such a special emphasis is to be placed on the oil.

Perhaps it would be sufficient for the Torah to simply command that the flames that emanated from the Menorah should be of the highest quality and have the greatest power of illumination. We would then understand that to produce flames of such a nature and quality, only the finest oil possible would have to be produced for the Candelabra to possess that proper fuel and extraordinarily fine flames. Thus, we see that the Torah emphasizes the preparation of the oil in more detail and with greater urgency than it does the description of the flame of the Candelabra that results.

In a strange way, it is as though the oil itself, which after all is only the fuel in the cup of the lamp of the Candelabra, somehow receives more prominence and detailed instruction than the flame itself. Not only that, but the great Candelabra has miraculous powers, and one of its lamps burned continuously, according to many commentaries, without having any added oil to the cup of that lamp. As such, if we are relying on that miracle, then why should the production of the oil for the Candelabra be deemed important at all?

Judaism places great weight not only on the fulfillment and actualization of commandments, but also regarding the preparation that precedes the actual fulfillment of the wishes of Heaven. Holiness and holy acts require preparation and forethought. They are not random acts that rarely occur because of the spontaneity of the moment.

All the holy days of the Jewish calendar require periods of planning – thirty days before the holiday itself, as well as physical, mental, and emotional preparation. One must enter the performance of commandments prepared. They are not to be performed haphazardly and without proper forethought and cognitive intent.

This is also true for the Sabbath day that occurs every week as well as all the daily commandments that we are privileged to perform on a regular basis. The Talmud teaches us that preparation is an important aspect of life – many times as important as actualizing the commandment.

Without proper preparation, performance of the commandments is likened to a body to which no soul is attached. Therefore, if we understand and appreciate this attitude towards life and commandments, we can readily appreciate why the Torah is so emphatic regarding the necessary methods of production of the oil to be used to light the lamps of the holy Tabernacle and Temple.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Berel Wein

The Ethic of Holiness

TETZAVEH - Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

With parshat Tetzaveh, something new enters Judaism: Torat Kohanim, the world and mindset of the Priest. Rapidly it becomes a central dimension of Judaism. It dominates the next book of the Torah, Vayikra. Until now, though, priests in the Torah have had a marginal presence.

This week's parsha marks the first time we encounter the idea of a hereditary elite within the Jewish people – Aaron and his male descendants – and their role to minister in the Sanctuary. For the first time we find the Torah speaking about robes of office: those of the priests and the High Priest worn while officiating in the sacred place. For the first time too we encounter the phrase, used about the robes: *lekavod ule-tiferet*, “for glory and beauty” (Ex. 28:2). Until this point, *kavod* in the sense of glory or honour has been attributed only to God.

As for *tiferet*, this is the first time it appears in the Torah. It opens up a whole dimension of Judaism – namely, the aesthetic.

All these phenomena are related to the Mishkan, the Sanctuary, the subject of the preceding chapters. They emerge from the project of making a “home” for the infinite God within finite space. The question I want to ask here, though, is: do they have anything to do with morality? With the kind of lives the Israelites were called upon to live and their relationships to one another? If so, what is their connection to morality? And why does the priesthood appear specifically at this point in the story?

It is common to divide the religious life in Judaism into two dimensions. One the one side, the priesthood and the Sanctuary, and on the other, the prophets and the people. The priests focused on the relationship between the people and God, *mitzvot bein adam leMakom*. Prophets focused on the relationship between the people and one another, *mitzvot bein adam lechavero*. The priests supervised ritual and the prophets spoke about ethics. One group was concerned with holiness, the other with virtue. You don't need to be holy to be good. You need to be good to be holy, but that is an entrance requirement, not what being holy is about. Pharaoh's daughter, who rescued Moses when he was a baby, was good but not holy. These are two separate ideas.

In this essay I want to challenge that conception. The priesthood and the Sanctuary made a moral difference, not just a spiritual one. Understanding how they did so is important not only to our understanding of history but also to how we lead our lives today. We can see this by looking at some important recent experimental work in the field of moral psychology.

Our starting point is American psychologist Jonathan Haidt and his book, *The Righteous Mind*. [1] Haidt posits that in contemporary secular societies our range of moral sensibilities has become very narrow. He calls such societies WEIRD – Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic. They tend to see more traditional cultures as rigid, hidebound, and repressive. People from those traditional cultures tend to see Westerners as strange in abandoning much of the richness of the moral life.

To take a non-moral example: A century ago in most British and American (non-Jewish) families, dining was a formal, social occasion. The family ate together and would not begin until everyone was at the table. They would begin with grace, thanking God for the food they were about to eat. There was an order in which people were served or served themselves. Conversation around the table was governed by conventions. There were things you might discuss, and others deemed unsuitable. Today that has changed completely. Many British homes do not contain a dining table. A recent survey showed that half of all meals in Britain are eaten alone. The members of the family come in at different times, take a meal from the freezer, heat it in the microwave, and eat it watching a television or computer screen. That is not dining but serial grazing.

Haidt became interested in the fact that his American students reduced morality to two principles, one relating to harm, the other to fairness. On harm they thought like John Stuart Mill, who said that “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.” [2] For Mill this was a political principle but it has become a moral one: if it doesn't harm others, we are morally entitled to do what we want.

The other principle is fairness. We don't all have the same idea of what is fair and what is not, but we all care about basic rules of justice: what is right for some should be right for all, do as you would be done to, don't bend the rules to your advantage and so on. Often the first moral sentence a young child utters is, “That's not fair.” John Rawls formulated the best-known modern statement of fairness: “Each person has an equal right to the most extensive liberties compatible with similar liberties for others.” [3]

Those are the ways WEIRD people think. If it's fair and does no harm, it is morally permissible. However — and this is Haidt's fundamental point

– there are at least three other dimensions to the moral life as understood in non-WEIRD cultures throughout the world.

One is loyalty and its opposite, betrayal. Loyalty means that I am prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of my family, my team, my co-religionists and my fellow citizens, the groups that help make me the person I am. I take their interests seriously, not only considering my own self-interest.

Another dimension is respect for authority and its opposite, subversion. Without this no institution is possible, perhaps no culture either. The Talmud illustrates this with a famous story about a would-be proselyte who came to Hillel and said, “Convert me to Judaism on condition that I accept only the Written Torah, not the Oral Torah.” Hillel began to teach him Hebrew. On the first day he taught him aleph-bet-gimmel. The next day he taught him gimmel-bet-aleph. The man protested, “Yesterday you taught me the opposite.” Hillel replied, “You see, you have to rely on me even to learn the aleph-bet. Rely on me also about the Oral Torah” (Shabbat 31a). Schools, armies, courts, professional associations, even sports, depend on respect for authority.

The third arises from the need to ring-fence certain values we regard as non-negotiable. They are not mine to do with as I wish. These are the things we call sacred, sacrosanct, not to be treated lightly or defiled.

Why are loyalty, respect, and the sacred not considered key strands of ethics in the typical view held by liberal elites in the West? The most fundamental answer is that WEIRD societies define themselves as groups of autonomous individuals seeking to pursue their own interests with minimal interference from others. Each of us is a self-determining individual with our own wants, needs and desires. Society should let us pursue those desires as far as possible without interfering in our or other people’s lives. To this end, we have developed principles of rights, liberty, and justice that allow us coexist peacefully. If an act is unfair or causes someone to suffer, we are prepared to condemn it morally, but not otherwise.

Loyalty, respect, and sanctity do not naturally thrive in secular societies based on market economics and liberal democratic politics. The market erodes loyalty. It invites us not to stay with the product we have used until now but to switch to one that is better, cheaper, faster, newer. Loyalty is the first victim of market capitalism’s “creative destruction.”

Respect for figures of authority – politicians, bankers, journalists, heads of corporations – has been falling for many decades. We are living through a loss of trust and the death of deference. Even the patient Hillel might have found it hard to deal with someone brought up on the 1979 Pink Floyd creed: “We don’t need no education, we don’t need no thought control.”

As for the sacred, that too has been lost. Marriage is no longer seen as a holy commitment, a covenant. At best it is viewed as a contract. Life itself is in danger of losing its sanctity with the spread of abortion on demand at the beginning and “assisted dying” at the end.

What makes loyalty, respect, and sanctity key moral values is that they create a moral community as opposed to a group of autonomous individuals. Loyalty bonds the individual to the group. Respect creates structures of authority that allow people to function effectively as teams. Sanctity binds people together in a shared moral universe. The sacred is where we enter the realm of that-which-is-greater-than-the-self. The very act of gathering as a congregation can lift us into a sense of transcendence in which we merge our identity with that of the group.

Once we understand this distinction, we can see how the moral universe of the Israelites changed over time. Abraham was chosen by God “so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just” (tzedakah umishpat; Gen. 18:19). What Abraham’s servant looked for when choosing a wife for Isaac was kindness, *chesed*. These are the key prophetic virtues. As Jeremiah said in God’s name:

“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom, or the strong of their strength, or the rich of their wealth but let one who boasts, boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who

exercises kindness, justice and righteousness (*chesed mishpat utzedakah*) on earth, for in these I delight.”

Jer. 9:22-23

Kindness is the equivalent of care, which is the opposite of harm. Justice and righteousness are specific forms of fairness. In other words, the prophetic virtues are close to those that prevail today in the liberal democracies of the West. That is a measure of the impact of the Hebrew Bible on the West, but that is another story for another time. The point is that kindness and fairness are about relationships between individuals. Until Sinai, the Israelites were just individuals, albeit part of the same extended family that had undergone Exodus and exile together.

After the Revelation at Mount Sinai, the Israelites were a covenanted people. They had a sovereign: God. They had a written constitution: the Torah. They had agreed to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). Yet the incident of the Golden Calf showed that they had not yet understood what it is to be a nation. They behaved like a mob. “Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies” (Ex. 32:25) That was the crisis to which the Sanctuary and the priesthood were the answer. They turned Jews into a nation.

The service of the Sanctuary performed by the Kohanim in their robes worn *le-kavod*, “for honour,” established the principle of respect. The Mishkan itself embodied the principle of the sacred. Set in the middle of the camp, the Sanctuary and its service turned the Israelites into a circle at whose centre was God. And even though, after the destruction of the Second Temple, there was no more Sanctuary or functioning priesthood, Jews found substitutes that performed the same function. What Torat Kohanim brought into Judaism was the choreography of holiness and respect that helped Jews walk and dance together as a nation.

Two further research findings are relevant here. Richard Sosis analysed a series of voluntary communities set up by various groups in the course of the nineteenth century, some religious, some secular. He discovered that the religious communes had an average lifespan of more than four times longer than their secular counterparts. There is something about the religious dimension that turns out to be important, even essential, in sustaining community.[4]

We now also know on the basis of considerable neuro-scientific evidence that we make our choices on the basis of emotion rather than reason. People whose emotional centres (specifically the ventromedial prefrontal cortex) have been damaged can analyse alternatives in great detail, but they can’t make good decisions. One interesting experiment revealed that academic books on ethics were more often stolen or never returned to libraries than books on other branches of philosophy.[5] Expertise in moral reasoning, in other words, does not necessarily make us more moral. Reason is often something we use to rationalise choices made on the basis of emotion.

That explains the presence of the aesthetic dimension of the service of the Sanctuary. It had beauty, *gravitas*, and majesty. In the time of the Temple it also had music. There were choirs of Levites singing psalms. Beauty speaks to emotion and emotion speaks to the soul, lifting us in ways reason cannot do to heights of love and awe, taking us above the narrow confines of the self into the circle at whose centre is God.

The Sanctuary and priesthood introduced into Jewish life the ethic of *kedushah*, holiness, which strengthened the values of loyalty, respect and the sacred by creating an environment of reverence, the humility felt by the people once they had these symbols of the Divine Presence in their midst. As Maimonides wrote in a famous passage in *The Guide for the Perplexed* (III:51),

We do not act when in the presence of a king as we do when we are merely in the company of friends or family.

In the Sanctuary people sensed they were in the presence of the King.

Reverence gives power to ritual, ceremony, social conventions, and civilities. It helps transform autonomous individuals into a collectively responsible group. You cannot sustain a national identity or even a marriage without loyalty. You cannot socialise successive generations without respect for figures of authority. You cannot defend the non-

negotiable value of human dignity without a sense of the sacred. That is why the prophetic ethic of justice and compassion, had to be supplemented with the priestly ethic of holiness.

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Parshat Tetzaveh

Weapons of Mass Distraction

"I shall rest My Presence among the Children of Yisrael and I shall be their G-d." (29:45)

At the end of the section on Torah prohibitions in the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot, the Ramban adds a list of mitzvot that he believes the Rambam should have also included. The second of these is the mitzvah not to forget the events at Mount Sinai. The Ramban lists this as a negative mitzvah, a "Don't do." Meaning, so to speak, "Don't spoil the situation as it stands." This is difficult to understand, for it suggests that the experience of Mount Sinai is something current right now and we must not do anything to destroy our awareness of it. The Ramban says that we should not "remove it from our consciousness" that "our eyes and our ears" should be constantly and forever at Mount Sinai.

The message is that the broadcast from Mount Sinai is constantly with us, and all we need to do is not to 'jam' the broadcast.

Before the Torah was given, it says in Shemot 19:16, "And it was on the third day, when it became morning, and there were sounds and lightning flashes..." After the giving of the Torah it says in 20:15, "And all the people saw the sounds and the torches..."

The lightning flashes that precede the Torah become torches afterwards. Before the giving of the Torah, the Word of Hashem was like lightning — a flash that lasted for a moment. After the Torah's giving, the words of the Torah became fixed, continuous and continuing — like a torch. The essence of a torch is that its light continues. It does not vanish in a flash. After the Torah was given to us, its sound is eternally present.

With this we can understand Onkelos' translation of the verse in Devarim 5:19, describing the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai as a "great sound that does not cease," meaning you can still hear it today.

So why don't we hear it?

The concept that the world is filled with sounds that we cannot hear was once difficult to grasp, but nowadays many people have in the pocket a device that makes this concept abundantly clear. The air is full of sounds. Sounds that travel from one side of the world to the other. A myriad of voices throngs the atmosphere.

The Talmud (Yoma 20b) makes a cryptic statement about the abounding sounds in the world: "Were it not for the sound of the sun in its orbit you would hear the sound of the hordes of Rome, and were it not for the sound of the hordes of Rome you could hear the sound of the sun in its orbit."

In other words, there is a fight in this a world, a fight to dominate the "airwaves" between the voice of Rome and the voice of the sun.

One of the names of Yaakov Avinu, Jacob, is Shemesh — "Sun." In Yosef's first dream of the sun and the moon and the stars bowing to him, Yaakov is represented by the sun.

The sun — Yaakov Avinu — and the "hordes of Rome" — the descendants of Esav — are locked in a battle for the airwaves, and for the minds and hearts of mankind.

To the extent that we tune in to Esav's broadcast, we will not be able to hear the unending and eternal broadcast from Mount Sinai.

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Clothes Make the Man

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersch Weinreb

My interest in the relationship between a person and his or her clothing goes back to my early days in graduate school. I was taking a course on human personality, under the tutelage of a remarkably insightful and erudite woman, Dr. Mary Henle. I was so enthusiastic about the courses

that I took with her that I asked her to supervise my master's degree thesis.

I remember the morning I shared my proposed topic with her. I thought that one of the ways to assess personality was to take note of the kind of clothing that a person wore. I further postulated that not only does a person's clothing tell us a lot about him or her, but the clothing that we wear actually has an impact upon us. Our clothing helps make us who we are.

Dr. Henle tactfully deflated my ego that morning. She said, "That's just an old wives' tale. Our personalities are very profound, subtle, and complex. At most, our clothing reflects just a superficial aspect of our identity. You give too much credit to the saying, 'Clothes make the man.' It is really only a wisecrack attributed to Mark Twain. There is nothing more to it than that."

I subsequently chose another topic for my master's degree thesis.

Many years have passed since that disappointing encounter, and Dr. Henle has long since passed away, although I remember her respectfully. During those years, I have learned that she was mistaken on many grounds. For one thing, the saying, "Clothes make the man," did not originate with Mark Twain. Centuries before the American humorist, the 16th century Catholic theologian Desiderius Erasmus wrote: "Vestis virum facit," which translates as, "Clothes make the man." Not long afterwards, none other than William Shakespeare put these words into the mouth of the character Polonius in his famous play Hamlet: "The apparel oft proclaims the man."

Truth to tell, statements about the relationship between a person and his clothing go back much further than a mere several centuries. Such statements originate in the Bible, and a passage in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10), is a case in point. We read:

"You shall bring forward your brother, Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests... Make sacred vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment. Next you shall instruct all who are wise of heart... to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as priest."

Maimonides, codifying the concepts which emerge from the Biblical text, writes: "A High Priest who serves in the Temple with less than his eight vestments, or an ordinary priest who serves with less than his four required vestments... invalidates the service performed and is subject to punishment by death at the hands of Heaven, as if he were an alien who served in the Temple... When their vestments are upon them, their priestly status is upon them, but without their vestments their priestly status is removed from them..." (Hilchot Klei HaMikdash, 10:4).

We are left with the clear impression that these vestments are external manifestations of the royalty and majesty of the priestly role. The clothing literally makes the man. Without the clothing, each priest is "ordinary"—one of God's subjects for sure, but without any regal status. With the clothing, he is not only bedecked with "dignity and adornment", but has become a prince, and can play a royal role.

Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, Ramban, makes this even more explicit. He writes, "These are royal garments. These cloaks and robes, tunics and turbans are even today (he lived in 13th century Spain) the apparel of nobility... and no one would dare to wear the crown... or the tekhelet (blue yarn) except for royalty."

From this perspective, clothes make the man. With them, he is imbued with the spirit of royalty and can carry himself with regal bearing.

Others interpret the function of the sacred garments differently, but all agree that garments influence the wearer in some fashion. For example, Rashi, commenting on the verse, "Put these on your brother Aaron, and on his sons as well; anoint them, and fill their hands" (Exodus 28:41), points out that in the Old French language with which he was familiar, when a person received a new official position the nobleman would put gloves upon him, indicating that he now had the authority of a new position. Rashi uses the Old French word *gant*, which the reference books that I consulted translate as a "decorative glove." This would indicate that the garments were a type of official uniform, not

necessarily regal, but symbolic of a specialized responsibility. With the donning of the gant the person himself gained the self-assurance of authority and power.

The late 15th century commentator Rabbi Isaac Arama, in his classic *Akedat Yitzchak*, provides even stronger support for our contention that clothes make the man. He identifies a similarity between the Hebrew word for the Kohen's uniform and the Hebrew word for ethical character. The Hebrew word for uniform is *mad*, plural *madim*, and the Hebrew word for a character trait is *midah*, plural *midot*.

Rabbi Arama notes that in Latin, too, the word *habitus* refers to both a special garment (e.g., a nun's habit) and a character trait (e.g. a good habit). He persuasively argues that "just as it can be determined from a person's external appearance as to whether he is a merchant or a soldier or a monk, so too, the discovery of our hidden inner personality begins with our external behaviors."

For Rabbi Arama, that our clothing is metaphor for our moral standing is evident in this biblical verse: "Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments when he stood before the angel. The latter stood up and spoke to his attendants: 'Take the filthy garments off him!' And he said to him: 'See, I have removed your guilt from you...'" (Zechariah 3:3-4).

Finally, there is another biblical verse which demonstrates the central role of clothing in "making the man." And here we go back even further in history than this week's parsha. Indeed, we go all the way back to the first parsha in the Torah, Bereishit: "And the Lord God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

Nechama Leibowitz comments: "Everything in the way of culture and civilization was given to man to discover and develop on his own, with his own capacities. Nothing in the way of repairing the world and settling it was given to him by God. Neither the discovery of fire nor farming nor building houses was revealed to man by God. Rather, he was required to invent all these procedures on his own. Only clothing was given to him from Above. "And the Lord...made garments."

God made clothing for man. And clothing makes the man.

Ah, do I now wish that I had not abandoned my original idea for a master's degree thesis. What a fascinating thesis it would have been!

Drasha Parshas Tetzaveh - Case Clothed

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

"Clothes," they say, "make the man." But did you ever wonder about the man who makes the clothes?

This week's portion discusses the priestly vestments worn by both the common kohen (priest) and the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). The common kohen wore four garments while the High Priest wore eight.

The garments of the High Priest were ornate and complex. They needed highly skilled artisans to embroider and fashion them. They included, among others, a jewel-studded breastplate, a honeycomb-woven tunic, an apron-like garment and a specially designed garment that was adorned with gold bells and woven pomegranates.

To weave these garments was quite a complex task, and Moshe had to direct the craftsmen with the particulars of the difficult sartorial laws. Yet when Hashem charges Moshe He described the function of the garments much differently than He did in telling Moshe to command the tailors.

Moshe himself was told by Hashem that the objective of the garments was for glory and splendor — surely wonderful, but very physical attributes. Yet when he is told to command the artisans, the message he is told to impart was quite different. "You shall speak to the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, as they shall make holy vestments to sanctify and minister for me." (Exodus 28:1-3) "The clothes," Moshe tells the tailors, "were not meant for glory or splendor; they were to sanctify and to minister." Why the change in stated purpose?

A Long Island rabbi attended a taharah (ritual ceremony to prepare a deceased Jew for burial) for an individual whose background was rooted in a Chasidic community. Chevra Kadishas (burial societies) are often

immune to the emotions, trauma and dread that would normally accompany a dead soul on a table.

The Chevra did their job almost perfunctorily, with hardly a word spoken, and that did not strike the rabbi as strange. Years of working with cadavers can numb the senses of even the toughest men. All of a sudden, a murmur bounced back and forth between Chasidic members of the Chevra. "Er hut a visa? (He has a visa?)" they queried. Then the conversation took a stranger turn. They began to mumble about a first class ticket.

The rabbi became concerned. Why was anyone talking about travel plans during this most sacred of rituals? That was not the time nor place. It just did not make sense.

Immediately the room became silent, it was now filled with awe and a sense of reverence. "Er hut a visa!" exclaimed the senior member of the group. The entire Chevra nodded and the atmosphere suddenly transformed.

They continued to prepare for the funeral as if the deceased had been a great sage or Chasidic Rebbe. The rabbi was unable to understand the sudden change in atmosphere until the eldest man beckoned him. "Come here," he said. "I'll show you something. The old man lifted the arm of the deceased to reveal seven numbers crudely tattooed on the dead man's forearm. "Do you know what they are?"

"Of course," replied the Rabbi. "They are the numbers that the Nazi's tattooed on every prisoner in the concentration camps."

"No," the old man said. "These numbers are the first-class ticket to Gan Eden. They are the visa and they are the tickets. Period."

The badges we wear have different meanings to every individual. Moshe, the man of G-d who saw the world with a profound vision of spirituality, was told about the more mundane aspect of the priestly garments. "They are for glory and honor." But he is told to charge the artisans, who often see only the splendor and glory of the corporeal world, with the true purpose of the garments — "to sanctify and minister."

Often we see numbers, events, and even garments as the mere manifestation of natural events whose memories impart us with only of a sense of awe for the history or beauty within. Sometimes we mortals must be reminded of a sense even greater than glory and splendor — ministration and sanctification of G-d's name.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Tetzaveh

Leaders Should Not Be Too Great for Their Generation

The pasuk in Parshas Tetzaveh says: "And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from the midst of the Children of Israel, so that he shall be a Kohen to me — Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Isamar the sons of Aharon." [Shemos 28:1]. I heard a thought on a tape from Rav Isaac Bernstein linking this pasuk with a very novel teaching of the Dubno Maggid.

Rav Bernstein is bothered — what does the pasuk mean when it says "You should take Aharon your brother and his sons with him FROM THE MIDST (mi'toch) BNEI YISRAEL"? The words "Mi'toch Bnei Yisrael" seem superfluous. Obviously, Kohanim will not be taken from a different nation! Is there then some kind of message that the Torah is trying to convey with these words?

The Dubno Maggid says a mind-boggling idea.

The Talmud teaches [Rosh HaShannah 25B] that Yiftach in his generation was like Shmuel in his generation. The Shofet Yiftach is a very enigmatic Biblical personality. He was not what we would call the greatest man who ever walked the face of the earth. He certainly was not anywhere near the caliber of the prophet Shmuel. Shmuel haNavi stands out in a Tanach full of great people as one of the dominant personalities of Jewish history. When Chazal say that Yiftach in his generation was like Shmuel in his generation, they are trying to convey that Yiftach was not on the level of a Shmuel, but every generation must live with the

leader it has. Therefore, the people living in Yiftach's generation had to give him the same honor and deference as if he was a Shmuel haNavi.

This is the simple interpretation of this gemara in Masseches Rosh HaShannah. The Dubno Maggid quotes a Medrash in Koheles (which I could not find in any Medrash on my computer database, but the Dubno Maggid is greater than any computer – so I am not questioning the authenticity of his source). According to this Medrash the intent of the Talmudic passage is the reverse: Had Shmuel lived in the generation of Yiftach, he would not have been considered to be anything special. This is mind-boggling, because we see in the story of Yiftach that Yiftach made some terrible mistakes in his life.

The Dubno Maggid explains that the Medrash does not mean that Yiftach was greater than Shmuel. Shmuel was far greater than Yiftach and most other people. The Medrash means that every generation needs a leader to whom they can relate. Sometimes, a leader can be TOO BIG for his generation. He could be too far above them and too removed from them to lead them properly. The Dubno Maggid, in his inimitable fashion, gives a parable to explain this:

Just like the clothes a person wears cannot be too small on him, so too the clothes a person wears cannot be too big on him. Someone who is a size 42 who wears a size 56 suit will not be properly dressed! That is the way it is with leaders as well. The leader needs to be appropriate and fit the particular generation he is leading. The Dubno Maggid explains that had Shmuel been in the generation of Yiftach, he would not have been an effective leader because he was too spiritually superior to that generation. The people could not have related to him.

Rav Bernstein suggests that this is perhaps what the pasuk is hinting at in our parsha as well. The pasuk says “And you should take Aharon and his sons... FROM THE MIDST OF BNEI YISRAEL.” The Kohanim need to be the leaders of their generation, consequently they need to come from the midst of the people – individuals whom the people can look up to, and yet relate to. If they are too far above the level of the people, they will not be able to function as role models. “Augh! He is too above us. He is a Malach! We need a human being!”

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Rav Kook Torah

Rav Kook on Tetzaveh: The Convert and the High Priest's Clothes **Rabbi Chanan Morrison**

The Talmud (Shabbat 31a) tells the story of three Gentiles who wished to convert. In each case, they were initially rejected by the scholar Shamai, known for his strictness, but they were later accepted and converted by the famously modest Hillel.

The Convert Who Wanted to be High Priest

In one case, a Gentile was walking near a synagogue when he heard the Torah being read and translated:

“These are the clothes that you should make: the jeweled breast-plate, the ephod-apron...” (Exod. 28:4).

His interest was piqued. “For whom are these fancy clothes?” he asked. “They are special garments for the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest.” The Gentile was excited. “For this, it is worth becoming a Jew. I’ll go convert and become the next High Priest!”

The Gentile made the mistake of approaching Shamai. “I want you to convert me,” he told Shamai, “but only on condition that you appoint me High Priest.”

Shamai rebuffed the man, pushing him away with a builder’s measuring rod.

Then he went to Hillel with the same proposition. Amazingly, Hillel agreed to convert him. Hillel, however, gave the man some advice. “If you wanted to be king, you would need to learn the ways and customs of the royal court. Since you aspire to be the High Priest, go study the appropriate laws.”

So the new convert began studying Torah. One day, he came across the verse, “Any non-priest who participates [in the holy service] shall die” (Num. 3:10).

“To whom does this refer?” he asked.

“Even King David!” he was told.

Even David, king of Israel, was not allowed to serve in the holy Temple, as he was not a descendant of Aaron the kohen.

The convert was amazed. Even those born Jewish, and who are referred to as God’s children, are not allowed to serve in the Temple! Certainly, a convert who has just arrived with his staff and pack may not perform this holy service. Recognizing his mistake, he returned to Hillel, saying, “May blessings fall on your head, humble Hillel, for drawing me under the wings of the Divine Presence.”

Shamai’s Rejection and Hillel’s Perspective

A fascinating story, but one that requires to be examined. Why did Shamai use a builder’s measuring rod to send away the potential convert? What did Hillel see in the Gentile that convinced him to perform the conversion?

Shamai felt that the man lacked a sincere motivation to convert. By chance, he had overheard the recitation of the High Priest’s special garments. The garments, beautiful though they may be, represent only an external honor. His aspirations were shallow and superficial, like clothing that is worn on the surface.

Furthermore, the chance incident did not even awaken within the Gentile a realistic goal. How could conversion to Judaism, with all of the Torah’s obligations, be based on such a crazy, impossible fancy — being appointed High Priest? The foundations of such a conversion were just too shaky. Shamai pushed him away with a builder’s measuring rod, indicating that he needed to base his goals on solid, measured objectives. Hillel, however, looked at the situation differently. In his eyes, the very fact that this man passed by the synagogue just when this verse was being read, and that this incident should inspire him to such a lofty goal — converting to Judaism — this person must have a sincere yearning for truth planted deeply in his heart. He was not seeking the honor accorded to the rich and powerful, but rather the respect granted to those who serve God at the highest level. The seed of genuine love of God was there, just obscured by false ambitions, the result of profound ignorance. Hillel was confident that, as he advanced in Torah study, the convert would discover the beauty and honor of Divine service that he so desired through the sincere observance of the Torah’s laws, even without being the High Priest.

Both Traits Needed

Once, the three converts who were initially rejected by Shamai and later accepted by Hillel, met together. They all agreed:

“The strictness of Shamai almost made us lose our [spiritual] world; but the humility of Hillel brought us under the wings of God’s Presence.”

Rav Kook noted that the converts did not talk about Shamai and Hillel. Rather, they spoke of the “strictness of Shamai” and the “humility of Hillel.”

These are two distinct character traits, each one necessary in certain situations. In order to maintain spiritual attainments, we need the traits of firmness and strictness. On the other hand, in order to grow spiritually, or to draw close those who are far away, we need the traits of humility and tolerance. The three converts recognized that it was Hillel’s quality of humility that helped bring them “under the wings of God’s Presence.”

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 152-154. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, pp. 144-147.) Copyright © 2022 Rav Kook Torah

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Tetzaveh

פרשת תצוה תשפ"ב

ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל

Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael. (27:20)

The Baal HaTurim cites the Zohar HaKadosh who observes that the Torah does not mention Moshe Rabbeinu’s name in this parsha.

Indeed, from Moshe's birth in *Sefer Shemos*, no other *parsha* excludes the name of our quintessential leader and *Rabban Shel Kol Yisrael*. The absence of Moshe's name in this *parsha* is due to his reaction to Hashem's desire to enact the ultimate punishment against the Jewish People. Their initiation of – and participation in – erecting the Golden Calf was a spiritual descent that rendered them undeserving of the privilege of being Hashem's chosen people. Moshe responded, "If you choose to do this, then *m'cheini na mi'Sifrecha*; 'Erase my name from Your Book/the Torah.'" When a Torah scholar, especially one who had achieved the caliber of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, issues forth a *kelalah*, malediction, even if it is *al tnai*, contingent upon a specific criteria, it will realize fruition. Since Moshe's *yahrzeit* is usually during these weeks, the Torah chose *Parashas Tetzaveh* as the likely *parsha* from which to delete his name. This begs elucidation. Moshe stood up for the nation. We have no question that the sin of *Klal Yisrael* reflected a lack of fidelity on their part. Yet Moshe, as a responsible leader, had to do whatever he could to seek absolution for their actions. Is this a valid reason for him to be punished? Our leader was prepared to relinquish his entire future – his spiritual ascendancy and opportunity to rise to even loftier spiritual elevation -- just to save his nation. Is this a reason for him to be censured?

Furthermore, asks *Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, the *Zohar HaKadosh (Parashas Noach)* asserts that Hashem criticized Noach for not acting like Moshe. When Hashem informed Noach that the entire world population would be destroyed, except for him, Noach accepted the decree without arguing on behalf of the people. The Flood is called *Mei Noach*, the Waters of Noach, because he did not present a defense of the people. Moshe, on the other hand, was prepared to give up everything for the people. Yet, he was "punished" for this. Is the critique consistent with Moshe's appeal?

Rav Shternbuch explains that veritably the deletion of Moshe's name from *Parashas Tetzaveh* is not a punishment, but rather, a compliment which lauds his exemplary *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*. Hashem wanted His People to remember for all time that Moshe was willing to sacrifice his spiritual growth if it would somehow spare the Jewish nation. Thus, we should derive that *mesiras nefesh* is a primary sense of devotion, especially if one sacrifices his *ruchniyus*, spirituality, to save others.

Throughout the generations, our Torah giants were prepared to give up their learning and spiritual advancement in order to better the lot of their people. *Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl*, gave up time from his *shiurim*, lessons, to travel to England and America to fundraise for his *yeshivah*. He could have sent someone else, but he was acutely aware that no one would do it like he would. His *yeshivah* was his life. His training of his students was paramount. If they had nothing to eat, however, they could not learn. *Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl*, would often quote the *Chafetz Chaim's* take on the words, *b'chol me'odecha*; as "with all of your resources" (*Devarim* 6:5). The *Chafetz Chaim* translated the word *me'odecha*, as "with all that you consider *me'od*," which means exceedingly. Nothing is as important to the Jew as *limud haTorah*, the study of Torah. Thus, he said, if someone truly loves Hashem, he will give up what is most important to him – his learning, his spiritual advancement, in order to fulfill Hashem's mandate. Helping another Jew is an essential aspect of serving Hashem. One who serves Hashem, but ignores the plight of his fellow, is not really serving Hashem.

The one Torah giant most identified with devoting his life and energy to the needs of his brothers and sisters – even at the expense of his own *ruchniyos* – was *Horav Aryeh Levin, zl*, known by his *nom de plume*, the *Tzaddik* of Yerushalayim. His utter dedication and willingness to give of himself, to sacrifice himself in his love for all Jews and Jewry, were legend. As his biographer observes, he was simply referred to as "*Reb Aryeh*," because no adjectives were required to know to whom one was referring. He ministered to those living in restricted environments, i.e. prisoners, lepers who were contagious, despite the personal danger involved. He encouraged and gave hope to the

unfortunate, the downtrodden, the needy – materially, physically and emotionally. He loved them all with his all-encompassing heart. He showed that just as one can be a *gaon*, brilliant towering ability in Torah (which he certainly was), one can also be a *gaon* in *chesed*. He was the patriarch of the most distinguished families in Yerushalayim. When his *neshamah* left its mortal abode, thousands of Jews from all walks of life paid respect to him: from the greatest *Roshei Yeshivah* and *rabbanim*, to the leaders of the Israeli State; the officers of the defense forces; and the throngs of *hamon am*, the average Jew, whose lives he touched in some manner.

Rav Aryeh preached that sacrifice is not limited to the relinquishing of one's physical self, energy, effort, time money and property, but includes the readiness to sacrifice one's spirit, one's soul. *Rav Aryeh* said that he derived this lesson from a story that took place concerning two pious brothers, disciples of the *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna*, named *Rav Moshe* and *Rav Yitzchak*. *Rav Moshe* spent the entire year traveling all over, teaching the children in rural areas where schools were a luxury. He barely eked out a livelihood from the paltry payments he received. He would return for the primary *Yomim Tovim*, Festivals, to share the material "bounty" that he earned with his family.

In earlier generations, the custom was to select one specific *mitzvah* and devote oneself to executing it to the fullest letter of the law. *Rav Moshe* had chosen *tzitzis*. As a result, he refused to walk four *amos*, cubits (six feet), not wearing his *tzitzis*. He adhered to this self-imposed obligation religiously.

Once, early in *Nissan*, as *Pesach* quickly approached, he hired a wagon driver to take him home. With his few belongings and his small bag of earnings, they set out for Vilna. Along the way, *Reb Moshe* asked to stop so that he could *daven Minchah*. He stood near a large boulder to the side of the road. He did not notice that one of his *tzitzis*/fringes had become entangled in a crevice of the stone and tore. He was stuck, since his *tzitzis* were no longer kosher. He asked the wagon driver to go to the nearest Jewish home or town and either borrow or purchase a pair of *tzitzis* for him. The man agreed for the exorbitant price of the contents of *Reb Moshe's* money pouch. What could he do? He gave up all of his *Pesach* funds for a pair of *tzitzis*. This would not have been so bad had the wagon driver kept his end of the deal. He did not, as he took the money and disappeared. *Reb Moshe* stood in place for twenty-four hours until someone came by and brought him a pair of *tzitzis*.

So ends part one of the story. Part two begins with *Rav Yitzchak*, the saintly brother who spent the entire day and a good part of the night engrossed in Torah study, becoming gravely ill. A few days into his illness, the doctor despaired for his life and directed the family to summon the *Chevre Kaddisha*, Jewish Burial Society. It was time. They also called *Rav Moshe* to be at his brother's side.

Rav Moshe came without delay. When he entered the room in which his brother lay comatose, he asked everyone to leave. He removed his *tallis katan* and laid it upon his brother's motionless body. He cried up to Hashem: "*Ribono Shel Olam*! There is one *mitzvah* to which I have adhered with all my strength. That is the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. I hereby give all of my reward that I will receive in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come, to my brother, so that he will recover from his current illness." *Rav Moshe* prayed passionately amid profuse weeping, so that his brother would emerge from the imminent crisis. Hashem listened, and, not only was *Rav Yitzchak* cured; he lived fifteen more years.

After *Rav Aryeh* related the story, he concluded with his summary: "This incident taught me that a Jew must be prepared to give up his spiritual ascendancy and reward to help his brother. Physical well-being, life and wealth are important fundamentals to relinquish on behalf of one's fellow. To give up the spiritual reward which one has earned and the opportunity for spiritual growth, however, is true self-sacrifice."

ועשית בגדי קדש לאהרן אחיך לכבוד ולתפארת

And you shall make holy vestments for Aharon, your brother, for honor and for glory. (28:2)

The *Kohen Gadol's* vestments were unique in that they atoned for various communal sins. The *Talmud (Zevachim* 88b) teaches that:

the Robe worn by the High Priest atoned for bloodshed; the Breeches atoned for lewdness, the Turban atoned for arrogance; the Belt atoned for impure meditations of the heart; the Breastplate atoned for neglect of civil laws; the Apron atoned for idolatry; the Cloak atoned for slander; and the Crown worn on the forehead atoned for brazenness. In other words, when the *Kohen Gadol* walked, he was a walking source of absolution. Apparently, when the *Kohen* wore his vestments, which were made for the express purpose of sanctifying him to Hashem, he (by his very demeanor) symbolized purity of character. Thus, his demeanor influenced the nation to refine their character traits, which would minimize the risk of sinful behavior. The *Kohen Gadol* was an individual whose every trait was honed to perfection. A person who observed the *Kohen Gadol* immediately understood and acknowledged the error of his ways.

The *Kesones*, Robe, expiated the sin of murder. First and foremost, this does not mean that the egregious act of murder committed by a person is wiped clean without punishment. The murderer is punished accordingly. If for some reason (lack of witnesses), however, the murderer is not punished by the court, the sin of murder blemishes the pristine nature of the Heavenly sphere. This stain is cleansed and atoned for by the *Kesones* worn by the *Kohen Gadol*. How does this occur? *Horav Eliyahu Svei*, zl, cites *Sforno* who explains *kavod* and *tiferes*, honor and glory/beauty, in the following manner. The *Kohen Gadol* wore garments to give honor to Hashem, since he specifically wore them when he carried out the Priestly service. The beauty the people beheld when they observed the *Kohen Gadol* resplendent in his vestments is the result of the nation's reverence for the *Kohen Gadol*. As a teaching priest, the entire nation are his *talmidim*, disciples, as they are engraved upon his heart (*Choshen*) and shoulders (*kispos ha'Ephod avnei shosham*). (The names of the twelve tribes were engraved on the Breastplate worn over the heart and on the *shoham* stones which were on the shoulders of the *Ephod*.) *Sforno* teaches us that all of *Klal Yisrael* (as a result of the names of the tribes being engraved on the *kispos ha'Ephod* and *Choshen*) are students of the *Kohen Gadol*, whose heart encompasses the entire nation. This relationship allows for him to expiate the sin of murder. His shoulders represent his ability to inspire each individual, thus elevating him. The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that when one wants to raise someone up, he places him upon his shoulders. This is the idea behind the *kispos ha'Ephod*. The *Kohen Gadol* not only cared for the nation; he also elevated them, which essentially is the role of a *rebbe*/teacher.

The *Kli Yakar* explains why specifically it was the *Kesones*/Robe – outer garment -- that atoned for bloodshed. Why not another garment? He cites *Rabbeinu Bachya* (*Bereishis* 37:3) who teaches that the body (the container which houses the soul) is similar to the *Kesones* in that it is the covering for the soul. When a person commits an act of murder, he sheds the *Kesones*/body from the soul. Thus, when the *Kohen Gadol* wore the *Kesones*, he was repairing the damage caused by – and atoning for – this act.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* contends, however, that the *kaparah*, atonement, effuses from the *Kohen Gadol* himself [through the medium of the *Kesones*]. It is the *Kohen Gadol's* character, however, that atones. Murder is the result of a lack of respect, a disdain for the value of human life. One who acknowledges his fellow's worth will not shed his blood. When *Klal Yisrael* saw how the *Kohen Gadol* carried the nation on his heart and his shoulders, not distinguishing among human beings, their background, their religious persuasion, or their material worth, they, too, learned to respect people. They comprehended the importance of valuing each and every person. Once this recognition became intuitive, murder (of any sort – even embarrassing, which is tantamount to murder) became unthinkable. In this manner, the *Kohen Gadol* wearing his *Kesones* atones.

Whereas clothing, so to speak, makes a person, in that they present him in a certain light, they can also cause him to lose sight of his real self. When one dons *Shabbos* garb, he feels *Shabbosdik* and acts accordingly. When one dons the garments usually worn by a *Rosh*

Yeshivah, he becomes imbued with a sense of responsibility to act in an elevated manner. Wearing the garb of a monarch with the crown on his head will obviously infuse the wearer with a sense of royalty and renewed responsibility.

One who relies on clothing to serve as the vehicle for his self-identity, however, demonstrates a deficiency. The following anecdote elucidates this pitfall. A wandering Jew wandered into a small rooming house in Ukraine late one frigid, stormy night and asked for a room. "Sorry" was the innkeeper's reply. "I am filled up. In fact, because of the storm, I have two to three sharing a bed. One second, I have an idea. I have a large Cossack (seven feet tall) sleeping on a cot in the attic. Since you are small in build, you will be able to fit on the bed. Try climbing in beside him."

The accommodations were far from perfect, but at least he would have a warm place to rest his weary body. He thanked the innkeeper for his graciousness and prepared to climb the stairs to the attic. First, he asked the innkeeper to wake him before dawn. "I have to catch a train," the Jew said. He went upstairs and made for himself a small spot next to the Cossack, who was out cold, having imbibed a considerable amount of vodka, and he immediately fell asleep. Before he knew it, a hand was shaking him. "It is well before dawn," the innkeeper said. "Remember you have a train to catch."

The Jew dressed hurriedly in the pitch dark room and rushed to the train station. On the way to the platform, he passed a full-length mirror in which he saw before him a frightening image. He saw a Cossack staring at him from the mirror's reflection. He exclaimed, "That foolish innkeeper. He woke up the Cossack instead of the wandering Jew. I will never make it back to the inn in time to wake myself up in time to catch my train."

When our self-identity is determined by and predicated upon the clothing that we wear, we may suffer from an identity crisis. We are who we are, because of what we are and how we act – not because of the clothes we wear, the car we drive, the house in which we live, or the circle of friends with whom we decide to socialize. Perhaps, our external clothing and accoutrements might impel us to live/act in a certain positive manner. If we delude ourselves into thinking that this is our true identity, however, we are in a serious predicament. "Be careful who you pretend to be. You might forget who you are" is a meaningful quote to encourage us to pursue our life's aspirations.

ונתת אל חשן המשפט את האורים ואת התמים

Into the *Choshen HaMishpat*, shall you place the *Urim* and *Tumim*. (28:30)

Rashi explains: "The *Shem HaMeforash* (Hashem's 42 or 72 letter Name) was placed inside the folds of the *Choshen*, where, by means of the *Urim* and *Tumim*, the *Choshen* would illuminate its words and bring perfection to its words." [*Urim* literally means "lights"; *Tumim* means "perfection."] While the illumination is understandable, what does *Rashi* mean that the *Tumim* brought perfection to its words? *Horav Moshe Shternbuch*, *Shlita*, explains that in order for one to present a query to the *Urim V'Tumim* successfully, the questioner must believe unequivocally that the answer which he will receive is *emes l'amito*, absolute, unimpeachable truth. Furthermore, he must be prepared to do everything that the *Urim V'Tumim* instructed him to do. He must carry out the plan without deviation. This is the only way that he will receive an answer.

The *Rav* notes that this, likewise, applies to one who asks an *eitza*, seeks counseling from a *tzaddik*. If the supplicant is not prepared to believe and accept everything the *tzaddik* tells him to do – the *tzaddik* will not have the *siyata d'Shmaya* to render the correct reply. This applies equally to the *goral ha'Gra*. [This is a ritual attributed to the *Gaon m'Vilna*, which is conducted randomly by opening a *Chumash* and linking the *pesukim* on the page to the matter at hand. Obviously, there is much more to it. This *goral* has been successfully used by holy righteous men throughout the past generations.]

Rav Shternbuch recalls during World War II, after the Nazis invaded and overran France, they would bomb England by day and by

night. They were certain that England would soon capitulate and surrender. An opportunity materialized to provide ships to transport children to either America or Canada. Thousands of children were given the opportunity to leave. Unfortunately, a great spiritual risk was involved, since it meant sending children alone to homes that were not Jewish. While they might respect the needs of the Jewish children – how long would this last before the children acculturated and assimilated into the non-Jewish culture? Rav Shternbuch's mother wanted to save her children, but at what expense? She turned to the saintly *Horav Eliyahu Lopian*, זל, for counsel. He replied that, on his own, he could not give advice concerning a life and death situation. He was prepared, however, to implement the *goral ha'Gra* in order to resolve her dilemma. He added two contingencies: She must accept the answer he gave without question. Otherwise, he could not guarantee an efficacious response. Second, he said that the *goral* could only be implemented during an *eis ratzon*, a propitious time of good will. Thus, he would only perform the *goral* on Monday or Thursday after he had fasted all day.

For some reason, he was unable to execute the *goral* on Monday. Rav Shternbuch's mother begged that he do it immediately, since the ships would be leaving at any time. He replied that he would only achieve the correct response at the proper time. They decided that this would occur the following Thursday. The ship left England earlier, leaving the Shternbuch children stranded in England. Tragically, the Nazis torpedoed the ship, and hundreds of children lost their lives. The saintliness of Rav Elya watched over them. Rav Shternbuch survived the war and became one of the greatest *poskim*, *halachic* arbiters, and Torah giants of our generation.

ונשא אהרן את משפט בני ישראל על לבו לפני ד' תמיד

Aharon shall bear the judgment of *Bnei Yisrael* on his heart before Hashem, constantly. (28:30)

The *Kohen Gadol's* spiritual eminence notwithstanding, his responsibility to the congregation remains paramount. He may never act in an aloof manner towards the people. They must always be “carried” on his heart, as he empathizes with their agonies and celebrates with each and every one of them during their ecstasies.

The *Kotzker Rebbe*, זל, explains the prohibition for the *Kohen Gadol* to defile himself spiritually to (even) his seven close relatives (unlike the ordinary *Kohen* who may do so to his father, mother, wife, brother, sister, son, daughter). The *Kohen Gadol* must carry all Jews equally on his shoulders. His love for the individual Jew should not be any different than the love he would normally have for his seven closest relatives. Indeed, all Jews are his close relatives – without distinction.

Horav Mordechai Pogremansky, זל, was wont to say: “One who does not share or empathize with the pain experienced by his brother is close to being considered an animal; one who shares his brother's joy is close to being considered an angel.”

לזכות רפואה שלמה בעד יצחק דוד בן מרים

Speedy recovery for Dr. Dennis Glazer Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

Ohr Somayach - Purim - Computations and Complications

For the week ending 9 February 2019 / 4 Adar I 5779

A Tale of Two Adars

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

This week, Klal Yisrael celebrated Rosh Chodesh Adar Rishon. As the month of Adar is the only one in the Jewish calendar that gets twinned (7 years out of every 19; in our calendar established millennia ago by Hillel II),[1] every time such a leap year occurs, aside for the ‘Mishenichnas Adar’ celebrations,[2] there is also some cause for concern and calculations.

Although the Gemara (Megillah 6b) concludes that all Purim-related observances (including the Arbah Parshiyos) are celebrated in Adar Sheini, to ensure that the Geulah (Redemption) from Haman (Purim) and the Geulah from Egypt (on Pesach) should be observed in consecutive months, nevertheless, figuring out in which Adar other life

cycle events such as Bar Mitzvahs and Yahrtzeits should be observed, is quite complicated.

Who Is Truly Older?

It is widely known that adding a leap year into the mix always has interesting Bar Mitzvah-related ramifications. The majority consensus is that if a boy was born in a non-leap year, one which there was only one Adar, and on the year of his Bar Mitzvah there are two Adars, his Bar Mitzvah will occur in the second Adar, since it is considered the true one concerning when one becomes a man.[3]

The same holds true if our lad was actually born in Adar Sheini. In fact, the only way one would celebrate a Bar Mitzvah in the first Adar is if he was actually born in an Adar Rishon. This is the accepted practical ruling by all authorities, both Ashkenazic and Sefardic.

This makes for a remarkable dichotomy. If one boy is born on the 21st of Adar Rishon, and his buddy a week and a half later on the 2nd of Adar Sheini, then in any standard year following, the second lad would be celebrating his birthday almost 3 weeks before his “older” friend. Since in a standard year there is only one Adar, the second-born's birthday would be the 2nd of Adar, while his “older” friend's would be several weeks later, on the 21st. In fact, only in a leap year would the older one truly be considered older. This would also affect their Bar Mitzvahs. If their Bar Mitzvah is in a standard year, the younger lad would become a man several weeks before his older compadre.[4] Yet, if their Bar Mitzvahs also occur in a leap year, then the older stays the older and the younger stays the younger for Bar Mitzvah purposes as well.

Anecdotally, it is due to this classic calenderical conundrum canon that my daughter celebrated her Bas Mitzvah, becoming a woman on her 12th birthday, 13 months prior to her twin brother's Bar Mitzvah!

Bar Mitzvah-ed Early

An additional fascinating upshot of all this is that even though the near-universal psak is that a Bar Mitzvah of a boy born in a standard Adar is celebrated in Adar Sheini, nonetheless, there are poskim, most notably the Beis Shlomo, who maintain that the Bar Mitzvah boy should start to lay Tefillin from Adar Rishon a month and a day before his actual Bar Mitzvah, even if his minhag is not to do so until the Bar Mitzvah itself.[5] The reason is that according to the minority opinion of the Maharash Halevi, the *ikar* is the first Adar, and if one would start to lay Tefillin 30 days before his true Bar Mitzvah in Adar Sheini, people may mistakenly suspect that his actual Bar Mitzvah is that day in Adar Rishon, which is not the normative halachah. Thus, the early extra day of donning Tefillin serves as a hekker of sorts, a public message showcasing that that first day of wearing Tefillin is not the actual Bar Mitzvah. Additionally, since the common minhag is to start donning Tefillin prior to the Bar Mitzvah anyway, by adding the extra day (31 days), the bochur fulfills the minority opinion as well.

Several contemporary poskim, including Rav Shmuel Halevi Vosner ז”ל and Rav Moshe Sternbuch, express preference for keeping this minhag of 31 days. In fact, the Tzitz Eliezer opines that it is for a leap year like this that the minhag to start laying Tefillin a month before their Bar Mitzvah developed. Just another tidbit to add additional calculations and complications to a year with double Adars.

Although a completely unknown shittah to most, this is the reason why my son who became Bar Mitzvah in a double Adar, started laying Tefillin 31 days before his actual Bar Mitzvah.[6]

Yearly Yahrtzeit

However, and quite interestingly, Yahrtzeit observance seems to be an entirely different story.

The Shulchan Aruch rules that if one's parent passed away in a standard Adar his Yahrtzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini (similar to the accepted psak for a Bar Mitzvah). Yet, the Rema, citing the Terumas Hadeshen and Mahari Mintz, argues that Yahrtzeits do not share the same status as Bar Mitzvahs, and conversely they should be observed in Adar Rishon.[7]

[Important Note: This machlokes does not apply regarding one who was actually niftar in an Adar Rishon or Adar Sheini; those Yahrtzeits are always observed on the exact day.]

Will the Real Adar Please Stand Up?

The Terumas Hadeshen[8] posits that this machlokes is actually based on another one: between R' Meir and R' Yehuda (Nedarim 63a) concerning which Adar is considered the main one regarding the laws of Nedarim and Shtaros - Vows and Documents.[9] The Rambam follows R' Meir's opinion, that Adar Sheini is considered the main one, while most other Rishonim, including the Rosh, Ritva, and Ran, follow R' Yehuda (as is the general rule in Shas), that Adar Rishon is considered the main one.[10] Apparently, regarding Yahrtzeits the Shulchan Aruch sides with the Rambam, while the Rema follows the opinions of the other Rishonim.

Another understanding of this machlokes is that it is based on conflicting Talmudic dictums. Since it is a mitzvah to properly observe a parent's Yahrtzeit,[11] would we not assert 'Ain Maavirin al HaMitzvos', not to let a mitzvah pass us by?[12] If so, we certainly should attempt to do so as soon as possible, i.e. Adar Rishon, and not wait until Adar Sheini.

Yet, other authorities claim 'Akdunei Paranus Lo Mekadmin', delaying observances that may cause anguish,[13] might be more important here, as we find regarding Tisha B'Av and other fast days, that when a scheduling conflict arises, we delay the fast instead of observing it sooner. Similarly, since the accepted practice is to fast on a Yahrtzeit, they maintain that its observance should be delayed to Adar Sheini.

Souled!

The Levush elucidates the Rema's ruling, stressing a critical difference between Bar Mitzvahs and Yahrtzeits. As opposed to a Bar Mitzvah, when a child is now considered a man and obligated in Mitzvos, properly observing a Yahrtzeit actually achieves repentance (Kapparah) for the soul of the deceased. The Judgment of Gehinnom is twelve months, therefore immediately after the conclusion of this period, which, in a leap year would occur in the first Adar, we should observe the Yahrtzeit to obtain elevation for the Neshama. Why should we prolong his Kapparah? And once the Yahrtzeit is already observed in Adar Rishon, the first year after the passing, it is already set as the one to observe every time there is a leap year.[14]

Yet, other authorities, including the Chasam Sofer,[15] disagree, maintaining that although we find that regarding the laws of Nedarim and Shtaros, even the Shulchan Aruch concedes that Adar Rishon is considered the main Adar,[16] even so, asserts that Yahrtzeits should nonetheless be observed in Adar Sheini. He explains that the rule regarding Nedarim and Shtaros is that they follow 'lashon Bnei Adam', the common vernacular. Since people are used to only calling the month Adar in a standard year, even in a leap year the first Adar is simply colloquially called Adar as well. Yet, concerning Yahrtzeits, which concerns Neshamos, its observance would follow the 'lashon HaTorah', which clearly establishes Adar Sheini as the main Adar, as all Purim-related observances are celebrated in Adar Sheini! Therefore, he concludes that Yahrtzeits should be observed in Adar Sheini.

Double Yahrtzeit ?

Generally speaking, the practical halacha here follows the traditional paths after the main halacha codifiers. Sefardim, who follow the psakim of the Shulchan Aruch, observe an Adar Yahrtzeit in Adar Sheini, while Ashkenazim would do so in Adar Rishon.[17] Yet, there are several Ashkezaic poskim who rule like the Shulchan Aruch here, maintaining that a Yahrtzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini.[18]

However, it is important to note that many of the authorities who rule that Yahrtzeit observance is in Adar Rishon, still do allow one to say Kaddish and / daven for the amud in Adar Sheini, especially if there is no other Chiyuv that day.

But, to make matters even more confusing, the Rema adds that there are those who maintain that Yahrtzeits should be observed in both Adars (!!). Although in Hilchos Aveilus the Rema seems to have dropped this

opinion as a viable option, nevertheless, it is a psak that several later authorities, including the Shach, Magen Avraham, and the Vilna Gaon, aver is required. In fact, and although the Aruch Hashulchan discounts this opinion, as this is not a matter of prohibition and therefore a chumra is non-applicable, still, the Mishna Berura writes that if possible one should try to observe the Yahrtzeit on both days.[19]

The Adar Amud

So, what is one to do? He should ask his Rav and follow his local shul's minhag. Forewarned is forearmed. Especially nowadays when 'fights for the amud rights' are unfortunately not that uncommon. It is always prudent to ascertain each individual shul's minhag, as well as get permission, before approaching the amud.

During a previous double Adar, while in America for a simcha, this author noticed a highly commendable and helpful sign posted by the Rav, Rabbi Eytan Feiner, in the famed White Shul in Far Rockaway, with clear and concise instructions to enable easy Yahrtzeit observance during the months of Adar. It proclaimed that the shul follows Ashkenazic practice. Therefore, Yahrtzeit observance for one who was niftar in a regular Adar should be in Adar Rishon. If the mourner is Sefardi, he should observe the Yahrtzeit in Adar Sheini. If one's minhag is to observe both Adars, he may do so, as long as it does not interfere with someone else's actual Yahrtzeit (i.e. davening for the amud).

Yes, Mishenichnas Adar Marbin B'Simcha, but sometimes that simcha is reserved for resolving halachic doubt.[20]

This article is based on a Hebrew ma'amar featured in this author's M'shulchan Yehuda, published in honor of my son's Bar Mitzvah.

[1] See Gemara Rosh Hashanah 7a and Gemara Sanhedrin 12b. There are several sevaros explaining why only Adar gets doubled. See Rashi (Rosh Hashanah ad loc. s.v. v'afap"ch), Tosafos (Sanhedrin ad loc. s.v. ein), Kedushas Levi (Parshas Ki Sisa s.v. ta'am), and Sfas Emes (Likutim L'Chodesh Adar).

[2] Mishnah Taanis and following Gemara (Ch. 4, Mishnah 6; 29a).

[3] Rema (Orach Chaim 55: 10; based on Shu"t Mahari Mintz 15), Levush (Orach Chaim 685, 1), Mogen Avrohom (Orach Chaim 55: 10), Pri Chodosh (ad loc. 10), Pri Megadim (ad loc. Eshel Avraham 10; he adds that m'pashtus this is also the Shulchan Aruch's shitta), Levushei Srad (ad loc. s.v. eino), Korban Ha'eidat (on Yerushalmi Megillah Ch. 1, Shiyarei Hakorban s.v. hada), Shaarei Teshuva (Orach Chaim 55: 11), Gilyon Maharsha (Yoreh Deah 402, s.v. b'Adar), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (15: 2), Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 55: 14), Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 45), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 59); not like the Maharash Halevi (or Maharsh L'Bais Halevi; Shu"t Orach Chaim 16) who was of the opinion that in such a case, all observances should be celebrated in Adar Rishon.

[4] Although the Magen Avraham (ibid., based on his understanding of the Mahari Mintz's position) maintains that even a boy born in an Adar Rishon's Bar Mitzvah gets deferred to Adar Sheini, and the Olas Hatamid and Chasam Sofer (Shu"t Orach Chaim 163; end 3) agree with him, nevertheless, the consensus of poskim is that one who is born in an Adar Rishon's Bar Mitzvah is observed in Adar Rishon as well; if he was born in a standard Adar or Adar Sheini his Bar Mitzvah would be observed in Adar Sheini. These poskim include the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.), Levush (Orach Chaim 685: 1), Pri Chodosh (ad loc. 10; citing the Yerushami Megillah Ch. 1: 5, that Adar Rishon is merely a 'tosefes'), Shvus Yaakov (Shu"t vol. 1: 9; who writes that the Mogen Avrohom misunderstood the Mahari Mintz), Elyah Rabbah (Orach Chaim 55: 9 and Elyah Zuta 5), Rav Dovid Oppenheim (cited in the Ba'er Heitiv ad loc. 11), Me'il Tzadaka (Shu"t 21), Shaarei Teshuvah (Orach Chaim 55: 11), Ma'amar Mordechai (ad loc. 13), Pri Megadim (ad loc. Eshel Avraham 10), Ikrei Hadat (3: 7), Maharsham (Daas Torah ad loc. s.v. u'shnas), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (15: 2), Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 55: 14), Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 43), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 59). The Ba'er Heitiv (ibid.) concludes that "v'chein haminhag pashut eitziel kol ba'alei hahora'ah". On an anecdotal level, this halacha affected this author growing up, as my birthday was Rosh Chodesh Adar and my Bar Mitzvah occurred on a leap year. This also affected my son who was born on my birthday as well, as his Bar Mitzvah as his Bar Mitzvah was observed on Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini 5776. [However, as an interesting counter-point, it had the opposite effect on his twin sister - as they were both born on Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini and her Bar Mitzvah was on a standard Adar year. That means she reached the age of Mitzvos 13 months before her twin brother!]

[5] See Shu"t Beis Shlomo (Even Ha'ezer 56) who maintains that such an Adar Bar Mitzvah boy should be machmir to start laying Tefillin a month and a day prior to his actual Bar Mitzvah in Adar Sheini. Although not everyone follows his chiddush, it is cited by many poskim l'maaseh. See Shu"t Shevet Halevi (vol. 6: 9 and vol. 10: 105, 2), Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer (vol. 13: 10 s.v. ela and u'chyadua), Moadim U'Zmanim (vol. 7: 250 s.v. v'ch"z u'la"ad), Orchos Chaim (Spinka; 37), Igros Hakodesh (5717; vol. 14: 243, postscript), and Shu"t Lehoros Nosson (vol. 12: 5). Thanks are due to R' Shloimie Lerner for pointing out and providing several of these invaluable sources.

[6] However, as opposed to this author who was born on a standard Adar but Bar Mitzvah-ed on an Adar Sheini, my son was actually born on Adar Sheini. Although practically there is no halachic difference between our birthdays and Bar Mitzvahs vis a vis their observance, there still might be one regarding the proper date of first donning the Tefillin. This is because at the end of his responsum on topic, the Maharash Halevi actually agrees to the Mahari Mintz in one specific case: if one is born on an Adar Sheini and the Bar Mitzvah is also on a leap year, then he would accede that the Bar Mitzvah should be celebrated in Adar Sheini.

Accordingly, this would seem that although I should have first layed Tefillin 31 days prior to my Bar Mitzvah, nonetheless, my son would have no reason to, as the minority opinion agreed to the majority opinion in his exact case. However, there is another shittah the reader should be aware of - that of the Aruch La'Ner (Shu"t Binyan Tzion 151). He maintains that both days of Rosh Chodesh have a status of one day, meaning they are considered somewhat connected. Therefore, once our growing lad's 13 years are complete and it is already Rosh Chodesh, he would already be considered a Bar Mitzvah, even though his true birthday is the following day (of Rosh Chodesh). The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 55: end 15) implies this way as well, and this logic is also cited l'maaseh by the Vayaged Yaakov (Shemos, Mitzvosecha Sha'ashu'ai, Mitzvah 4) and his son the Vaya'an Yosef (Greenwald; Shu"t vol. 1: 33, l.s.v. v'heishiv), and is mentioned in Ishei Yisroel (pg. 135, Ch. 15, footnote 26, in the parenthesis). Therefore, as my son was born on the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini (a.k.a. the 1st of Adar Sheini), there is another relevant minority opinion that would need to be addressed, by making a hekkar and being choshesh for. As such, and as most are unaware of the Maharash Halevi's concession when the Bar Mitzvah bochur was born in Adar Sheini, the potential for mishap is still present. Therefore, due to these concerns, my son still first donned his Tefillin 31 days prior to his Bar Mitzvah, on the 30th of Shevat 5776, which was also known as the First Day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Rishon (at the Neitz Minyan at the Kosel Hamaaravi, if you must know).

[7] Shulchan Aruch and Rema (Orach Chaim 568: 7), Terumas Hadeshen (vol. 1: 294), Mahari Mintz (Shu"t 9). Interestingly, in his Beis Yosef commentary (end Orach Chaim 568), the Shulchan Aruch writes that that this opinion of such a Yahrzeit being observed in Adar Sheini, is the ruling of the Mahari Weil (Shu"t Dinin V'Halachos 5; who was arguing on the Mahari Mulin).

[8] Terumas Hadeshen (vol. 1, 294). His assessment of the dispute is widely acknowledged as the proper one and is cited by many later authorities as a given.

[9] Application of this dispute includes if one writes a document listing only the month as Adar, which Adar was he referring to? The same applies to vows as well. If one made a Neder not to eat meat until Adar, until when is meat prohibited to him?

[10] Rambam (Hilchos Nedarim Ch. 10: 6; especially according to the Kesef Mishnah's understanding ad loc.), Rosh, Ritva, and Ran in their commentaries to Nedarim 63a. Interestingly, Tosafos (Nedarim 63b s.v. v'hatanya) implies like the Rambam as well.

[11] See Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 402: 12).

[12] See Gemara Pesachim 64b, Yoma 33a, 58b, and 70a, Megillah 6b, and Menachos 64b. As the Terumas Hadeshen (vol. 1: 294) explains, although the Gemara Megillah (ibid.) ultimately decides that the ikar Adar follows Rav Shimon ben Gamliel's opinion and it is deemed more important for Purim and its related Mitzvos to be observed in the month adjacent to Pesach, nonetheless, in Rav Eliezer b'Rabbi Yosi's minority opinion, the first Adar is ikar due to 'Ain Maavirin al HaMitzvos', and in his opinion one should fulfill Purim-related Mitzvos at the first opportunity and not wait until the second Adar. Hence, if this Mitzvah of Yahrzeit observance (as per the Rema's lashon ibid.) could technically be observed in either Adar, and being closer to Pesach is a non-applicable factor regarding Yahrzeits, it stands to reason that it should preferably be observed in Adar Rishon due to this dictum. This should certainly hold true, especially as according to several authorities [see Nishmas Adam (13: 2; citing proof from Tosafos (Yoma 33a s.v. ain); thanks are due to Rav Yirmiyohu Kaganoff for pointing out these sources] this is actually a din Deoraysa, that when one has an opportunity to fulfill a Mitzvah sooner than another, one should not tarry, but should rather fulfill it as soon as one can. On the other hand, and although agreeing l'maaseh, the Maharil (Shu"t 31: 3; as pointed out by the Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 568: 20) seems not to accept the dictum of 'Ain Maavirin al HaMitzvos' as the reason to mandate Yahrzeit observance in Adar Rishon. The Machatzis Hashekel (Orach Chaim 568: 20 s.v. uv'teshuvos) opines that perhaps the Maharil is of the opinion that fasting for a Yahrzeit is not due to the Mitzva of 'Kibbud Av V'Eim', but rather to protect him from 'Mazal Ra'ah' on the day one's parent is niftar.

[13] See Gemara Megillah 5b, regarding pushing off Tishah B'Av. The Ramban (Milchemos Hashem; end of the first chapter of Megillah) adds that this applies as well to Taanis Esther. Although the Maharil (Shu"t 112) writes that this is inapplicable to a Yahrzeit as it is only 'Tzaara B'Alma', nevertheless the Chasam Sofer reiterates this sevara several times. See Shu"t Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim 163 s.v. v'hinei), Haghos Chasam Sofer on Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 568: 7), and Chiddushei Chasam Sofer on Gemara (Megillah 5a). Thanks are due to Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz for pointing out this debate regarding Klalei HaShas to this author.

[14] See Levush (Orach Chaim 685: 1), Shu"t Beis Shlomo (Even Ha'ezer 56, Hagah M'ben Hamechaber 1), and Shu"t Har Tzvi (Orach Chaim vol. 2: 83, l.; quoting the Mahari Mintz).

[15] See Shu"t Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim 163) and Haghos Chasam Sofer (to Orach Chaim 568: 7). The Vilna Gaon (Biur HaGr"a to Orach Chaim 568: 7 s.v. k'she'ira) cites this as well.

[16] Regarding Nedarim see Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah (220: 8); regarding Documents see Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat (43: 28); regarding Gittin see Shulchan Aruch Even Ha'ezer (126: 7). In all of these cases he agrees that the halachah follows R' Yehuda that one who writes/says 'Adar' is referring to Adar Rishon. These cases all follow 'Lashon Bnei Adam', the common vernacular. Interestingly, he does not follow the Rambam in these cases [see how the Chelkas Mechokek and Bais Shmuel (in their commentaries to Even Ha'ezer 126: 7) deal with this difficulty].

[17] Most Sefardic poskim follow the Shulchan Aruch and mandate observing this Yahrzeit in Adar Sheini, including the Knesses Hagedolah (Orach Chaim 568, Haghos on Beis Yosef), Chida (Machazik Bracha ad loc. 8), Yafeh Lalev (vol. 2, ad loc. 4) and Rav Daniel Tirani (Ikrei Hadat 29: 4). See Kaf Hachaim (Orach Chaim 568: 76), Chazon Ovadia (Purim ppg. 32 - 34), and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu's Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (221: 3), all of whom state this unequivocally.

[18] Although Rav Yaakov Emden implies in his responsa (Shu"t Sheilas Ya'avetz vol. 1, 117) like the Rema, nonetheless, in his later Siddur (Siddur Ya'avetz pg. 375a), as well as in his Mor U'Ketziyah (Orach Chaim 686 s.v. yesh) he concludes like his father, the Chacham

Tzvi, that such a Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Sheini. As mentioned previously, the Chasam Sofer (Shu"t Orach Chaim 163 and Haghos to Orach Chaim 568: 7) and Korban Ha'eidah (on Yerushalmi Megillah Ch. 1, Shiyarei Hakorban s.v. hada) were major proponents of this, as well. The Melamed L'Hoye'el (Shu"t Orach Chaim 113: 1 & end 116) also follows the Chasam Sofer on this. Additionally, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah vol. 3: 160, 1) implies that the ikar truly is Adar Sheini for Yahrzeits, as it should be the same as Bar Mitzvahs, all rationale proving otherwise notwithstanding. [Rav Ovadia Yosef (Chazon Ovadia - Purim pg. 34), expresses a similar sentiment. However, l'halachah Rav Moshe holds that one should observe the Yahrzeit in both Adars - see next footnote.] Yet, it must be stressed that most Ashkenazic poskim follow the Rema's shittah and maintain that the Yahrzeit should be observed in Adar Rishon. These include the Maharil (Shu"t 31), Mahari"i Mintz (ibid.), Terumas Hadeshen (ibid.), Levush (ibid.), Elyah Rabba (Orach Chaim 685, 7 & Elyah Zutah ad loc. 7), Taz (Orach Chaim 568: 3), Yeshuos Yaakov (ad loc. 4), Chayei Adam (132: 37), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (221: 3), Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 568: 13 & 14), Maharam Brisk (Shu"t vol. 1: 128; who explains that the greatness of the Chasam Sofer notwithstanding, still the halacha here follows the Rema and most Ashkenazic poskim), Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky (Gesher Hachaim Ch. 32: 10; who states that 'rov' Ashkenazim are noheg the first Adar), Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank (Shu"t Har Tzvi ibid.), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo - Tefillah Ch. 18: 23 and Moadim vol. 1, Ch. 18: 11) and Rav Moshe Sternbuch (Moadim U'Zmanim vol. 7: end 250). The Mishnah Berurah (568: 42) as well, implies that regarding Yahrzeits Adar Rishon is ikar. However, it is important to note that many of these authorities still do allow one to say Kaddish and / daven for the amud in Adar Sheini, especially if there is no other chiyuv that day.

[19] The Rema in Orach Chaim (568: 7) adds that there are those who are machmir to observe a Yahrzeit in both Adars. Yet, in Yoreh Deah (402: 12), he repeats this halachah, while only mentioning that one should observe the Yahrzeit in Adar Rishon! Nevertheless, several later authorities, including the Shach (Yoreh Deah 402: 11; quoting the Rashal and Bach) as well as the Mogen Avrohom (Orach Chaim 568: 20) and the Vilna Gaon (Biur HaGr"a to Orach Chaim 568: 7 s.v. shnayhem) hold that one must observe the Yahrzeit in both Adars; the Gr"a even mandating it m'din. Although the Aruch Hashulchan (ibid.) writes strongly against what is essentially observing two distinct Yahrzeits for one person, nevertheless, the Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 42), Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah vol. 3: 160, 1), and Rav Moshe Sternbuch (Moadim U'Zmanim (vol. 7: end 250) maintain that it is proper to observe a Yahrzeit in both Adars if a parent was niftar in a standard Adar. However, even so, Rav Moshe Feinstein held that it is M'Toras Safek and not vaday, and therefore a vaday chiyuv on either Adar would maintain precedence for davening for the amud - see Mesores Moshe (pg. 193: 417). Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo ibid.), although writing that Adar Rishon is ikar for Yahrzeits, nevertheless adds 'yesh machmirim' to daven for the amud in Adar Sheini. In the footnotes (Moadim ad loc. 38) it mentions that when his Rebbeztin was nifters, Rav Shlomo Zalman made a public siyum for her Yahrzeit in Adar Rishon and made another one 'B'tzinah' in Adar Sheini.

[20] Metzudas Dovid (Mishlei, Ch. 15: 30 s.v. me'ohr einayim) 'Ha'aras Einayim B'Davar Hamesupak Yismach Lev Ki Ain B'Olam Simcha K'hataras Hasafeikos'! This saying is also cited by the Pri Megadim (Orach Chaim beg. 670, Eshel Avraham s.v. nohagin and Orach Chaim 682, Mishbetzos Zahav end 1) regarding why on Chanukah (as we say in Al Hanissim) it is fitting that the 'Zeidim' were given over to the 'Oskei Torasecha'.

L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda

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For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu.

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May I Keep the Skeletons in the Closet?

Or What Personal Information Must I Divulge?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Gemara (Zevachim 88b) teaches that the me'il of the kohein gadol atoned for saying loshon hora...

Two sample shaylos I have been asked:

Question #1:

Mrs. Weiss (for obvious reasons, not her real name) calls me to discuss the following sensitive matter:

"I was treated successfully for a serious disease that my grandmother also had. The doctors feel that my daughter is at risk for this same disease. She is now entering the shidduchim parsha. Am I required to reveal this family information to shadchanim and/or potential shidduch partners, and, if so, at what point am I required to reveal this information? I am truly concerned that this could seriously complicate her shidduchim possibilities."

Question #2:

A prominent talmid chacham is not originally from a frum background. His son, who is well-respected in his yeshiva, was recently involved in a shidduch. At a certain point, the talmid chacham's family felt responsible to reveal certain significant information: The talmid chacham was not originally Jewish, and he and his Jewish wife did not discover Torah until after this son was born. They

disclosed this information to the family of the girl involved, and her family decided to discontinue the shidduch.

He is now inquiring: "Must we disclose this information to future potential shidduchim?"

Although these situations are somewhat atypical, we all have medical, personal, and/or genealogical issues that we want to keep private. What information must we reveal about ourselves while arranging shidduchim for our children (or for ourselves)? And at what point must we disclose it?

What halachic issues are involved?

Before we analyze these cases, we need to elucidate some halachic topics. We can divide the discussion into three subtopics:

I. Emes -- Honesty

II. Geneivas daas -- Misleading someone

III. Onaah -- Fraud

I. EMES -- HONESTY

A person must maintain total integrity in all his dealings -- after all, the Torah commands us to emulate Hashem in all our deeds, and His seal is truth (Shabbos 55a). Someone who is meticulously honest will merit receiving the presence of the Shechinah (see Sotah 42a).

One may not be untruthful without any reason, and certainly not when it deceives or causes someone personal or financial harm. For example, one may not deny damaging someone's property. Similarly, one may not blame fictitious excess traffic for a tardy arrival at work, when it is simply because one left home too late. For the same reason, one may not deceive someone about a shidduch, by misinforming the other party. I will soon explain the details of this halacha.

HONESTY IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST POLICY

Notwithstanding the responsibility to be straightforward, there are specific situations where the Torah advises one to be imprecise. For example, it is more important to avoid (1) creating machlokes, (2) embarrassing someone, or (3) hurting his feelings or reputation than it is to disclose the entire truth (Bava Metzia 23b with Rif and Tosafos). In situations where a full exposé may cause one of these negative results, one should omit the detrimental information, although it is preferable to avoid fabricating a story (see Chofetz Chayim, Hilchos Rechilus 1:8). If there is no choice, it is preferred even to fabricate a story, rather than embarrass someone or hurt his feelings or reputation. If a correct answer may cause machlokes, one must modify the truth, rather than create ill feeling (Yevamos 65b).

Similarly, if I am asked about someone's personal habits, I may modify my answer, if the truth might reveal private information that the person may not want to divulge (Maharal, Bava Metzia 23b).

II. GENEIVAS DAAS -- MISLEADING SOMEONE

Geneivas daas, literally, "stealing a mind," means creating a false impression -- that is, deluding another person's perception of reality. The Gemara (Chullin 94a) rules *asur lignov da'as habri'os*, "it is prohibited to steal someone's mind." One example of this is someone who acts as a big tzaddik in front of people, but is less halachically meticulous in private (Tosafos, Bechoros 31a s.v. *ika*). This unwarranted display of righteousness is a form of deception. Another example is a gentile who asked his Jewish landlord to place a mezuzah on his door; Rav Moshe Feinstein prohibited placing an invalid mezuzah on the door, because of geneivas daas (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:184).

A different type of geneivas daas is misleading someone to feel indebted when this is unwarranted. An example of this is to beg someone to join you for a meal, when you know he will not accept (Chullin 94a, as explained by Orach Meisharim 24:5), and you do not really want to invite him. The invited party feels obligated to reciprocate this false invitation.

Geneivas daas can happen in shidduchim situations, such as by implying that one intends to provide financial support for a yeshiva scholar, when one has no intention or ability to do so, or by implying that one is a big masmid or talmid chacham, when one is not (see Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Even Ha'ezer #82).

III. ONA'AH -- FRAUD

Misrepresenting a product or service in order to make a sale is a form of cheating, such as painting an item to hide a defect. A modern instance of *ona'ah* is insider trading, purchasing or selling a stock or commodity on the basis of information that is unavailable to the public. This is forbidden, unless one notifies the other party of this information.

In shidduchim, the same rule is true: subject to some exceptions that I will explain shortly, one must notify the other party of information that might be of concern, which I will refer to as "blemishes," although they are not blemishes in the usual sense.

MEKACH TA'US -- INVALIDATING THE MARRIAGE

The most serious ramification of withholding required information about shidduchim, or worse, of being deceptive, is that this can even result (in certain extreme cases) in a halachically invalid marriage. (The same applies to any

contracted arrangement -- an unrevealed, serious blemish effects a *mekach ta'us*, because the two parties never agreed to the arrangement, as it indeed exists.)

Here are a few interesting examples:

If someone specifies that his new wife should have no vows (*nedarim*), and finds that she is bound by a *neder* to abstain from meat, wine, or nice clothes, the *kiddushin* is annulled (Kesubos 72b)! A husband wants his wife to enjoy life, and refraining from these activities may disturb the happiness of their marriage.

OTHER SERIOUS BLEMISHES

To quote the words of the Sefer Hassidim (#507) "When arranging matches for your children or other family members, do not hide from the other party medical issues, that they would object to enough to decline the shidduch, lest they afterwards choose to annul the marriage. Similarly, you should tell them about deficiencies in halachic observance that are significant enough that the other party would have rejected the marriage."

CAN'T SMELL

Another example of unrevealed information that invalidates a marriage is a woman who failed to notify her future husband that she has no sense of smell, since this flaw hampers her ability to prepare tasty meals. Similarly, a man whose profession causes his body to have a foul odor is sufficient reason to invalidate the marriage (Kesubos 76a).

Withholding information concerning inability to have children is certainly a *mekach ta'us*. In this last situation, a physician who is aware that his patient cannot have children is required to reveal this information to the other side, even though this violates patient confidentiality (Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 16:4).

WHEN TO TELL?

In most instances, there is no requirement to notify the other party or a shadchan of any of these blemishes at the time that a shidduch is suggested. The Sefer Hassidim that I quoted above does not mention at what point one must notify the other party of the shortcoming. Contemporary poskim I spoke with feel that one should reveal this information after the couple has met a few times, about the time that the relationship is beginning to get serious. There is no requirement for the parties to tell a shadchan.

However, if one knows that the other party will reject the shidduch because of this blemish, I would recommend forgoing this shidduch to begin with. For example, if one knows that a particular family prides itself on a pure pedigree, don't pursue a shidduch with them if you know that they will ultimately reject it when they discover that your great-uncle was not observant. A very serious blemish, such as the inability to have children, should be discussed in advance, since most people will invalidate a shidduch for this reason.

WHAT MAY ONE HIDE?

What type of information may one withhold?

KNOWN INFORMATION

It is halachically deceitful for a seller to withhold important information that the buyer cannot find out. However, the seller is not required to disclose a problem that the buyer could discover. Furthermore, as long as the buyer could have noticed something that may arouse attention, there is no *geneivas daas* and no *ona'ah* in making the sale (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:31). For example, if someone is selling a house with a drop ceiling, he is not required to notify the buyer that there was damage above the ceiling, since a drop ceiling in a residence arouses attention. Similarly, if the entire neighborhood is susceptible to flooded basements, the seller does not need to mention that his basement has a flooding problem. If the buyer asks directly, the seller must answer honestly (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:31).

A similar concept is true concerning shidduchim. For example, if the scandalous activities of a family member are well-known in one's hometown, one need not tell the other party, since this information could be discovered by asking around (Shu"t Panim Meiros 1:35). Halachically, when the other party asks neighbors for information about this potential shidduch, the neighbors should share the requested details.

INSIGNIFICANT INFORMATION

A second category of information that need not be revealed includes factors that are insignificant to the buyer. One is not required to provide an in-depth list of every shortcoming that the merchandise has. Similarly, shidduchim do not require revealing every possible medical or *yichus* issue. The Chofetz Chayim distinguishes between a medical issue that one must reveal and a "weakness," that one need not. Thus, someone need not reveal minor ailments that would not disturb the average person.

Although I know rabbanim who disagree with this position, I feel that juvenile diabetes is a malady that must be mentioned, whereas hay fever and similar allergies may be ignored. If one is uncertain whether a specific medical issue is significant enough to mention, ask a shaylah. My usual litmus test is: if the issue is significant enough that one might want to hide it, it is something that one should tell.

At this point, we can discuss Mrs. Weiss's shaylah asked above:

"I was treated successfully for a serious disease that my grandmother also had. The doctors feel that my daughter is at risk for this same disease. She is now entering the shidduchim parsha. Am I required to reveal this family information to shadchanim and/or potential shidduch partners, and, if so, at what point am I required to reveal this information? I am truly concerned that this could seriously complicate her shidduchim possibilities."

Most poskim with whom I discussed the shaylah contended that one should reveal this information to the other side, after the couple has gotten to know one another and is interested in pursuing the relationship. One rav I spoke to disagreed. He contended that since the problem can be caught early and treated successfully, one need not divulge this information at all. All opinions agree that one has absolutely no requirement to mention this information to a shadchan.

Now let us discuss the second case I mentioned earlier:

A prominent talmid chacham was not Jewish at the time that his son was born. Is he required to release this information to future potential shidduchim?

This question takes us into a different area of concern about shidduchim – yichus, a subject of much halachic discussion. Some poskim sometimes permit hiding this type of information, whereas others prohibit this under all circumstances.

This debate centers on the following story. The Gemara discusses whether someone who has a gentile father and a Jewish mother is considered a mamzer who may not marry a Jew or not. The Gemara concludes that he may marry a Jew, and most halachic authorities rule that he is fully Jewish.

Notwithstanding this ruling, the Gemara (Yevamos 45a) records two identical anecdotes where someone whose father was not Jewish was unable to find anyone in the Jewish community willing to marry him. Although it was halachically

permitted for him to marry, people considered this yichus issue serious enough that they did not want him marrying their daughters.

He came to the local gadol -- in one case, Rav Yehudah, and in the other, Rava -- who advised him to find a wife by relocating to a community where no one knows his past.

The question is: If he is required to reveal that his father is not Jewish, what does he gain by relocating – once he reveals his blemish, people will, once again, be uninterested in his marrying into their family!

Several prominent poskim, therefore, conclude that he is not required to reveal his family blemish, since his lineage will not affect his ability to be a good husband (Shu"t Imrei Yosher 2:114:8; Kehillas Yaakov, Yevamos #38 or #44, depending on the edition). Others dispute this conclusion, contending that one must reveal information like this before a shidduch is formalized, and offering different explanations how he would find a match in the new community (Rav E. Y. Valdenberg, quoted by Nishmas Avraham, volume 3, page 26, 251- 252).

Whether the talmid chacham of our second question is required to reveal his family defect depends on this dispute. According to many authorities, there is no requirement to disclose that he was not born Jewish, whereas others disagree.

As I mentioned earlier, almost all of us have shaylos regarding what we are required or not required to disclose about shidduchim. May we all have only nachas from our children and their families!

לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה
אנא מלכה בת ישראל ע"ה

Parshas Tetzaveh: A Continual Offering By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

I. A CONTINUAL OFFERING

Over these few weeks, we are reading about the command to construct the Mishkan (Sanctuary) and the fulfillment of that command by the B=nei Yisra=el. After being commanded to build the Mishkan, all of its vessels and accouterments, the B=nei Yisra=el were adjured to sacrifice the Olat haTamid -the continual burnt offering. The Olat haTamid is offered up twice daily:

AThe one lamb you shall offer in the morning; and the other lamb you shall offer between the evens (between noon and the end of the day).@ (Sh=mot 29:39) The Olat haTamid claims primacy not only as the first sacrifice mandated (besides the Pessach); its significance is alluded to in many Parashiot relating to the sacrificial order: Ybesides the Olat haTamid and its libation appears fourteen (14!) times in Bamidbar (chapters 28-29). Every sacrifice brought is to be offered up Ybesides the Olat haTamid i.e. after the daily Acontinual@ sacrifice. It is from these verses that the dictum AFrequency causes precedence@ is derived:

Kol haTadir meHavero Kodem et Havero (That [ritual] which is more frequent than another precedes that other.) (Mishna Zevachim 10:1) An example of the application of this concept is found in the eighth chapter of Berakhot (and its parallel Sugya in the last chapter of Pesachim) where Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree about the order of the two B=rakhot recited at Friday night Kiddush. The Gemara explains Beit Hillel=s position (that the blessing over the wine is recited before the blessing over the Shabbat), by applying the rule of frequency generates precedence. Since the recitation of the blessing over wine (YBorei P=ri Haggafen) is perforce more frequent than the recitation of the blessing over Shabbat (YM=kaddesh haShabbat), the blessing over wine precedes the blessing over Shabbat.

II. DEFINITIONS OF *TAMID*

I would like to raise two questions about the Olat haTamid; one formulaic and the other fundamental. The formula used to describe the daily sacrifices: Tamid, is somewhat misleading here. In other usages in Tenakh, the term Tamid indicates unceasing presence or action. For example:

The fire shall be Tamid (constantly) burning on the altar, it shall never go out.@ (Vayyikra 6:6 B see MT Hilkhos T=midin uMusafin 2:1).

The fire is always to be burning on the altar B this constitutes Tamid. The well-known prayer of David:

I have set God before me Tamid (constantly)@ (T=hillim 16:8) expresses David=s unceasing awareness of the Divine Presence.

In our case, however, the constancy of the daily offerings is much more limited, indeed occasional. AThe one lamb shall you offer in the morning, and the other lamb shall you offer between the evens.@

How can the Torah describe these offerings as Tamid when they are brought at two separate junctures of the day?

One might argue that the meaning here of Tamid is not the same as in the verses quoted above; that here it indicates that the practice is to be constant, i.e. day in and day out (without missing a day). This could be termed Arelative constancy@-relative to the demands of the ritual, it is practiced constantly. For instance, we would describe someone who keeps Shabbat regularly as one who Aalways keeps Shabbat@, even though there are six days out of seven when this is impossible. Relative to the Mitzvah of Sh=mirat Shabbat, however, he fulfills them regularly; this justifies the appellation ASomer Shabbat.@

One might argue that B except for R. Yose. (BT Menahot 99b): The Lehem haPanim (showbread) is to be before God ATamid@. The old loaves were replaced each week with the new loaves. According to the first opinion in the Mishna, four Kohanim slid the old loaves off of the table as four others slid the new loaves on to the table; this in order to fulfill the

requirement of Tamid. R. Yose disagreed, saying that even if one set of loaves was removed totally and the other then put in its place, this still fulfilled the requirement of Tamid. In the Gemara, a more detailed opinion of R. Yose=s is quoted:

R. Yose says: Even if they removed the old set of loaves in the morning and set up the new set of loaves in the evening, this is Tamid.

R. Yose could have argued Arelative constancy@ and explained that as long as the bread was there every week, it is considered Tamid. R. Yose=s refusal to use this argument indicates that the demand of Tamid is not relieved via relative constancy; we must redefine constancy for each case individually.

III. GENERATING PRECEDENCE

Kol haTadir meHavero Kodem et Havero (That [ritual] which is more frequent than another precedes that other.) This legal concept is derived from the law of the Olat haTamid . A fundamental question, shooting its curious arrows of inquiry beyond the formula of Tamid, begs to be answered here. Why does frequency translate into precedence in Halakhah? Conventionally, occasional and unusual occurrences are more exciting, exotic and inspiring. That which is constant is mundane, humdrum and usual; the religious psyche seeks and thrives on the occasion, the festivity; that which removes us and helps us to transcend our everyday existence. How can we compare an everyday sunset to Halley=s comet? Isn=t the Sh=ma Yisra=el of Nei=la [at the end of Yom haKippurim] a hundredfold more inspiring than the Sh=ma Yisra=el of a midwinter=s Tuesday evening?

One answer that is tempting utilizes a reversal of assumption: Precedence itself does not indicate significance; contrariwise, precedence indicates a lack of significance. That which is more common goes first B in order to build up to the less common, more exciting event or ritual. This sense of ordering practice with the intent of creating a spiritual climax is inviting; it appeals to our dramatic and suspenseful entertainment mentality. This answer, however, cannot withstand the test of the juxtaposed Halakha.

Following the formulation of the rule that Afrequency generates precedence@, the next Mishnah in Zevachim (10:2), asserts a comparable principle: ASanctity generates precedence.@ Kol haM=kudash meHavero Kodem et Havero (That [ritual] which is holier than another precedes that other.) Clearly, the precedence of that which is holy is comparable to the precedence of that which is frequent. Since we would not assume that the holier ritual is practiced first in order to build up to one less holy; our theory of spiritual climax which explains the precedence of that which is frequent is apparently disproved.

We now have two problems to solve: Why does frequency generate precedence; and how can we refer to the daily offerings as Tamid when they are not an unceasing practice?

IV. RAMBAM=S APPROACH

Alt is a Mitzvat >Aseh to offer in the Sanctuary two lambs of the first year every dayY@ (Sefer haMitzvot, Mitzvat >Aseh #39; Mishneh Torah: introduction to Hilkhos T=midin uMusafin, Mitzvah #1).

Rambam defines the two daily T=midin as one Mitzva. This is similar in formula to Rambam=s definition of the Mitzvah of Reading the Sh=ma. (Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitzvat >Aseh #10; Mishneh Torah: introduction to Hilkhos K=ri=at Sh=ma; see, however, Sefer haMitzvot of R. Sa=adia Ga=on where K=ri=at Sh=ma is counted as two Mitzot, morning and evening separately; see also Ramban=s critique on Sefer haMitzvot, Shores #9). The two daily offerings (as well as the two daily readings of the Sh=ma) are not two separate Mitzvot; each pair constitutes one Mitzvah. This presentation is itself difficult; how can two separate actions, each defined separately (at the very least, each has its own time parameter. For another distinction, see B.T. Menahot 50a and MT T=midin uMusafin 1:12) be considered one Mitzva?

One possible avenue of response is that of >Ikkuva (interdependence). We find other Mitzvot which are composed of various actions; since each one is necessary for the fulfillment of the Mitzvah, each is regarded as an Ikkuva to the performance of the Mitzvah; it therefore becomes part of the same Mitzvah. By way of example, each of the four species taken on Sukkot is an Ikkuva to the performance of the Mitzvah (Mishna Menahot 3:6; Mishneh Torah: Hilkhos Lulav 7:5).

Therefore, if one lacked an Etrog, and took the Lulav, Hadas and Aravah, it would be (from an Halakhic standpoint) a meaningless action. Since all four species are an Ikkuva B a necessary component B to performing the Mitzvah, they must be considered one Mitzvah (one could, of course, define causality in the inverse direction thusly: Since all four comprise one Mitzva, each then becomes a necessary component to its fulfillment). Applying Ikkuva to the T=midin would have to work as follows:

Since each offering (morning and afternoon) is necessary for the fulfillment of the Mitzvah, they must be defined as one Mitzvah. The same rule would have to apply to the morning and evening readings of the Sh=ma=, in order to defend Rambam=s grouping of these two readings into one Mitzvah. The Halakhah, however, does not bear this out. Rambam (Hilkhhot T=midin uMusafin 1:12) following the Gemara in Menahot (50b), rules that if the morning Tamid was not brought, even if this neglect was intentional, the afternoon Tamid is still brought. The one exception to this rule (Rambam, BT Menahot ad loc.) is rooted in a concern extrinsic to our problem. Similarly, regarding the reading of the Sh=ma=, if one neglected to read the Sh=ma= in the morning, this does not exempt him from the obligation to read the Sh=ma= in the evening, neither does neglecting the evening reading prevent the morning reading from being a complete obligation (see BT Berakhot 26a).

Clearly, Ikkuva is not Rambam=s reason for considering both T=midin (and both readings of the Sh=ma=) as one Mitzva. How very frustrating! Instead of answering the two questions above, we have compounded the problem by adding a third. Why does Rambam count the two daily T=midin (and, correspondingly, the two daily readings of the Sh=ma=) as one Mitzva? We can answer this by returning to the Gemara=s discussion of the demand for Tamid in the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Lehem haPanim B a section we referred to above (end of Section II).

V. THE *LEHEM HAPANIM*

The Torah states:

You shall take choice flour, and bake twelve loaves of it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. You shall place them in two rows, six in a row, on the table of pure gold. You shall put pure frankincense with each row, to be a token offering for the bread, as an offering by fire to YHVH. Every sabbath day Aaron shall set them in order before YHVH Tamid as a commitment of the people of Israel, as a covenant forever. They shall be for Aaron and his descendants, who shall eat them in a holy place, for they are most holy portions for him from the offerings by fire to YHVH, a perpetual due. (Vayyikra 24:5-9) The Lehem HaPanim (showbread), which rested on the Shulhan (table) Tamid was replaced with the new set of loaves every Shabbat. According to the Mishnah (Menahot 11:7) , there are two opinions of how the bread was replaced while maintaining the constancy of Tamid. According to the first opinion, as the new bread was placed on the Shulhan, the old bread was slid off.

R. Yose, however, was of the opinion that such temporal proximity was unnecessary. In a Baraita (quoted in BT Menahot 99b), R. Yose is quoted as saying that even if the old bread was removed in the morning and the new bread replaced in the evening, this still constitutes Tamid.

R. Ami (ibid) derives the following rule from R. Yose=s statement:

Even if one only read one chapter [of T=nakh] in the morning and one chapter in the evening, he has fulfilled >The scroll of this Torah shall not disappear from your mouth= [and you shall study it day and night] (Yehoshua 1:8).@ R. Yohanan, quoting R. Shim=on b. Yohai, states: AEven if one only read the Shema= in the morning and in the evening, he has fulfilled >It shall not disappear= @ (BT Menahot ibid)

VI. TWO DEFINITIONS OF CONSTANCY

There are two ways of defining constancy. The simplest, most common way is Aconstancy = continually recurring@ (American Heritage Dictionary). Rambam=s formula in the enumeration of the Mitzvot, counting both daily T=midin as one Mitzvah helps us (and even forces us) to reevaluate the definition of constancy. A less common, but possibly more valid definition within the oeuvre of Halakha is: Aconstancy = frequent expression of an unceasing relationship.@

By way of example, a happily married couple is endlessly in love. Nevertheless, the expression of their mutual affection must, perforce, be limited by the other demands and manifestations of their lives. Each member works, studies and perhaps plays separately. By delegating birthdays, anniversaries, certain holidays and the like, the frequent Aromatic interlude@ serves as an indication of their unending love for each other. These days function as A signposts@ in the relationship; the mood and spirit of such occasions helps to define the ongoing nature of the relationship (Within the pale of the Shir haShirim model, this can serve as an analogy for the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Shabbat is a beautiful example of a A relationship signpost@ which helps define the relationship during the rest of the week).

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All three questions which we asked can be answered as one: The daily offering is called Tamid, for it is the symbol of constant devotion to God. Since the daily T=midin function as daily Apoles@ to the relationship (the morning Tamid is the first sacrifice of the day. Except for the Pessah, the afternoon Tamid is the last), they are one Mitzvah; a continuous Mitzvah of Olah which has its expression at the extremes of the day. So, too, is the reading of the Sh=ma; A when you lie down and when you rise up@ is a way of assigning special times to that relationship- instructively, these times are, once again, at the extremes of man=s day, just as the times for the Tamid are at the extremes of the Sanctuary day (there are no sacrifices offered at night; MT Ma=aseh haKorbanot 4:1).

Kol haTadir meHavero Kodem et Havero (That [ritual] which is more frequent than another precedes that other) is now understood. All Mitzvot are a symbol of the covenant between the Jewish people and God; that Mitzvah which is more frequent indicates that it represents a more significant element in that relationship (much as we remain in closer contact with close friends and family than with mere acquaintances); therefore it demands precedence. QED

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Parshat Tetzaveh: Kohenization

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

[Just a quick footnote to last week's shiur: besides Ibn Ezra, whom I mentioned, Ramban (35:1), Abravanel (35:1), and Cassuto all understand that the worship of the Egel results in the cancellation of the plan to build the Mishkan.]

PARASHAT TETZAVEH:

Parashat Tetzaveh continues Hashem's description to Moshe of the structure of the Mishkan (portable Temple) and its accoutrements, but moves from the topic of the structure of the Mishkan and the details of the Kelim -- the topic of Parashat Teruma -- to the topic of the Kohanim, the Priests. The Priestly section (not to be confused with what Bible critics call "P") splits into three subsections:

- 1) Introduction: The command to select Aharon & sons as Kohanim.
- 2) Part I: Clothing of the Kohanim.
- 3) Part II: Initiation process of the Kohanim.

In the 'Kohenic context,' I want to deal with two basic questions:

1) Function: the Kohen has many specific jobs. But what is behind all of his responsibilities? What is the function of a Kohen in Bnei Yisrael? Does the Kohen work for God or for the people? We will approach this question by breaking it down into two smaller questions:

- a) What are the jobs of the Kohen?
- b) How do these jobs express the basic function of a Kohen?

2) Orientation: how does the Kohen's function -- his role in the nation -- affect his orientation toward God and toward the people? When he takes on all of the jobs included in being a Kohen, does he remain the same person with a new job, or does the new job redefine him? This is a question every religious leader has to answer for himself or herself: What is the relationship between one's function as religious leader and one's personal religious identity? Is there any room left for the religious leader's personal religious fulfillment and creativity? In looking at this question, we will look at two processes in the creation of a Kohen:

- a) "Depersonalization"
- b) "Repersonalization"

THE FUNCTION OF THE KOHEN:

What are all of the Kohen's jobs? (We will focus on the Kohen Gadol in particular, since we have the most information about him and since the Kohenic qualities are most sharply expressed in him.) For those which are well known, we will leave out the sources:

1) AVODA (sacrificial service in the Temple): offering korbano (sacrifices), burning the ketoret (incense), lighting the Menora (candelabrum), maintaining the Shulhan (table) and its bread.

2) BLESSING Bnei Yisrael with the Birkhat Kohanim (Priestly blessing).

3) TEACHING:

a) VaYikra 10:8-11 -- "God spoke to Aharon: '... Distinguish between holy and unholy, between pure and impure, and ... teach the Bnei Yisrael all of the laws which God has told them through Moshe.'"

b) Malakhi 2:6-7 -- (in context, the Navi [prophet] is criticizing the corrupt Kohanim of his time and reminding them of the Kohanim of old, whose exemplary qualities he describes): "The teaching of truth was in his [i.e., the priest of old] mouth; no evil was found on his lips. In peace and uprightness he walked with Me, and he returned many from sin; for the lips of the Kohen shall keep knowledge, and they [Israel] shall seek teaching at his mouth, for he is a messenger ["malakh"] of the Lord of Hosts."

4) JUDGING:

a) Tzara'at: the Kohen is empowered to diagnose Tzara'at, the disease described by the Torah in detail in Sefer VaYikra (ch. 13-14) which, according to Hazal (Arakhin 15b), comes as a punishment for slander and other sins.

b) Sota: the Kohen is instrumental in the process of investigation and trial when a woman is caught sequestered with a man other than her husband, and is accused by her husband of infidelity.

c) Deciding difficult questions of halakha: Devarim 17:8-9 -- "When a matter of law escapes you, whether of blood, civil law, ritual lesions, or matters of strife in your gates, you shall get up and go up to the place which God, your Lord, will choose [referring to the future Temple]. You shall come to the Kohanim-Leviyim and to the judge of that time, and seek [the law], and they will tell you the judgment."

d) Decisions of national importance: the Urim ve-Tummim (Shemot 28:30), the divine oracle, is operated by the Kohen.

5) REPRESENTING BNEI YISRAEL before God. Some examples from our parasha:

a) Efod: 28:6-13 -- the Kohen Gadol wears the Efod (a sort of apron) as part of his uniform; significantly, the Efod bears two special stones, one on each shoulderpiece, each of which has the names of six of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael carved into it. The Torah stresses that Aharon is to wear the Efod and thereby bring these names before God "as a remembrance": Aharon appears before God as the representative of the people whose names are carved into the stones he bears.

b) Hoshen: 28:15-30 -- the Hoshen, or breastplate, bears twelve stones in which are inscribed the names of the tribes; the Torah stresses also here that Aharon carries them "as a remembrance" before God, like the stones of the Efod.

c) Tzitz: 28:36-38 -- the Tzitz is a sort of headband made of gold which Aharon wears on his forehead; the words "Kodesh la-Shem," "Holy to God," are inscribed on it. Its function is to atone for all of the sacrifices the people bring under improper conditions (such as when the sacrifice has become ritually impure). The Tzitz 'insists' (see Rashbam) that despite the shortcomings of the people's korbanot, all of the offerings are ultimately "Kodesh la-Shem," dedicated wholly to God, and should therefore be accepted by God.

6) The Kohen creates the backdrop for God's "Kavod" to appear to the people: In VaYikra Perek 9, the inauguration of the Mishkan takes place. Its climax is when Aharon completes 'setting up' the Korban on the Mizbe'ah so that the 'Kavod' (glory) of God can be revealed to the people, who are assembled to watch. Aharon finishes his duties, and then the Kavod appears as a fire from heaven which descends and consumes the korban on the Mizbe'ah. This is a pattern which appears in several places in Tanakh (perhaps most notably in the story of Eliyahu's challenge to the prophets of Ba'al on Har ha-Carmel).

Now that we have all of the Kohen's jobs in front of us, we can deal with the next question: What is the function of the Kohen?

The Kohen mediates between God and the people; the Kohen is a bridge over which traffic moves in both directions. He represents God to the people and the people to God:

1) Kohen acting as God's representative to the Bnei Yisrael:

- a) Teaching: he is a "malakh Hashem Tzevakot," an angel/messenger bearing God's word.
- b) Judging, especially using the Urim ve-Tummim, which express God's instructions.
- c) Creating the stage for God's revelation to the people.
- d) Birkhat Kohanim: passing down God's blessing to the people.

2) Kohen acting as the people's representative to God:

a) Avoda: the Kohen conducts the national worship of God by bringing Korbanot Tzibbur (collective offerings from the entire nation) and maintaining the various functions of the Mishkan, the national center of avodat Hashem (service of Hashem). He facilitates individual worship/avoda by bringing the korbanot of individuals before God.

3) Wearing Bigdei Kehuna: the stones on the Hoshen and Efod with the names of the tribes represent the nation's coming before God; the Tzitz insures that even when the people's korbanot are not perfect, they are accepted by God.

ORIENTATION OF KOHEN:

We now come to our second basic question about the Kohanim: how does the function of being a bridge between God and Bnei Yisrael impact on the orientation of the Kohen toward his own identity? Is there still a person under all of the Bigdei Kehuna (is there a man under that rabbinical beard), or does the office of Kohen overwhelm the Kohen's personal identity?

Part of the Torah's answer is communicated by the structure of Parashat Tetzaveh. The 'Kohanim' section, which takes up most of Parashat Tetzaveh, is surrounded by 'Mishkan' sections:

I: Instructions for Aron (Ark), Shulhan (Table), Menora (Candelabrum), Mizbah ha-Nehoshet (Brass Altar), Mishkan (portable Temple)

II: The "Kohanim" material of Parashat Tetzaveh

III: Instructions for Mizbah ha-Ketoret (Incense Altar), Shemen ha-Mishhah (oil of anointing), Ketoret (Incense), and Kiyor (Washing-Cistern).

In other words, the Kohanim section appears to interrupt the Mishkan section. Why not first finish talking about the Mishkan and Kelim before starting with the Kohanim? The point of putting the Kohanim section here may be to show us that it is not an "interruption," that the Kohanim share something very basic with the Kelim of the Mishkan: becoming Kohanim means that Aharon and his sons are transformed by their function into Kelim, in a sense. Their personal identity is overcome by their function as bridges between God and Bnei Yisrael.

Imagine you're trying to get from Manhattan to New Jersey, and you want to take the bridge. If the bridge starts to dance as you try to cross it, twisting into different shapes, swaying to its own rhythm, bucking up and down, you'll never get across! Aharon and his sons have become this bridge: since they function as bridges between God and the people, their own identity must be subordinated to their function as mediators. Inserting their own personalities, their own religious orientations, their own spontaneity into their function as Kohanim would interfere with the 'traffic' trying to cross the bridge. Instead of representing God to the people and the people to God, they would be taking advantage of their powerful position to represent only themselves to the people and to God. A Kohen must become depersonalized; he must become objectified, almost dehumanized, in his function of Kehuna.

Now we can take a look at the parasha and see how this theme plays out: how the Torah depersonalizes the Kohanim and objectifies them so they can perform their function properly.

DEPERSONALIZING THE KOHANIM:

1) "THE CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN": Kohen as the carrier of begadim (clothes):

a) The Torah gives detailed instructions for the construction of the Efod, Hoshen, and Tzitz; in fact, the Torah focuses so much on the clothing that the Kohen who is to wear them seems secondary to them! The Kohen is to wear the Efod and Hoshen with the names of the tribes on the stones so that the people will, symbolically, come before God. His function, then, is to be the wearer of the Begadim, the carrier of the people before God. The clothes are the point; the Kohen merely carries the clothes on his body. The Urim ve-Tummim, carried inside the Hoshen, also put the focus on the begadim and point away from the individual inside: the Urim ve-Tummim is an oracle of sorts, consulted on important issues, and the Kohen is merely a mediator for the expression of God's will through the oracle. He carries around this source of revelation. The Tzitz as well, with its message of "Kodesh la-Shem" ("dedicated to God"), relates not to *Aharon's* dedication to God, but to the *people's sacrifices* dedication to God. Aharon's clothing communicates to God and communicates to the people, but he himself is merely the nexus for this communication. He is secondary to it; instead of taking an active, participatory, human role, he is objectified, passive, facilitative.

b) Besides the appointment of the Kohanim and the creation of their clothing, the Torah also communicates a succession plan for the Kehuna Gedola. Here again, the Torah spends most of its space describing the transfer of the begadim, not the wearer and his qualities (29:29-30). One gets the sense that what is being created in Parashat Tetzaveh, and passed from father to son when the time comes, is an "office" of Kohen Gadol, an office which transcends (perhaps even ignores) the importance of its holder. This perspective is also implicit in the Torah's description of Aharon's death (BeMidbar 20:23-28), which takes pains to describe how Aharon's Bigdei Kehuna are removed and put onto his son before he dies. The

passing of the office is expressed most sharply by the passing of the begadim, not the passing of personal authority or honor, because the begadim truly express the character of the Kohen's function: carrier of the begadim, facilitator of a relationship.

c) In Shemot 28:35, the Torah says: "It [the Me'il, a robe with bells on it] should be upon Aharon for serving, so that its sound is heard when he enters the Holy, before God, and when he goes out, so that he will not die." Rashi comments, "So that he will not die" -- from the negative you can infer the positive: if he has them [the begadim], he will not incur the death penalty; but if he enters [the holy area] without one of these pieces of clothing, he is condemned to death at the hand of Heaven." Ramban disagrees with Rashi that this particular pasuk expresses the general prohibition of the Kohen's serving without the requisite begadim, but he agrees that there is such a prohibition, derived from a different pasuk. He says: "... We learn this [i.e., the prohibition of serving without the requisite begadim] from ... Sanhedrin (83a) and Shehitat Ha-Kodashim (Zev. 17b): 'One [a Kohen] missing clothing who serves [i.e., performs sacrificial service in the Temple], how do we know that he suffers death? Rav Avahu said in the name of Rav Yohanan ... 'Gird them with the belt, and put the turbans on them, and their Kehuna should be a law to them forever' (29:9) -- when their clothing is upon them, their Kehuna [priesthood] is upon them; when their clothing is not upon them, their Kehuna is not upon them, and they are 'Zarim' [the halakhic term for non-kohanim]; and the Master has said, 'A Zar who performs sacrificial service, suffers death ...'."

In other words, according to this Gemara, a Kohen without all of his begadim is not a Kohen! He is a "Zar," a "stranger," the Torah's term for a non-Kohen, and he suffers the same fate a Zar would suffer for illegally performing the Avoda: death by the hand of Heaven. For our theme, the point is clear: the focus is completely on the begadim; the Kohen is merely the carrier.

2) PARALLELS BETWEEN THE KOHANIM AND THE KELIM (vessels of the Mishkan):

In several contexts, the Torah draws parallels between the Kohanim and Kelim. This contributes to the theme of depersonalization and objectification, especially since many of the parallels appear in the initiation process of the Kohanim. The Kohanim's initiation objectifies them and depersonalizes them, perhaps to express to them what their orientation to their Kehuna should be. Examples of these parallels (besides the inclusion of the 'Kohanim' section inside the 'Mishkan' section, mentioned above):

a) God commands Moshe to "take" Aharon and his sons as Kohanim: "Bring close to you Aharon, your brother, and his sons ... Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar, the sons of Aharon." This list of people sounds a lot like the lists of materials which we find in profusion all over the parshiot of the Mishkan. Usually, we find a command to build a certain Keli and then a list of materials: for example, the Torah commands the creation of Bigdei Kehuna and then lists the materials out of which they are to be made: "... The gold, blue, purple, red, and fine linen" (28:5). There are Kelim to be created -- the Bigdei Kehuna -- and the materials are gold, blue, purple, red, and fine linen. In parallel fashion, there is a Keli to be created -- the Kehuna -- and the 'materials' are Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar.

b) The Kohanim are anointed with oil, just as the Kelim are (see 30:25-33, 29:7, 29:21, and 40:9-16).

c) The Kohanim are anointed with blood, just as the Mizbe'ah (altar) is, and in fact, the blood used for the Kohanim is from the same animal as that sprinkled on the Mizbe'ah (see 29:12, 29:16, 29:20-21).

d) "Kiddush": the Kohanim are sanctified, as some of the Kelim are (see 29:37, 29:1, 29:21, 28:41).

e) Passivity: throughout the period of their initiation, the Kohanim are completely passive while Moshe does all of the Avoda (sacrificial service). Moreover, they remain passive while Moshe performs various functions on them! (See VaYikra 8:6-14.) Moshe is "makriv" (brings close) the raw human pre-kohen material to the Ohel Mo'ed; Moshe washes the kohanim; Moshe dresses them; Moshe anoints them with oil; Moshe sprinkles them with blood. They stand, passive, like the lifeless, personality-lacking kelim of the Mishkan.

f) Parallels between Kohanim and korbanot: Moshe is "makriv" the Kohanim, the same word used with regard to korbanot (and actually the root of the word "korbanot"!); see 28:1, 29:4, 29:8, 29:10); Moshe is "rohetz" (washes) them, a function also performed on some of the korbanot in the same context (see 29:4, 29:17).

3) REPRESSION OF HUMANITY: In several contexts, the Torah expresses the idea that the Kohen, particularly the

Kohen Gadol, is not allowed the 'luxury' of expressing his emotions at the expense of the Avoda to which he is bound. Even when a close relative dies, he must remain in the Mikdash, before God, doing the Avoda, rather than leaving the Mikdash to mourn his loss. For him, the religious and national responsibility of the Kehuna must always supersede the personal and human.

This is most painfully and dramatically expressed by Aharon's reaction to the death of his sons, Nadav and Avihu, when they bring a "foreign fire" before God and are consumed in His fire. Moshe instructs Aharon that he is not to mourn, not to interrupt his duties as Kohen, not to leave the Mikdash. He tells Aharon that God has said, "Through those who are close to Me I am sanctified; I am honored in front of the entire congregation"; in response, Aharon is simply silent (VaYikra 10:3).

Many mefarshim understand God's statement -- "Through those who are close to Me I am sanctified" -- as a reference to Nadav and Avihu; as sanctified kohanim, chosen servants of God, they are the ones "close to God." By killing them for their slight disobedience, God inspires the awe of the people, hence, "I am honored in front of the entire congregation." But Rashbam disagrees. He paraphrases Moshe's command to Aharon after the death of his sons:

RASHBAM:

"Moshe said to Aharon, 'Do not mourn, do not cry, do not stop doing the Avoda, because what I am telling you is the word of God, that 'I will be sanctified through those close to Me' -- 'through the Kohen Gadol, who is close to Me to serve Me, I wish to be sanctified, and I do not wish that My name be profaned along with My Avoda,' for this is what God has told me [Moshe], that 'the Kohen Gadol . . . should not undo his hair or remove his priestly clothing, and not leave the Mikdash, and not profane thereby the Mikdash of his God' -- so if you do not leave the Mikdash, it remains holy" Therefore, "Do not abandon your Avoda, for you are the Kohen Gadol, and do not leave [the Mikdash], and do not profane, but instead let God and His Avoda be sanctified through you. As a result, "Before the entire congregation shall I be honored" - the honor of the Shekhina is that he [Aharon] sees his sons die, yet he puts aside his mourning for the service of his Creator. "Aharon was silent" -- silenced his mourning: he did not cry and did not mourn"

According to Rashbam, the function of the Kohen, especially the Kohen Gadol, is to remain always dedicated to God and to prioritize God over all personal needs. Aharon responds by silencing his mourning; he maintains his Kehuna and suppresses his humanity, as the Kohen must.

[There is also the inhumanity of Shevet Levi's vengeance against the worshippers of the Egel, even when they are his own relatives (see Shemot 32:26-29 and see Devarim 33:8-10, where Moshe praises their "inhuman" fealty to God), but we will leave that for another time.]

"REPERSONALIZATION":

The 'depersonalization' of the Kohanim brings us to something we touched on last week: the potential danger in doing the Avoda. Evidence of this danger is all over the Torah: the Kohanim are warned to wear the Me'il, to wash from the Kiyor, and to wear the Mikhnasayim (pants), all "so that they do not die" (!!); the Kohanim (and others) at Har Sinai are warned not to go up the mountain so that God does not "destroy them"; a Zar who does the Avoda suffers death at the hands of Heaven, as does a Kohen who serves without the proper begadim.

The function of the Kohen is to act as a bridge between God and the human community of Bnei Yisrael. This means that the Kohanim have to surrender their personal identity and humanity to a significant degree. What happens if a Kohen fails to surrender to his kohenic function, if he stubbornly insists on expressing his own personality and achieving his own spiritual goals through his privileged access to Hashem? Perhaps a look at Parashat Pekudei, several weeks ahead of us, will provide an answer:

Many have pointed out the pattern of the repeated phrase, "Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe" ("Just as Hashem had commanded Moshe") in Parashat Pekudei; this phrase appears there about fifteen times, describing how Moshe and the people built and prepared the Mishkan and each of its appurtenances exactly as instructed by God: "Just as Hashem had commanded Moshe." But the pattern of "Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe" does not end at the end of Parashat Pekudei. Parashat Pekudei is followed by a 'parenthetical' section, a "Manual for Korbanot" (AKA Parashat VaYikra and the first part of Parashat Tzav). This parenthetical section ends in the second half of Parashat Tzav, where the Torah picks up the Mishkan narrative once again, describing the eight-day process of the initiation of the Mishkan and the Kohanim. Tellingly, this narrative picks right back up with the "Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe" pattern we note in Parashat Pekudei; fifteen additional repetitions of this phrase appear here, describing how all of the events of the initiation take place "exactly as

Hashem had commanded Moshe." What is it all about? What is the Torah trying to communicate with this pattern?

In all, the Torah repeats the pattern of "Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe" thirty times, with slight variation, though Pekudei and then Tzav and Shemini. The people do exactly what God commands -- to the letter, to the "T," exactly, exactly, exactly. But then the pattern comes to a sudden end:

Shemot 38:22 -- ". . . Asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:1 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:5 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:21 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:26 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:29 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:31 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:32 -- ". . . Ke-khol asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:42 -- ". . . Ke-khol asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 39:33 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem"
Shemot 40:16 -- ". . . Ke-khol asher tziva Hashem oto"
Shemot 40:19 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:21 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:23 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:25 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:27 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:29 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
Shemot 40:32 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:4 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem oto"
VaYikra 8:5 -- ". . . Asher tziva Hashem . . ."
VaYikra 8:9 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:13 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:17 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:21 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:29 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"
VaYikra 8:35 -- ". . . Asher tziva Hashem be-yad Moshe"
VaYikra 8:36 -- ". . . Asher tziva Hashem be-yad Moshe"
VaYikra 9:6 -- ". . . Asher tziva Hashem"
VaYikra 9:7 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem"
VaYikra 9:10 -- ". . . Ka'asher tziva Hashem et Moshe"

The pattern crashes to a catastrophic and tragic halt with VaYikra 10:1 --

VaYikra 10:1 -- "ASHER **LO** **TZIVA** OTAM."

The Torah sets up the pattern of "ka-asher tziva Hashem," reporting Bnei Yisrael's strict, unwavering obedience to Hashem's exact instructions for the Mishkan, in order to shatter the perfection with the report that Nadav and Avihu bring an offering of ketoret (incense) which God did NOT command - "asher LO tziva Hashem." For this crime, they die.

A Kohen qua Kohen must forfeit his identity, his humanity, his search for ways to express and experience his own spirituality; he does exactly "Ka-asher tziva Hashem" -- because he is a faithful Keli Mikdash, merely a bridge. The moment the Kohen's personal, self-representing religious identity returns -- the moment he uses his position as Kohen to pursue personal religious aspirations -- at that moment, he negates the process of depersonalization and objectification which made him a Kohen. Repersonalized, representing only himself, he is a Zar, a non-Kohen, and what he brings is Zara, "Eish Zara" (a "foreign fire").

Shabbat Shalom

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In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag

Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

Order in the 'court-yard'? Certainly that's what we'd expect to find when the Torah presents the laws of the mishkan; and that is exactly what we do find - most of the time.

However, there is one glaring exception - that relates to the placement of the laws of the **mizbach ha-ktoret** at the end of Parshat Tetzaveh (instead of at the beginning of Parshat Teruma).

In the following shiur, we will first clarify our question; afterward we will offer an explanation that relates once again to the thematic connection between the mishkan and Ma'amad Har Sinai.

INTRODUCTION

Recall, from last week's shiur how Parshat Tetzaveh forms part of the larger unit (chapters 25 thru 31), which we referred to as **tzivui ha-mishkan** [the commandment to build the mishkan]. This unit contains a complete set of laws in which God explains to Moshe how the mishkan is to be built and how it will operate.

In that shiur, we discussed the controversy concerning when and why this set of laws was first given to Moshe Rabeinu. In the following shiur, we analyze the internal structure of this unit, to show how (and why) it actually contains **two** distinct units - that overlap in a very special manner.

A VERY LONG 'DIBBUR'

Before we begin, we must make one general observation concerning why parshiot Teruma and Tetzaveh (i.e. Shmot 25:1-30:10) should be considered a distinct 'sub-unit'. Note how Parshat Teruma begins with God's commandment to Moshe to "speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them..." (25:1) - followed by a lengthy set of instructions that continues all the way until the end of Parshat Tetzaveh (i.e. 30:10). To prove this, simply note how the next "dibbur" doesn't begin until the opening pasuk of Parshat Ki Tisa. [See the new "dibbur" in 30:11, while noting that there has not been any similar opening statement since 25:1. However, from 30:11 till the end of chapter 31, every parshia in a separate "dibbur"! We'll return to this observation later in the shiur.]

Therefore, we begin our study with an analysis of this first 'sub-unit' (i.e. 25:1 thru 30:10). Afterward, we will discuss how the six short 'parshiot' in Parshat Ki Tisa (30:11 thru 31:18) that follow, even though they are outside this unit, complete the larger unit of "tzivui ha-mishkan" - the commandment to build the Mishkan.

AN OUTLINE OF TERUMA/TETZAVEH

The following outline summarizes the topic of each parshia within this unit of parshiot Teruma/Tetzaveh. Study it carefully, noting how it appears to follow in a rather logical order (at least until the very end). It will clarify our opening question.

[Follow this chart with a Tanach Koren at hand.]

Introduction - Donation of the **materials** (25:1-7)

& the purpose of this project:

"Ve-asu li mikdash ve-shachant! betocham" (25:8-9)

Vessels in the Kodesh Kodashim (innermost sanctuary)

Aron - the ark to house the "luchot" (25:10-16)

Kaporet - the special lid for the ark (25:17-22)

Vessels in the Kodesh (main sanctuary)

Shulchan - the table for the show-bread (25:23-30)

Menora - the candelabra (25:31-40)

The Ohel Mo'ed [The tent housing these vessels] (26:1-37)

Yeriot - The canvas of the tent - from cloth & goatskins

Krashim - the wooden beams supporting this tent

Parochet - the curtain to partition the Kodesh Kdoshim

The Chatzer [The outer courtyard & its vessels]

Mizbeiach Ha-Ola (the altar / 27:1-8)

Chatzer - the outer courtyard

its curtains and poles (see 27:9-19)

Oil For The Menora (27:20-21)

[A priori, we would have expected to find this commandment with the **menorah**. See further *iyun*.]

The 'Bigdei Kehuna' - (28:1-43)

Six parshiot describing the priestly garments

The Seven-Day Inaugural Dedication Ceremony (29:1-37)

Olat Tamid (29:38-46)

The daily offering on the altar (after its dedication)

The Mizbach Ha-Ktoret - the incense altar (30:1-10)

[This seems 'out of place', as we will discuss.]

As you review this outline, note the logical order of its progression. It begins by describing the 'aron' - the most sacred object in the mishkan, situated in the 'kodesh kodashim'; then continues with the vessels located in the 'kodesh', followed by the 'ohel mo'ed' [Tent of Meeting], which houses these vessels. Afterward we find the 'mizbach ha-ola' - which is located outside this tent - and the courtyard ['chatzer'] that surrounds it. This unit concludes with the 'bigdei kehuna' - the special garments for the kohanim who will officiate in the mishkan, followed by the details of its seven-day dedication ceremony (and the daily sacrifice that will be henceforth offered).

However, the final parshia describing the "mizbach ha-ktoret" appears to be totally 'out of place'. After all, this golden altar is one of the three vessels situated in the kodesh. Clearly, this parshia should have been recorded in chapter 26 together with the laws of the "shulchan and menorah" - the other vessels located in the ohel mo'ed.

To verify this point (that the mizbach ktoret is recorded out of place), simply note the parallel mention of these vessels in Parshat Vayakhel (see 35:13-15, 37:10-29, & 39:35-39). There the laws of the mizbach ktoret are consistently recorded together with the laws of the menorah and the shulchan.

Furthermore, this 'displacement' of the mizbach ha-ktoret is only half the problem. We will now explain how the psukim that precede this parshia place this golden altar in even greater 'isolation'!

OUT OF 'PLACE' and 'OUT' OF PLACE

Review the above outline once again, noting how the parshia of the olat tamid (29:38-46) forms what 'should have been' the conclusion of this unit. Let's take a closer look at this parshia, noting how its concluding verses forms a beautiful summary for this entire unit (see 29:42-44):

"Olat tamid for all generations, in front of the ohel mo'ed - the place where we will meet to speak to you from there."

[note how this pasuk 'matches' 25:22!]

And I will sanctify the **OHEL MO'ED** (& its vessels),

[summarizing chapters 25 & 26]

the **MIZBEIACH** (i.e. the **chatzer**),

[summarizing chapter 27]

and the **KOHANIM**... (i.e. their garments & dedication)

[summarizing chapters 28 & 29]

(see 29:44)

As you review these psukim, note how the words in **CAPS** correlate to the primary topics in the above outline! But that's not all, for the next pasuk forms almost a perfect 'bookend' for this entire unit: "ve-shachanti betoch **bnei Yisrael**..." (see 29:45) - matching: "ve-asu li mikdash ve-shachanti betocham" (see 25:8) - the opening commandment of this entire unit - found at the beginning of Parshat Teruma!

Finally, to top it off, this parshia concludes with its 'grand finale' - that connects the purpose of this mishkan to the very purpose of the entire process of Yetziat Mitzrayim:

"And they shall know that I am their God who took them out of Egypt - **le-shochni betocham - in order** to dwell among them; I am the Lord their God" (see 29:42-46).

Thus, chapters 25 thru 29 form a clearly defined unit with 'matching bookends'. But this only magnifies our opening question regarding the placement of the laws concerning the **mizbach ha-ktoret** (in the next parshia / see 30:1-10) - for it is not only 'out of place' - it is totally isolated - outside this 'shechina' unit!

This total isolation of the mizbach ha-ktoret forces us to search for a thematic reason for the Torah's intentional placement of these laws after the closure of the shechina unit.

BACK TO HAR SINAI

To suggest an answer to this question, let's return once again to the conceptual parallel between the mishkan and Har Sinai, as discussed in last week's shiur, and as explicated by Ramban:

"... the hidden purpose ['sod'] of the mishkan is for God's **glory** which dwelled ('shachan') on **Har Sinai** to dwell upon it..." (Ramban on 25:1, see TSC shiur on Teruma).

According to Ramban, the very purpose of the mishkan was to serve as a vehicle that could perpetuate the Sinai experience! This purpose is reflected in the numerous parallels that exist between Ma'amad Har Sinai and the mishkan. For example:

* The **aron**:

contains the **luchot ha-eidut** (25:21), the everlasting testimony of the covenant forged between God and bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai (see 24:3-12).

* The **keruvim**:

situated above the **kaporet** (on top of the **aron**), serve as the site from where God will continue to speak to Moshe. There, Moshe will receive the remaining mitzvot, just as he had received the dibrot from God on Har Sinai.

* The **mizbach ha-ola** -

where Bnei Yisrael will offer their **olat & shlamim**, is similar to the **mizbeich** that Bnei Yisrael built at the foot of Har Sinai, upon which they offered **olat & shlamim** (see 24:4-8).

Following this train of thought, we should expect to find a parallel as well between the mizbach ha-ktoret and Ma'amad Har Sinai - a parallel that may shed light on why the Torah places the mizbach ha-ktoret after the Shechina unit of the mishkan was completed. To find it, we must first consider a more general parallel between Har Sinai and the mishkan.

THREE MECHITZOT

One of the most striking parallels between the mishkan and Har Sinai relates to the concept of '**mechitzot**' - boundaries. At Har Sinai, the **people** are instructed to remain at the **foot** of the mountain while the **kohanim** are permitted to come a bit closer (see 19:22; 24:1-2 & 24:9). Only **Moshe** is granted access to the **top** of the mountain (see 19:20-24 & 24:2 & 24:12).

In regard to the mishkan, we find a very interesting parallel. The **people** are permitted to proceed only as far as the outer courtyard of the mishkan (where the **mizbach ha-ola** is located). The **kohanim** are allowed into the "**kodesh**" (where the **shulchan & menorah** are located), and only Moshe (and Aharon) can enter the "**kodesh ha-kodashim**" (where the **aron & keruvim** are located).

[Additionally, Bnei Yisrael may enter the courtyard only after first purifying themselves (i.e. they must be "tahor"), just as a purification process was required in preparation for Ma'amad Har Sinai (see 19:10-15).]

The following table summarizes this parallel:

GROUP	HAR SINAI	THE MISHKAN	FUNCTION
Moshe	top of mountain	Kodesh kodashim	dibur
Kohanim	mid-mountain	Kodesh (ohel mo'ed)	meeting
People	foot of mountain	Chatzer (courtyard)	korbanot

So how does the **mizbach ha-ktoret** fit into all this?

In our shiur on Parshat Yitro, we discussed the dialectic nature of the encounter between God and Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai. Ideally, Bnei Yisrael should have heard the commandments directly from God [**panim be-panim**']. However, as mortal man is incapable of withstanding God's Presence (see Devarim 5:4-5, 20-25), God found it necessary to 'buffer' this encounter. due to this tension, God found it necessary to cover Har Sinai with a **cloud** before revealing himself:

"Behold I am coming to you **be-av** he-**anan** - in the **thickness** of a **cloud** - in order that they can hear as I speak to you..." (see 19:9)

"... And Har Sinai was full of **smoke** ['ashan'], for God had come down upon it with fire..."

(see 19:16-18 and the TSC shiur on Parshat Yitro).

In this manner, the **anan** (cloud) on Har Sinai effectively served as a **buffer** between:

- Bnei Yisrael at the **foot** of the mountain, and
- God's revelation at the **top** of the mountain.

One could suggest that the **mizbach ha-ktoret** serves a similar function. When the **ktoret** [incense] is offered on the coals of this small altar, it creates a cloud of smoke (see Vayikra 16:13) in the "kodesh". In this manner, this "anan" [cloud of smoke] forms a buffer between Bnei Yisrael, who stand outside in the **chatzer** - and God, whose presence dwells in the "**kodesh ha-kodashim**".

THE AXIS: -Aron -- Mizbach Ktoret -- Mizbach Ola

This interpretation is supported by two key psukim that describe the relationship between the **mizbach ha-ola**, **mizbach ha-ktoret**, and the **kodesh kodashim**.

The first pasuk stresses the connection between the **mizbach ha-ola** and the **ohel mo'ed**. As you study this pasuk, note how redundant it appears to be:

"**olat tamid** [the daily offering on the mizbach ha-ola]

- for all generations,
- in front of the entrance to the **ohel mo'ed** -
- before God [lifnei Hashem]
- from where **I will meet you**
- to **speak** to you there" (see 29:42).

Surely, the Torah could have explained where this public offering is brought in half the words; yet for some reason the Torah wishes to emphasize a thematic connection between the "olat tamid" and the place where God will speak to Bnei Yisrael.

Then, in the next 'parshia', the Torah provides explicit instructions concerning where to place the **mizbach ha-ktoret**. Note once again the 'wordiness' of this pasuk, and how it relates to the pasuk above:

"And you shall **place** it [the mizbach ktoret]

- in front of the **parochet**,
- which is over the **aron ha-eidut**,
- in front of the **kaporet** which is upon the **eidut**
- from where **I will meet with you**." (see 30:6).

It is for this reason that the Torah emphasizes that the mizbach ktoret must be located between these two focal points, i.e. along this very same **axis** that connects the **mizbach ha-ola** with the **kodesh kodashim**.

In fact, later on in the same chapter, when the Torah explains how the ktoret was made, it emphasizes this point once again:

"...and you shall grind it very fine, and **put** it:

- before the testimony [lifnei ha'**eidut**]
- in the tent of meeting [**ohel mo'ed**],
- where **I will meet with you**; - it shall be for you most holy." (see 30:36)

A 'PROTECTED' DIVINE ENCOUNTER

In a manner very similar to what took place at Har Sinai, God 'comes down' from the heavens, as it were, to the **kodesh kodashim**; while Bnei Yisrael come from their camp, to stand before God in the **chatzer** of the mishkan.

Hence, the main section of the **ohel mo'ed** serves as a buffer between God and Bnei Yisrael. There, the **ktoret** must be offered each time the **kohen** enters to perform his service, which creates an **anan** [cloud of smoke] to 'protect' the **kohen** when he enters the **kodesh**:

"And Aharon shall offer the **ktoret** daily, in the morning before tending to the **menorah**, and when lighting the **menorah** in the evening..." (30:7-8).

[Note also Vayikra 16:2, where Aharon must also offer ktoret to create a similar cloud of smoke to protect himself before entering the kodesh ha-kodashim on Yom Kippur!]

With this background we can answer our opening question. One could suggest that by placing the commandment to build the **mizbach ha-ktoret** after the summary psukim at the very end of this unit, the Torah alludes to its unique function as a 'buffer' in this covenantal encounter. As - 'realistically' - Bnei Yisrael may not be worthy of this encounter, the Torah commands Bnei Yisrael to place the **mizbach ktoret** in the kodesh to serve as a buffer, to protect them for the Shechina that dwells in the kodesh kedoshim.

[Note the similarity between the nature of this 'protected encounter' in the mishkan and what we referred to in our shiur on Parshat Yitro as '**plan A**,' by which God speaks to Moshe while 'covered by a cloud' so that the people can only overhear their conversation. See Shmot 19:9! See also Devarim 5:5.]

Furthermore, the dialectic nature of this encounter is highlighted by the placement of the laws of the mizbach ha-ktoret outside this Shechina unit, yet within the same dibur!

THE KTORET UNIT

Up until this point, we have treated parshiot Teruma/Tetzaveh as one, integrated unit, as indicated by the single **dibur** that introduces these two parshiot. Now we must consider the remaining parshiot (in Parshat Ki Tisa) that form the final six paragraphs of the greater **tzivui ha-mishkan** unit.

Take a minute to review the beginning of Ki-Tisa (i.e. 30:11-31:17), noting how it describes several other mitzvot concerning the mishkan that were also 'left out' of the **Shechina unit**.

When we list these parshiot in order, we find once again a set of 'bookends':

30:1-10 **mizbach ha-ktoret** (* bookend 1 *)
(as explained above)

30:11-16 **Machatzit ha-shekel** -
money collected to fund the **ohel mo'ed**

30:17-21 **Ki'yor**
the faucet for the kohanim to wash their hands

30:22-33 **Shemen ha-mishcha**
special oil to anoint the mishkan's accessories and the kohanim

30:34-38 **Ktoret** (* bookend 2 *)
the incense for the **mizbach ktoret**

[At this point, the **laws** concerning the mishkan end. Chapter 31 discusses the appointment of Betzalel to build the mishkan and the prohibition to work on **Shabbat** (to preclude the possible, mistaken notion the work for the mishkan on shabbat is permissible). Whereas these do not involve laws directly relating to the construction of the mishkan and its accessories, we have omitted them from this table.]

The above table shows how (1) the **mizbach ktoret** and (2) the mitzvah to make the **ktoret** delineate a second unit, which contains several peripheral commandments regarding the mishkan.

A PARALLEL STRUCTURE

As your review these parshiot, note how a rather amazing parallel structure emerges; pointing to the direct connection between this **Ktoret** unit and the previous **Shechina unit**. Note how each of these peripheral commandments in the **Ktoret unit** corresponds (in the same order!) to a related topic in the **Shechina unit**!

The following table illustrates this parallel:

TOPIC	SHECHINA UNIT	KTORET UNIT
Accessories in the mishkan	aron, kaporet, shulchan, menorah	mizbach ktoret
Ohel Mo'ed	yeriot, krashim	machatzit ha-shekel le-avodat ohel mo'ed
Chatzer	mizbach ha-ola	kiyor
Dedication	bigdei kehuna & milu'im (to anoint the kohanim)	shemen ha-mishcha
Daily Offering	korban tamid on mizbach ha-ola	ktoret tamid on mizbach ha-ktoret

The mitzvot found in the **Shechina unit**, which focus on God's 'hitgalut' in the mishkan, are complemented by the mitzvot in the **Ktoret unit**, which focus on the need to protect Bnei Yisrael in this special encounter.

Note as well how all of the mitzvot in the Ktoret unit emphasize either kapara (see shiur on Yom Kippur, where we explained how kapara involves protection from God's hitgalut) or warn of impending death if not performed properly (see 30:10; 30:12; 30:21; 30:33; 30:38; relate to Devarim 5:21-23!). Protection is required from the potential punishment enacted should man not prepare himself properly for this encounter with God in the mishkan.

In this manner, the laws of the mizbach ktoret can serve as an eternal reminder of how man must not only value his ability to enjoy a relationship with God, but also remain aware of the natural limits of this encounter.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Be sure to see Ramban on 30:1, where he explains why the mizbach ha-ktoret is at the end of the unit. See also Seforno & Chizkuni. Relate these approaches to our analysis of this unit in the above shiur.

B. In our discussion of the overall structure, we noted that (B) comprises the complete unit of **tzivui ha-mishkan**. Note that this complete unit includes **seven** dibur's. [A dibur is each time the Torah introduces God's speech to Moshe with, "Va-yedaber Hashem el Moshe leimor" or "va-yomer ...", etc.

[See 25:1, 30:11, 30:17, 30:22, 30:34, 31:1, and 31:12.]

One could view these dibur's as allusions to the seven days of creation. The first **dibur**, covering the entire **Shechina unit**, may reflect the concept of God's creation of **light / Shechina** (see Rashi on Breishit 1:3). The next four deal with other mitzvot of the mishkan. [Admittedly, they don't work out as good as the rest.] The sixth **dibur** describes the appointment of Betzalel to build the mishkan. This may parallel God's creation of man on the sixth day. Just as man in Creation [**perek aleph**] was to master the material world and utilize his God-given talents towards a divine purpose, so must Betzalel organize the materials collected and use his God-given talents to oversee the construction of the mishkan. To do so, he requires 'ruach Elokim' (31:3/ relate to the creation of man 'be-tzelem Elokim').

The seventh **dibur** is the mitzvah to keep **Shabbat**! (See 31:15.) This may serve as the basis for the many Midrashim that describe the mishkan as the pinnacle of the creation process. This reflects, once

again, the biblical theme that the natural world needs to be directed towards a divine purpose. This is the duty of man not only in the mishkan, but also throughout his daily life, as well.

C. A FULL TIME JOB

Recall from our original outline how the first two psukim of Parshat Tetzaveh (i.e. the mitzvah to light the menorah /see 27:20-21) also appears out of place. If we follow the logic of the structure of the **Shechina unit**, it should have been recorded together with the mitzvah to build the menorah (just as the mitzvah to offer the **lechem ha-panim** is included with the mitzvah to build the **shulchan** / see 25:30).

Nevertheless, the Torah transfers these psukim from chapter 26 and juxtaposes them with the mitzvah to make the **bigdei kehuna** (in chapter 28). Why?

One could suggest that in doing so, the Torah alludes to a more important role of the **kohanim**. Aside from the honor and glory of their position, as reflected by their special garments, their primary job is to 'spread the light' of Torah - the message of mishkan, as represented by the **aron ha-eidut** at its focal point - to Bnei Yisrael.

It is this mitzvah of the **kohanim**, to disseminate the Torah, which may explain why it referred to as a "chukat olam le-doroteichem - an everlasting law for all generations" (see 27:31). Even when the mikdash lay in ruins, this mitzvah forever remains the obligation of our religious leaders.

D. ADDITIONAL SOURCES & RESEARCH

Re: The 'displacement' of the mizbach ha-ktoret

We explained that the Torah 'transferred' the discussion of the mizbach ha-ktoret to the end of the mishkan unit to emphasize its role as a 'buffer', protecting Bnei Yisrael from the 'hashra'at ha-Shechina' that occurs in the mishkan. This general idea appears in the Vilna Gaon's "Aderet Eliyahu". The Gaon explains that neither the ktoret nor the machatzit ha-shekel (which the Torah discusses immediately following its discussion of the mizbach ha-ktoret) was indispensable for 'hashra'at ha-Shechina'. They come into play once the Shechina has already descended, in order to bring kapara for Bnei Yisrael. Though the Gaon does not mention the 'buffer' idea developed in the shiur, his explanation does feature the concept of a need for kapara when the Shechina descends and the mizbach ha-zahav as filling that role. Like the Gaon, the Seforno also writes that the mizbach ha-zahav is not necessary for the Shechina to descend. However, rather than pointing to atonement as the ktoret's primary function, the Seforno views it as an expression of kavod to Hashem, and hence a prayer of sorts asking the Almighty to accept the korbanot offered on the other mizbeiach. The Ramban also writes along the lines, describing the mizbach ha-zahav as an expression of kavod rather than a means of bringing the Shechina.

This point, whether or not the ktoret is required to bring the Shechina, appears to be subject to dispute. The Midrash Tanchuma, Tetzaveh 15, writes clearly that the Shechina would not descend into the mishkan until after the ktoret was offered. This is also the view of the Da'at Zekeinim mi-Ba'alei ha-Tosafot on Shmot 25:6. This view would oppose the position of the Seforno and Vilna Gaon.

Several different answers to the question of this parsha's location appear in other mefarshim. Some Acharonim, including the Meshech Chochma (30:1), view the location of this parsha as an allusion to the halacha allowing the offering of ktoret even without the mizbach ha-ktoret. The Or Ha-chayim (25:9) also sees here a subtle allusion to a technicality, that Shlomo Ha-melech built his own mizbach ha-ktoret rather than using Moshe's. (This assumption is somewhat controversial - see Torah Shleima, milu'im to Parshat Tetzaveh, 29.) The Tzror Ha-mor (30:1) writes that the Torah places this parsha last to indicate the unique stature of the mizbach ha-ktoret as the most important of all the klei ha-mikdash. A similar theory is advanced by Rav Dov Rabinowitz ("Da'at Sofrim"), who claims that Bnei Yisrael are worthy for the ktoret, the most exalted of all the offerings, only after they have loyally executed all the commands of the previous chapters and the Shechina has taken it residence in the mishkan. Rav Zalman

Sorotzkin (Oznayim la-Torah 30:1) suggests precisely the opposite: lest one afford too much importance to the mizbach ha-zahav over the mizbach ha-nechoshet, the Torah extracted the former from the discussion of the klei ha-mikdash in order to emphasize that the mizbach ha-nechoshet actually constitutes the primary altar. The Netziv understands the Torah's structure as intended to underscore the distinct themes symbolized by the two mizbachot. The mizbach ha-nechoshet - along with the menorah - represents Torah, whereas the mizbach ha-ktoret symbolizes gemilut chasadim. The Torah emphasizes their symbolic distinction by separating them; their coexistence in the heichal points to the need for the two to work in tandem. The Malbim, who develops an elaborate system of symbolism with regard to the mishkan and its accessories, views the mizbach ha-ktoret as representing the spiritual result of the avoda performed in the mishkan. It is therefore presented last and apart from the rest of the mishkan's components, as it represents that which is attained as a result of that was discussed beforehand.

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Weapons of Mass Distraction

“I shall rest My Presence among the Children of Yisrael and I shall be their G-d.” (29:45)

At the end of the section on Torah prohibitions in the Rambam’s Sefer HaMitzvot, the Ramban adds a list of *mitzvot* that he believes the Rambam should have also included. The second of these is the mitzvah not to forget the events at Mount Sinai. The Ramban lists this as a *negative* mitzvah, a “Don’t do.” Meaning, so to speak, “Don’t spoil the situation as it stands.” This is difficult to understand, for it suggests that the experience of Mount Sinai is something current right now and we must not do anything to destroy our awareness of it. The Ramban says that we should not “remove it from our consciousness” that “our eyes and our ears” should be constantly and forever at Mount Sinai.

The message is that the broadcast from Mount Sinai is constantly with us, and all we need to do is not to ‘jam’ the broadcast.

Before the Torah was given, it says in Shemot 19:16, “And it was on the third day, when it became morning, and there were *sounds and lightning flashes...*” After the giving of the Torah it says in 20:15, “And all the people saw the *sounds and the torches...*”

The lightning flashes that precede the Torah become torches afterwards. Before the giving of the Torah, the Word of Hashem was like lightning – a flash that lasted for a moment. After the Torah’s

giving, the words of the Torah became fixed, continuous and continuing – like a torch. The essence of a torch is that its light continues. It does not vanish in a flash. After the Torah was given to us, its sound is eternally present.

With this we can understand Onkelos’ translation of the verse in Devarim 5:19, describing the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai as a “great sound that does not cease,” meaning you can still hear it today.

So why don’t we hear it?

The concept that the world is filled with sounds that we cannot hear was once difficult to grasp, but nowadays many people have in the pocket a device that makes this concept abundantly clear. The air is full of sounds. Sounds that travel from one side of the world to the other. A myriad of voices throngs the atmosphere.

The Talmud (Yoma 20b) makes a cryptic statement about the abounding sounds in the world: “Were it not for the sound of the sun in its orbit you would hear the sound of the hordes of Rome, and were it not for the sound of the hordes of Rome you could hear the sound of the sun in its orbit.”

In other words, there is a fight in this a world, a fight to dominate the “airwaves” between the voice of Rome and the voice of the sun.

One of the names of Yaakov Avinu, Jacob, is *Shemesh* — “Sun.” In Yosef’s first dream of the sun and the moon and the stars bowing to him, Yaakov is represented by the sun.

The sun — Yaakov Avinu — and the “hordes of Rome” — the descendants of Esav — are locked in a battle for the airwaves, and for the minds and hearts of mankind.

To the extent that we tune in to Esav’s broadcast, we will not be able to hear the unending and eternal broadcast from Mount Sinai.

PEREK SHIRA: The Song of Existence

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

THE SONG OF THE WIND

The Wind says: “Say to the north wind ‘Give!’ and to the south wind, ‘Do not withhold!’ Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the Earth!” (*Yeshayahu* 43:6)

Agents of Hashem’s will, winds move unrestrained to perform the desire of their Creator. They play an essential role in the process of precipitation and in the dispersing of plant seeds for propagation, among many other benefits they provide the world. They sing of Hashem’s limitless control of His world, and especially the awesome ingathering of exiles, portrayed as winds speedily bringing ships of His people back home from the ends of the earth.

▪ *Sources: Mesaprim Tehillos Hashem*

**In loving memory of Harav Zeev Shlomo ben Zecharia Leib*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the Menorah in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *Bigdei Kehuna* (priestly garments): A breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil.

Hashem commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the Altar in the Mishkan. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. Hashem commands that another Altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this Altar each day.

Q & A

Questions

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of the oil for the menorah?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the menorah?
3. What does tamid mean in reference to the menorah?
4. What does kehuna mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol.
6. To what does Rashi compare the ephod?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the ephod?
8. The stones of the ephod bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the choshen mishpat atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word mishpat?
11. What was lacking in the bigdei kehuna in the second Beit Hamikdash?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the Kohen Gadol wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the tefillin situated?
14. What does the word tamid mean in reference to the tzitz? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a kohen hediot?
16. During the inauguration of the kohanim, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as kohanim (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the kohanim?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the menorah?
20. What does the crown on the mizbeach haketoret symbolize?

Answers

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - Choshen, ephod, me'il, ketonet, mitznefet, avnet, tzitz, and michnasayim.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 1. 28:15 -
 - (a) The claims of the litigants
 - (b) The court's ruling
 - (c) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The Urim V'Tumim ~ the "Shem Ha'meforash" placed in the folds of the choshen.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the me'il was made only of techelet.
13. 28:37 - Between the tzitz and the mitznefet.
14. 28:38 -
 - (a) It always atones, even when not being worn.
 - (b) The Kohen Gadol must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - Ketonet, avnet, migba'at and michnasayim.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a mikveh.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the menorah comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of kehuna.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

The Color Purple

Let's clarify this from the get-go: There is no word in Classical Hebrew for the color "purple." I repeat: There is no word in Classical Hebrew for the color "purple." In fact, the English word *purple* itself does not necessarily even refer to what we call "purple" nowadays. That being said, there are three Hebrew words which have come to be associated with "purple" – *argaman*, *segol*, and *lilach*. In this essay we will show how *argaman* does not mean "purple" and is not, in fact, even a color, and how *segol* and *lilach* are Modern Hebrew neologisms that only recently came to mean "purple."

The word *argaman* appears 38 times in the Bible. Additionally, the words *argavan* in Biblical Hebrew (II Chron. 2:6) and *argavana* in Biblical Aramaic (Dan. 5:7) are alternate forms of *argaman*, based on the interchangeability of the letters MEM and VAV. Moreover, *argavana* is also the Aramaic word used by the Targum to translate the Hebrew *argaman*. But what does the word *argaman/argavan* mean, and from where does this word come?

The root of *argaman* seems to be comprised of five letters: ALEPH-REISH-GIMMEL-MEM-NUN. When writing about four – (quadriliteral), or five – (pentaliteral) letter roots in Hebrew, Ibn Ezra asserts that such atypical words are either compound roots comprised of multiple roots fused together, or are loanwords borrowed from a language other than Hebrew. Indeed, scholars like Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein (1899-1983) and Dr. Chaim Tawil see the Hebrew *argaman* as borrowed from the Akkadian *argamannu*. The famous American archeologist William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971) argued that the Hebrew word *argaman* cognates with similar Hittite and Ugaritic words that mean "tribute/offering," and thus evoke *argaman* as an expensive dyed cloth that was often paid as tribute.

In detailing the laws of the Temple and its paraphernalia, Maimonides (*Laws of Klei HaMikdash* 8:13) writes that *argaman* refers to wool that was dyed red. In his commentary to the Mishna, Maimonides (to *Kilayim* 9:1) again defines *argaman*, this time using the Arabic word *laca*. Bartenuro (there) uses that same word, but also clarifies that *argaman* was wool dyed red. The word *lac* is actually also an English word and refers to a "red resin." It comes up more often in the English terms *shellac* and *lacquer*, which refer to red coloring. Maimonides' approach that *argaman* refers to something dyed red is echoed by later authorities, including his son Rabbi Avraham Maimuni (to Ex. 25:4), Rabbi Tanchum HaYerushalmi (to Dan. 5:7), and *Torat HaMincha* (Parshat Tetzaveh).

The Midrash (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 3:16, *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4) states that *argaman* resembles the gold of the *kapporet*, which was of a reddish hue (*Yoma* 45a). In fact, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829-1908) in *Aruch HaShulchan HaAtid* (*Klei Hamikdash* 28:12) adduces Maimonides' position from this source.

Radak, in his *Sefer HaShorashim*, initially writes that *argaman* refers to crimson red, but then cites Rasag as explaining that *tola'at shani* refers to crimson red. He therefore concludes that *argaman* must refer to a different shade of red. Several Midrashic sources assert that *argaman* resembles fire, which points to the notion that *argaman* refers to something akin to the color orange (see *Sifrei Zuta*, *Midrash HaGadol* and *Yalkut Midrashei Teiman* to Num. 4:13, and *Midrash Agur* ch. 14). Several Yemenite sources, including *Midrash Chefetz* and *Meor HaAfeilah* (to Ex. 25:4) write that *argaman* refers to a yellowish-red, while *tola'at shani* refers to a strong red. So perhaps Radak would agree that *argaman* was orange-colored. (After writing that *argaman* cannot refer to crimson but must be a different shade of red, Radak mentions those who explain *argaman* as *lac*.)

Explaining *argaman* as red does not preclude also explaining *argaman* as orange, for essentially orange is a shade of red (mixed with yellow). What is clear, though, is that none of these sources see *argaman* as a mixture of red and blue/green. This omission seems to obviate the notion that *argaman* refers to what we call “purple.” Moreover, all commentators agree that *argaman* does not actually denote a color, but rather refers to woolen fabric that was dyed a certain color. So even if *argaman* refers to purple, it does not refer to the color purple, but to wool that was dyed purple.

Maimonides’ famed interlocutor Rabbi Avraham ben David of Posquieres (1110-1180), also known as Raavad, disagrees with his position. Instead, he asserts that *argaman* refers to something comprised of two or three colors “woven” (*arug*) together. As Rabbi Yosef Kurkis (circa. 1540) and Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) clarify, Raavad understood the word *argaman* as a portmanteau of the trilateral root ALEPH-REISH-GIMMEL (like in *arigah*, “weaving/tapestry”) and the word *min* (“species/type”). Thus, he understood *argaman* as reflecting a sort of panoply of colors, not just one specific color.

The Midrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4) states that the term *argaman* alludes to the sun, who prepares (*oreg*, literally “weaves”) different forms of “sustenance” (*manna*). Alternatively, *argaman* is a reference to G-d, Who “weaves (*oreg*) together the world, so that each thing brings out its species (*min*), and one species will not mix with another.” Similarly, the *Zohar* in *Idra Rabbah* (141b) seems to understand that *argaman* refers to a hue of red that includes other shades as well (see also *Zohar Terumah* 139a).

Rashi (to Psalms 68:28), basing himself on *Machberet Menachem*, seems to explain that *argaman* is derived from the trilateral root REISH-GIMMEL-MEM, which usually means “gathering” or “stoning somebody to death.” As Rashi explains it, that root is, in turn, related to the root REISH-KUF-MEM (possibly via the interchangeability of KUF and GIMMEL), which usually refers to “embroidery.” Although Rashi does not explicitly make this point, the common denominator between all the meanings of REISH-KUF-MEM and REISH-GIMMEL-MEM is that they refer to gathering things together – be they multiple stones to kill a person or multiple threads to produce needlework. This perhaps suggests that Rashi follows Raavad’s understanding of *argaman* as consisting of multiple shades joined together.

Like Rashi, Ibn Ezra (to Proverbs 26:8) also seems to understand *argaman* as a derivative of the root REISH-GIMMEL-MEM, but he explains that root as referring to “exalted” things, with *argaman* thus seemingly referring to an “exalted” sort of dyed fabric.

Ohalei Yehuda sees the word *argaman* as a portmanteau of *oreg* (“weaving”) and *manah* (“respectable portion”) in reference to *argaman* being considered an important type of clothing in the ancient world. Alternatively, he prefers the understanding that *argaman* derives from *argavan*, which is comprised of the roots ALEPH-VAV-REISH (“light”) and GIMMEL-VAV-NUN (“color/appearance”), in allusion to the bright color that *argaman* denotes. I similarly propose that *argavan* could be seen as a contraction of ALEPH-REISH-GIMMEL (“weaving”) and GIMMEL-VAV-NUN (“color/appearance”), with the middle letter GIMMEL related to both etymons.

Even though Raavad, Rashi, and the others do not explicitly identify *argaman* as red, that does still seem to be their understanding. However, they seem to understand that *argaman* includes multiple shades of red. Indeed, Professor Athalya Brenner-Idan sees *argaman* as a general term that includes various shades of red that range from pink all the way to violet/dark purple. She supports this position by noting that the Temple Scroll (found within the DSS) uses the expression *argaman adom* (“red *argaman*”), implying that the term *argaman* alone can also include shades that are not typically understood as strictly “red.”

There are some cases in which it is fairly clear that *argaman* does not refer to purple. For example, Rashi (to Song of Songs 7:6) implies that *argaman* is a color that is sometimes found in women’s hair. Yet, as Professor Brenner-Idan first pointed out, it is dissatisfactory to understand *argaman* as referring to purple in that case, because no natural hair is purple-colored. In that particular instance, she supposes that perhaps *argaman* does

not refer to a specific color, but serves as a stand-in for any expensive or rare item. See also Targum Onkelos (to Gen. 49:11) and Rashi (there) who write that *argaman* resembles the color of wine, which again seemingly precludes *argaman* as referring to “purple.”

That said, the Septuagint consistently translates *argaman* into Greek as *porphyra*, which is the antecedent of the Latin *purpura*, and, ultimately, the Old English word *purpure*. The Modern English word *purple* derives from those earlier words, but did not always refer exclusively to the red-blue combination with which most English speakers are now familiar. Rather, in several languages the word *purple* means “red,” and the word for what we call “purple” is actually *violet*. The same was true in English until relatively recently. Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers the following alternate definition for the word *purple*: “Formerly: of any generally red shade; (now) of a deep, rich shade intermediate between crimson and violet.” Thus, when we hear the word *argaman* translated into *purple*, this is not necessarily what we call “purple,” but rather a generic type of red.

The Midrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4) states that *argaman* is the most esteemed of the different fabrics used in the Tabernacle and Temple because it represents the garments used by royalty. In many other Midrashic sources, the word used for royal clothes is *purpura*. For instance, the Midrash (*Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 50) writes about Mordecai that just as the king wore *purpura*, so did Mordecai wear *purpura*. We also know from various Greco-Roman historians that Tyrian purple was a controlled commodity that was typically only made available to the royal family. However, just because the Greek word we are discussing is a cognate of the Modern English word *purple*, this does not mean that the actual color of the clothes in question was really what we call “purple.”

In 1894, Yechiel Michel Pines introduced a new word for “purple”: *segol*. This word seems to be influenced by the English word *violet*, which was originally the name of a purple-colored flower, and then became the word for the color itself. The Talmud (*Brachot* 43b, *Shabbat* 50b) mentions a plant called a *siglei*, which Rashi (there) explains is a reference to the three-petal “violet” flower.

Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein suggests that the name *siglei* derives from the Aramaic word *sigla* (“cluster of grapes”), probably because the formation and color of grapes on a cluster resembles the formation and color of the violet flower. I would further argue that perhaps the Aramaic word *sigla* itself derives from the Hebrew word *eshkol* due to the interchangeability of SHIN and SAMECH, as well as KAF and GIMMEL. We find, in fact, that Targum Yerushalmi typically translates the Hebrew word *eshkol* into the Aramaic *sigla*. Interestingly, Rabbi Eliyahu HaBachur (1468-1549) in *Meturgaman* notes that *sigla* also lends its name to the vowelization symbol *segol*, which is comprised of three dots in a cluster-shaped formation.

Another Modern Hebrew term for the color “purple” is *lilach*. Just like *segol* primarily refers to the violet flower and was later extended to refer to the color of said flower, so too was *lilach* (literally, “lilac”) a term originally used from the lilac flower that was later extended to the color of said flower. The same is true of the Modern Hebrew words for “lavender” and “mauve,” which are also recognized by the Academy of the Hebrew Language as different words for “purple.”

For more information about the meaning of *argaman*, see *Kuntres Merkavo Argaman* by Rabbi Yisrael Rosenberg of Lakewood. Many of the ideas and sources discussed in this essay were inspired by that work.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

THE AMIDAH (PART 4) – *BIRKAT HA'AVOT*

“Prayer is not a miracle. It is a tool, man’s paintbrush in the art of life. Prayer is man’s weapon to defend himself in the struggle of life. It is a reality. A fact of life.”

(Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer)

The first blessing concludes, “O King, Helper, Savior, and Shield. Blessed are you, G-d, Shield of Avraham.”

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) was the Rabbi of Konigsberg in East Prussia. His most famous work was *HaKetav v’Hakabbalah*, which proves the indivisibility of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. He also authored a commentary on the Siddur called *Iyun Tefillah* (not to be confused with Rabbi Shimon Schwab’s commentary with the same name). In his commentary he explains that the G-d is described as being “Helper” because G-d helps those who attempt to help themselves. Our Sages teach us that there is a concept called *hishtadlut* – that, as a rule, we should not just sit back and expect G-d to take care of everything. Rather, we must be proactive in trying to find solutions to our problems. If we do so, G-d joins together with us and helps us. That is why He is described as “Helper”. However, there is a level that surpasses “*hishtadlut*” and that is when a person is so completely helpless in the face of whatever they are grappling with and they are so entirely powerless to act. As a result, they have no other alternative than to turn to G-d and place their trust entirely in His Hands. At such times, G-d saves the person even without the person being actively involved. This is why He is also referred to as “Savior.”

Rabbi Elya Lopian explains that when G-d acts in the role of either “Helper” or “Savior” He does so by using the natural world so that His acts are hidden behind a veneer of being “natural.” However, there is

an even higher level of connection to G-d that is so elevated that it generates Divine protection in a supernatural fashion. And that is someone who is prepared to put his life in danger to serve G-d. For such a selfless person, G-d becomes a “Shield,” protecting the person and assisting him in an obviously unearthly fashion.

Perhaps this explains two verses in Tehillim (91:11-12): “He [G-d] will send His angels to protect you on all your travels. They will carry you on their hands, lest you hurt your feet on a stone.” Why does G-d command the angels to carry the traveler above the stones? Surely, it would be simpler to have the angels remove the stones so that he can walk smoothly along the path ahead of him. G-d gives everything its particular location in this world – even a simple, inanimate stone has been placed where it is by G-d. If so, even the place where the stone lies is an integral part of G-d’s plan, and sometimes it cannot be moved. The Midrash (*Shemot Rabbah*) teaches that the person being spoken about is someone whose sole concern is to do G-d’s Will without taking into account their own personal comfort and safety. Therefore, for those who live their lives on the loftiest spiritual planes, G-d shields them and raises them above the stones in a supernatural way.

The first blessing in the *Amidah* ends with the words “...Shield of Avraham.” Rabbi Shimon Shkop (1860-1939), was the famed Rosh Yeshiva in Grodno, Belarus. He was considered to be one of the most brilliant and influential leaders of the Yeshiva world

during the upheavals of the First World War and the calamitous buildup to the Holocaust. He has a beautifully poignant explanation as to why Avraham is singled out by name, whereas the two following blessings only allude to Yitzchak and Yaakov without mentioning them directly. In Judaism ancestry is often quite emphasized. A person who comes from a prestigious lineage of Torah scholars and spiritual mentors might mistakenly imagine that their antecedents are a reason for them to be treated with extra honor despite the fact that they, themselves, have not reached similar levels of scholarship and righteousness. Yitzchak merited having an illustrious father. Yaakov had both his father *and* his grandfather to learn from. Perhaps, then, it is no surprise that they reached the towering heights that they did. Not so Avraham. Our forefather Avraham came from a family of idol worshippers. He had no

distinguished lineage whatsoever. Nothing to feel proud of. And, yet, Avraham, despite his complete lack of pedigree, found G-d all by himself, and revealed G-d's Majesty to all those around him. From absolutely nothing, he succeeded in building a relationship with G-d that would become the prototype for the Jewish nation's spiritual aspirations. As we conclude the first blessing of the *Amidah* – the prayer that expresses our closeness and intimacy with G-d – it is imperative that each and every one of us clearly understands that our connection to the Divine is defined only by ourselves. It is not classified by how esteemed our parents and grandparents are. So, too, such a relationship is not unattainable because of a paucity of lineage. Rather, it is available to all. And it is dependent on only one factor, and that is how I relate to G-d.

To be continued...

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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Mo'ed Katan 16-22

Word Power

“A covenant exists for the lips.” (The spoken word has great power.)

The Torah Sage Shmuel paid a *shiva* call to his brother Pinchas, whose child had departed this world. Shmuel asked his brother why he had not trimmed his fingernails despite being allowed to cut them during the mourning period. Pinchas replied, “If a tragedy like mine had happened to you, would you also show such disregard for mourning?” Pinchas’ reply was not only harsh, but, as we learn on our *daf*, was dangerous as well. Afterwards, Shmuel’s close relative passed, and when Pinchas visited him, Shmuel took his cut nails and threw them towards Pinchas, saying, “You do not know that *brit kruta l’sfatayim*?” (“There is a covenant of the speech,” meaning that one’s words have the power to effect fulfillment of what is spoken.) A word is not just a word, as the saying goes. The *gemara* describes Pinchas’ unfortunate statement as an example of “an error that goes forth from the ruler.” (Kohelet 10:5) It is irreversible and inevitable. To be fair, we should favorably judge this “error” to be a slip of the tongue, stemming from the unsettled state of mind of the mourning speaker.

Shmuel cites a teaching from Rabbi Yochanan as the source for our knowledge of this “speech covenant.” It is based on what Avraham Avinu said to the accompanying lads, prior to ascending with his son Yitzchak for the *akeidah*. Avraham told them, “Stay here, and I and the young man will return to you.” (Ber. 22:5) And, so it was, that both Avraham and his son Yitzchak returned alive and unscathed, and a ram was offered on the mountain per Hashem’s command. Avraham Avinu’s words were more than prophetic. They were an effective means for invoking Divine Mercy to spare his son in accordance with *brit krutah l’sfatayim*.

The concept of *brit krutah l’sfatayim* appears to be identical, or at least quite similar, to another teaching: “A *tzaddik* decrees something, and Hashem fulfills it.” (This is the way many paraphrase a teaching by Rabbi Abahu that is found above in Mo’ed Katan 16b). Hashem willingly grants a *tzaddik* an awesome power, measure for measure. Since a *tzaddik* controls his desires and humbly nullifies himself to Hashem, Hashem in turn “nullifies” Himself to the *tzaddik*, as it were.

Tosefot raises a strong question. In our *gemara*, Shmuel cites Rabbi Yochanan’s teaching regarding the *positive* outcome in the case of Avraham and Yitzchak as proof for *brit krutah l’sfatayim*. “This is a wonder,” asserts Tosefot. Since that case was one with a *positive* outcome, how can it be a proof for “a covenant of speech” in Shmuel’s case, where there was a *negative* and tragic outcome? We know the established Torah concept that the Divine trait of Mercy is much greater than the Divine trait of Punishment. Therefore, perhaps *brit kruta l’sfatayim* is true for Divine Mercy but not for Divine Punishment? Tosefot concludes this question by suggestion should Shmuel should instead cite a teaching of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish in Masechet Berachot (19a), “A person should never open his mouth to the Satan.” One should not say something of a harmful nature – whether it be regarding himself or others – because invoking the Divine trait of Punishment may lead to a negative outcome. Tosefot leaves this entire question unanswered. (See the Maharsha for a discussion of the differences in the various teachings, and a suggested answer to Tosefot’s question.)

When I was a youngish student in our local *cheder*, a few of us boys, “being boys,” were joking around, saying this and that about each other and others.

Stu* said, "If only David would break an ankle while skating, I am sure that coach would let me play third base this year." Lewis* replied, "Even if he dies, you would not even make the team!" I do not recall what "witty" remark I made, if any. Our teacher, a rabbi whose Torah greatness would be appreciated by us only later in life, walked into the classroom at that very moment. "I was not eavesdropping, but I heard your words about your baseball team and they sadden me." "But we did not mean to talk behind David's back," we explained. "Even if he were here, we would say it about him or even about each other!" "It is just talk and the way we speak all the time. Doesn't everyone speak like that?" we said with righteous confidence. "Not everyone," our rabbi said. "Words are not just sounds that we make to communicate with each other. Words are extremely powerful, and

can actually serve as a type of 'ammunition' to cause a bad outcome. Just as Hashem created the world with Divine words, we, who are created in His image with the 'power' of speech, can also create with our words, so to speak. So, let us be careful when saying something injurious about another person or to another person, even if we are 'just talking'."

The words of the great rabbi made a positive impact in my soul, *baruch Hashem*, and I have shared my rabbi's teaching with my students over the years. As needed, I even stop the speaker midsentence: "Please do not say 'If I accidentally kill B*...' (using an actual student's name), but rather say, If one person accidentally kills another person, in the abstract, without a name or specifying a particular person." My experience has been that the students "get it," internalize it, and are very careful in their choice of words from then on.

■ *Mo'ed Katan 18a*

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Hershman

Cut from the Cloth of Character

Clothes don't make the man. Or do they?

The Kohen's garments were more than a uniform. The entire character of the priesthood and the validity of the offering procedures depended on these priestly garments, and on every detail prescribed for them in this week's Torah portion. Without these garments the Kohen is not fit to perform Temple service; the service is invalid. Without them the Kohen exposes his own persona, with all its faults and weaknesses, and is thus unfit to serve. But when he is clothed in the priestly garments, the Kohen assumes a new identity. He does not appear as he actually is, but as he ought to be, and can then meet the standards of sanctity required for the service.

Our Scripture is full of references to clothing, expressing, and even imbuing, character. Consider

the first appearance of clothing in the Torah. After Adam and Eve sin, and they are banished from Gan Eden, G-d *clothes them*. Now that they are in danger of straying to the level of beast, they are given clothing to remind them of their higher moral calling.

The Hebrew words for clothe, cover and clothing are often used to describe the integration of character traits. G-d is said to be clothed in majesty, in righteousness, and in zeal, among other attributes. Our prophets describe man as clothed in salvation, righteousness, strength, dignity and faithfulness, and there are several instances where the *kohanim* are singled out as being clothed in righteousness and salvation. (*Tehillim* 132:9, 16) The garments of the Kohen must express the character he is to achieve, and set the standard for the nation as a whole. The Kohen must not wear anything else on his body that

would interfere with these garments – he is to be one with the traits they symbolize.

Rav Hirsch's commentary leaves nary a detail of these garments unexplored. Here, we share only two examples. The linen pants of the Kohen are called *michnesei bod*, and the Torah instructs that they *cover his nakedness, from his waist until his thighs*. Thus, they cover the parts of the body involved in nourishment and reproduction; they cover them with the quality of purity, symbolized by the white linen. Purity is especially relevant to these two realms of human activity. The name for linen "*bod*" derives from the special way in which the plant grows as it rises from the ground: it rises in straight, separate, unbranched stems. This represents the straight, predetermined and undeviating path that purity demands.

The tunic, extending from shoulder to heel, also represents purity. The tunic thus covers the entire body, except the head; it clothes the *animal* nature of man with purity. It is woven into a small pattern of hollows, like hollows into which stones are set. This represents two fundamental steps required in the quest for purity: first, one must remove anything impure, creating a hollow space for the good to be set. As King David writes, *shun evil and do good*. (Psalms 34:15)

All of the Kohanic garments must be supplied and owned by the nation. The people, too, are to reflect on the attributes befitting a servant of G-d, even outside the Temple, and 'clothe' themselves accordingly.

■ Sources: Commentary, Shemot 28:43

The Insights Into Halacha Series Presents: Snowballs on Shabbos?

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Let It Snow!

The recent "Elpis" Storm blanketed Yerushalayim with snow, with meteorologists correctly predicting (and children ecstatic) that the accumulated snowfall would reach 20 centimeters (approximately 8 inches). To many, this brought back memories of Yerushalayim's 2014 *Asarah B'Teves/Erev Shabbos* "Blizzard." With this in mind, a specific halachic query readily comes to mind.

Is making snowballs permitted on Shabbos? And, if not, why not?

Truthfully, these questions are far more complex than one might think, and quite interestingly there is no clear-cut consensus of rationales and reasons even among the authorities who say it is prohibited.

Hotza'ah

One very important fact is clear. If the *Eruv* is down, or in a locale that does not have an *Eruv*, outdoor snowball fights (unless in an enclosed *Reshus HaYachid*/private domain) would certainly be forbidden, as throwing snowballs would transgress the prohibition of "*Hotza'ah*, carrying." The question would not even start unless the place has a reliable *Eruv*.

However, to define what actions or set of actions define snowball *making*, and whether or not it is prohibited, is not so simple. Let us further explore these issues.

Muktzeh

First of all, is snow actually *Muktzeh* (prohibited for use)? Is one allowed to move it?

The common halachic consensus is that rain is not *Muktzeh* even if it fell on Shabbos, as proven by *Tosafos* and based on the *Gemara* in *Eruvin* (45b-46a). The moisture of the rain existed beforehand in the form of clouds. This is the codified halacha. Our question is whether the same categorization would apply to snow.

Many authorities, including the *Chavos Yair*, *Even HaOzer*, *Maamar Mordechai*, and the Butchatcher Rav, as well as many contemporary authorities, including the *Minchas Shabbos*, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, the Debreciner Rav, the *She'arim Metzuyanim B'Halacha*, Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, the *Rivevos Efraim*, the *Nishmas Shabbos*, and Rav Pesach Eliyahu Falk, do define snow similarly to rain, maintaining that the same rationale permitting utilizing rain on Shabbos applies to snow as well. Accordingly, snow is therefore *not Muktza* and thereby technically permitted for use.

On the other hand, there is a notable minority opinion, that of Rav Moshe Feinstein. He held that snow is indeed considered *Muktzeh* since nowadays people generally do not have a real use for it. It is more akin to gravel as its main use is simply to walk upon it. Additionally, he held that snow would be prohibited due to another concern as well. In Rav Feinstein's assessment, snow would be considered *Nolad* (came into existence on Shabbos) if it fell on Shabbos, since, as opposed to rain, people do not associate snow with being carried in the clouds (true as it may be).

An interesting upshot of this understanding is that although Rav Moshe held snow to be *Muktzeh*, he did not ascribe any other prohibition to making snowballs. Accordingly, it seems that Rav Moshe would be of the opinion that if one gathered snow on *Erev* Shabbos and set it aside for a snowball fight on Shabbos (within a proper *Erev*, of course), one may then make and throw those snowballs on Shabbos.

Boneh

However, many other authorities, although maintaining that snow itself is not *Muktzeh*, nevertheless held that making snowballs on Shabbos

is problematic for other reasons, chief among them being "*Boneh*, building." The *Rambam*, cited as halacha by the *Mishnah Berurah* in a discussion of cheese-making, rules that whenever one takes separate parts of an item and joins them together to make a new item, the action is "similar to *Boneh*" and therefore prohibited on Shabbos.

Rav Yair Chaim Bachrach (1639-1702) – the renowned *Chavos Yair* – and on a more contemporary note, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rav Chaim Kanievsky apply this rule to the formation of snowballs, prohibiting it. Although by making snowballs one is not actually creating something new, he is still giving form to something that was previously not extant, which gives the appearance of and is akin to the halachic definition of building.

Yet, other *Poskim*, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, the Debreciner Rav, and the *Nishmas Shabbos*, disagree, maintaining that the prohibition of *Boneh* applies only when one builds something that has at least a minimal semblance of permanence. Snowballs, they argue, which have a transient and ephemeral existence lasting a grand total of several seconds from time of throwing, should not be included in the 'building' category. Nonetheless, they concede that when it comes to building snowmen, which generally are meant to stick around until they melt several days later, would be proscribed due to *Boneh*.

Risuk

Another potential prohibition in making snowballs on Shabbos is "*Risuk*, crushing" (or mashing), related to the prohibition of "*Sechita*, squeezing" (as in squeezing out juice from a fruit). The *Shulchan Aruch*, regarding washing one's hands on Shabbos with icy or snowy water, rules that one should be careful not to rub his hands together with the ice as it may crush the ice, causing it to melt and him to unwittingly transgress the prohibition of *Risuk*.

Several authorities, including the *Chavos Yair*, and much later the Debreciner Rav, apply this ruling to making snowballs. In the formation of a snowball by applying direct pressure to it, one cannot avoid crushing the snow, causing a bit of it to melt.

In scientific terms, this process of applying pressure is referred to as regelation, where the compression causes a melt and then the release causes refreezing of that melt. This is what holds a well-made snowball together. (Thanks are due to David Lederman for pointing out to me this fascinating observation.) Interestingly, the discoverer of regelation, British scientist Michael Faraday, was *born 100 years after* the *Chavos Yair* first discussed this phenomenon regarding the halachic implications of snowball-making.

Either way, these *Poskim* explain that snowball-making would be prohibited on Shabbos due to this reason.

On the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein and the *Nishmas Shabbos* disagree. They assert that any minuscule amount of water that is possibly melted while forming a snowball outdoors in the freezing cold is definitely not noticeable, and in no way would this constitute crushing or squeezing out a liquid.

More *Melachos*?

Other potential prohibitions for the formation of snowballs, mentioned by several authorities and rejected by others include: *Ma'mar* - gathering (i.e. gathering the snow to make the snowballs), *Uvda D'Chol* - weekday activities, and *Soser*, destroying (i.e. when the thrown snowball hits its target and consequently falls apart).

So, Can We Build a Shabbos Snowman?

In the final analysis, although there are *Poskim* who give a dispensation to allow young children to make

and throw snowballs on Shabbos, nevertheless, the majority of authorities rule that it is strictly prohibited.

In fact, and unknown to most, this contemporary question is not as current as many suspect. As early as the 1690s (!) the *Chavos Yair* wrote that one who sees children throwing snowballs at each other on Shabbos should attempt to stop them.

The reason why the *Chavos Yair's* view on this topic is mostly unknown is that his full *sefer* called *Mekor Chaim* on *Orach Chaim* was first published only in 1982, posthumously, by *Machon Yerushalayim*, although it was written more than 300 years earlier! It is said that this work was originally intended as a principal commentary to *Shulchan Aruch* but was withdrawn by the author when he discovered that other commentaries, most notably the *Taz* (*Turei Zahav*) and the *Magen Avraham* (at the time known as the *Magen David* and *Ner Yisrael* respectively), had already been published.

Let us conclude and “summarize” this essay regarding snowballs and snowmen. Practically speaking, although the halachic authorities do not necessarily see eye to eye in their rationales, and there is no clear-cut consensus as to a singular reason why it should be prohibited, the accepted ruling is that making snowballs, and certainly making snowmen (especially for adults) is prohibited on Shabbos. Just another reason to play inside on Shabbos when a ‘White Winter Wonderland’ beckons from the great outdoors or a ‘Polar Vortex’ comes a-knocking.

This article was written L'iluy Nishmas this author's beloved grandmother, Chana Rus bas Rav Yissachar Dov, and l'zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad!

Rabbi Spitz's recent English halacha *sefer*,
“[Insights Into Halacha - Food: A Halachic Analysis](#)” (Mosaica/Feldheim)
has more than 500 pages and features over 30 comprehensive chapters, discussing a myriad of halachic issues relating to food. It is now available online and in bookstores everywhere.