

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Inconspicuous Assumption

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 Tezaveh. 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 *sifri'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 Tezaveh, the twentieth portion of the Torah.

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 Soleveitchik 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 Soleveitchik 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

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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." © 2000 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky & torah.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

The leaders of Israel whose major domain was the Sanctuary—Holy Temple were the members of the tribe of Levi and especially the branch of the tribe who descended from Aaron, the kohanim—priests. Indeed, the Torah readings of last week as well as of this week deal with the Sanctuary and all of its accoutrements (parashat Terumah) and the special garments and functions of the kohanim-priests (parshat Tetzaveh) respectively. It seems to me that a clear understanding of the main purpose of the Sanctuary—Holy Temple and the functions of the kohanim—priests will do a great deal to clarify the role of religious leadership and religious institutions in Jewish life today—and will even help us in understanding the significance of the Holy Temple for the Jewish people and the sanctity of the Temple Mount.

There is a fascinating difference of opinion as to when precisely the Almighty commanded the Israelites to build a Sanctuary and began to delineate the function of the priests. According to Rashi, based on most of the Rabbinic (Midrashic) interpretations, the command "and they shall build for me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:5) came after

the Day of Forgiveness (Yom Kippur), after they had worshipped the golden calf and received atonement from the Almighty. From this perspective it would seem that the major task of rabbinic leadership is to help the Jewish people establish a relationship with G-d, seek His forgiveness when they falter and discover meaningful avenues of approach for a relationship with the Divine. The Ramban has a very different chronology based upon the specific order of the Biblical narrative. For him, G-d commanded the construction of the Sanctuary immediately after the Revelation at Sinai, in order to provide a place from which the word of G-d would continue to emanate to the nation in a relevant and inspiring manner. The Bible itself, in detailing the construction of the ark which housed the two tablets of testimony, declares in G-d's name, "And I shall meet with you there and I shall speak with you from atop the arks' cover (kapporet) from between the two cherubs....." (Exodus 25:22).

This difference of opinion has far reaching consequences in terms of the main function of our religious institutions and their personnel— as well as to what extent we truly yearn for a third—and permanent—Holy Temple. If one continues the thought of the Ramban it becomes clear that the major feature of the Sanctuary was the sacred ark which housed the Ten Commandments—and indeed the ark is the very first of the Sanctuary's furnishings which is biblically described. We understand very well why the Great Sanhedrin—the institution which continued Torah interpretation and even additional enactments generated by changing conditions—was housed within the "office of the hewn stone" within the Holy Temple itself. This is likewise perfectly in consonance with the function of the kohen—priest as well as all of the Levites as expressed by Moses at the end of his life when he bestowed blessings on each of the various tribes: "They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your torah to Israel" (Deuteronomy 33:10). The chief task of Jewish leadership and institutions is to teach Torah; to make sure that G-d's word remains immediate and significant.

On the other hand however Maimonides seems to have a different emphasis, much more in keeping with the chronology of the command to build the Sanctuary according to Rashi. This great codifier and philosopher begins his "Laws of the Chosen House" with the definition that "the Holy Temple is a place in which sacrifices are offered and three times a year the "seeing of the Divine" is celebrated (Rambam Laws of the Chosen House 1,1). He goes on to say, in terms of his description of the construction of the Holy Temple, "The altar is the most specifically determined place whose precise locus is never to be changed. There is a tradition accepted by all that the place of the Temple is the place of the binding of Isaac, the place of the offering of Noah when he left the ark, the place of the offerings of Cain and Abel, the place of the offering of Adam when he was created—and that is the place from

which the initial dust from which Adam was formed was taken." (Ibid. 2, 1)

It is clear from Maimonides that the most significant place of the Sanctuary is the altar, the place of sacrifices. The three main types of sacrifices are sin offerings, gift offerings and whole burnt offerings. A sin offering expresses the fact that we humans are frail and prone to fall; it gives us the opportunity to stand before the creator of life and the universe, admit our mistakes and rise from our failure. The whole burnt offering expresses our readiness to commit our personal and material resources to the Almighty and His vision of a more perfect world of peace and harmony. The gift offering expresses our gratitude to a G-d who has created a world which can often give much pleasure and bring much satisfaction. If indeed, it is the altar—and not the ark—which is the main aspect of the Sanctuary than it becomes the most important task of our religious institutions to help the individual rise up after he has fallen, to visit the sick, to comfort the bereaved, and to inspire individual growth and personal commitment to the ideals of a G-d of compassion and justice. In Moses' farewell blessing, he concludes the verse about the tribe of Levi which was previously cited with the words, "And they (the Levites and kohanim—priests) shall place incense before Your Presence and burnt offerings on your altar." (Deuteronomy 33: 10) Religious leadership is therefore to be found first and foremost around the altar and not only in the classroom in front of the Holy Ark.

Unfortunately we generally think of the Holy Temple in terms of blood—and-gore sacrifice; I believe that it was much more like barbecued dinners where families would gather together to celebrate important occasions, not forgetting to give proper thanks to the Ruler of the Universe. The growth which comes from admitting one's mistake, making proper restitution, and feeling the cathartic relief of forgiveness is likewise a critical aspect of our humanity and our yearning for improvement. And of course there can be no real excellence in any aspect of one's life—personal, familial, intellectual, religious without commitment and sacrifice. In all of these ways the religious institution must play a major role and the Kohen-Rabbi-Pastor must be ready to give a helping hand and a warm embrace. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Almighty only entered into the covenant with the Israelites after the youth of the Jewish nation offered sacrifices and gifts to the Almighty. (Exodus 24:5) © 2005 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd you shall make a plate of pure gold, and you shall engrave on it a graving [as used on a] seal, [that says], 'Holy to G-d' (Shemos 28:36). "It was written upon it in two rows; G-d's name above and 'Holy to' below" (Shabbos 63b, Succah 5a).

The commentators explain that G-d's name was written "above" because it would be inappropriate (especially if there were only a couple of words) for G-d's name to not be at the very top. Many of them then attempt to reconcile this need with the need to be able to read the Kohain Gadol's forehead plate properly; since normally things are read from top to bottom, if G-d's name was written directly above "Holy to" (as a simple reading of the Babylonian Talmud indicates, and as is more strongly implied in the Jerusalem Talmud, Yuma 4:1), then it would be mistakenly read backwards.

Besides trying to understand how to satisfy both of these seemingly contradictory requirements, we should try to understand the meaning of the words themselves. Who, or what, is "Holy to G-d?" Does it refer to the Kohain Gadol that wore it? To the special clothing that he wore? Is there another option?

When explaining how the "shoham" stones on the "ephod," which had the names of the 12 Tribes inscribed in them (6 on each), were "stones of remembrance" (28:12), the Rashbam refers us to his commentary on the inscription on the forehead plate. There (28:36), he writes, "on the ephod and on choshen (breastplate) were the names of the children of Israel as a remembrance that G-d gave atonement for the sins of the holy [offerings] - which were consecrated by the children of Israel - who are written below the forehead plate on the stones of the ephod and choshen" (See also his comments on 28:38).

It seems, then, that the Rashbam understands the word "holy" as referring to the Children of Israel, who were "Holy to G-d." How did they become holy (or maintain their holiness)? By G-d forgiving their transgressions, which was accomplished via the acceptance of their offerings. The clothing that the Kohain Gadol wore, viewed together as one set, were a reminder that "Israel is holy to G-d." In this context, where the words are read from bottom (on the ephod and choshen) to top (on the forehead), the only way to have it read properly is to have the words "Holy to" on the second row and G-d's name at the very top.

Based on this understanding, the need to have G-d's name above all and the need to read the words in the proper order are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they work together to paint a picture of a holy nation thankful for its special relationship with the One above.

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RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

This week's portion deals primarily with the priestly garments. Right at the outset, the Torah states that they were worn by the Priest for "honor" (kavod). In the words of the Torah, "and you shall make Holy garments for your brother Aharon (Aaron), and they shall be for honor (kavod) and beauty (tiferet)." (Exodus 28:2)

But honor seems contrary to the Torah ideal. R. Eliezer HaKapar states: "jealousy, desire and honor take a person from the world." (Avot 4:28) Shouldn't the Torah, therefore, request a priest to aspire to achieve the highest level of humility, rather than honor?

The answer may lie in a deeper understanding of the Hebrew word kavod. Rav Ahron Soloveichik argues that the word kavod contains within it, the root of the word kaved. Kaved means "heavy" and is linked etymologically to kavod. In concrete terms, heaviness is determined by the pull of gravity upon an object. In conceptual terms, weight is determined by the degree of responsibility one has. The greater responsibility (kaved), the greater the potential honor once those obligations are fulfilled.

The meaning of our verse now becomes clear. The goal of the priestly garments is not honor, but rather to serve as a reminder that the priest has a greater responsibility to the community.

Notwithstanding its relationship with kaved, kavod can still be productive. While honor can sometimes lead to bloating of the ego which, in turn, can get in the way of real accomplishments, it can also be a powerful and important tool to help others. When one assists others, kavod is not only brought to the giver, but God is honored as well. Note the liturgy on Shabbat, the Keyl Adon prayer that echoes the language of our portion when it states, pe'er v'kavod notrim lishmo, "splendor and honor are given to God's name".

Note the Midrash on the verse, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart." (Deuteronomy 6:5) The rabbis note that the Hebrew for heart (Lev) is written in the plural (Levavkha). Since the heart symbolizes human nature, the use of the plural here is viewed by the rabbis as meaning that God is to be worshipped with both the good and bad inclinations. In the same vein, the natural human tendency to enjoy being honored can be a factor in spurring us to undertake beneficial efforts on behalf of people in need. Perhaps the honor of the priestly garments can lead the Priest to work with greater vigor for Am Yisrael.

Sometimes greater responsibility can lead to honor and, at times, honor can inspire greater commitment. It has often been said that "Clothes make the man." The Torah here is completing the sentence, with the teaching that clothes are there to make us act for others. © 2005 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

A great deal of this week's Torah reading concerns itself with the garments of the kohanim, the priests that served in the mishkan/ Tabernacle and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Special reference is made in the parsha to the exquisite garments that were to be

worn by the kohein gadol, the High Priest of Israel. In describing those special garments, the Torah details the long blue tunic coat that the kohein gadol was to wear as part of his eight-garment uniform. It tells us that attached to the bottom hem of that garment were bells which sounded gently as the kohein gadol walked within the precincts of the Temple. "And the sound [of the bells] shall be heard as he [the kohein gadol] enters the holy place." Legitimate questions may be asked of this matter. Why the bells? Why the necessity for the "sound to be heard?" Who was supposed to hear these bells and what message did that sound impart to the listener? All of these matters have been discussed for many centuries by our great biblical commentators and scholars.

The bells were meant to be heard by the kohein gadol himself. People who are elevated to high public office are in danger of not realizing the true burden of personal responsibility this achievement truly entails. One does not fully appreciate the gravity of the weight of this responsibility. When King Shaul became king over Israel, somehow he did not realize that he was no longer plain Mr. Shaul. The prophet Shmuel is forced to come to him and reprimand him. Shmuel says to Shaul: "Even if you be small and humble in your own eyes, [you must realize that] you are now the head of the Tribes of Israel." A king has great duties, enormous responsibilities. He must see himself in the light of history, tradition and destiny. He is no longer just a private individual but now becomes a role model, an object lesson for his people to follow and emulate. If one does not see one's self as fulfilling that role, then the reign of the king or leader, just as that was the case with King Shaul, will essentially be a disappointing and even tragic one. The words of the prophet Shmuel to King Shaul should echo in the ears of each and every person who currently holds a leadership position within the Jewish people and its society.

Thus, the kohein gadol had to constantly be reminded that he was the kohein gadol, with all of the privileges, the stature, duties and responsibilities that were attached to that lofty position in Israel. Since many of his duties were performed in private or before a small group of other kohanim, the Torah provided him with a built-in reminder system. The bells that sounded as he walked into the Temple said to him over and over again: "You are the kohein gadol - you are held to the highest standards of behavior and holiness. The Jewish people look to you for guidance and leadership. You must live up to their expectations." Even though we unfortunately have no kohein gadol and no Temple currently, nevertheless we should still be able to hear the sound of those bells, challenging us to greatness, probity, holiness and excellence. By listening to the sound of those bells, we are able to help build our own private mishkan of holiness within ourselves, our families, our communities and all of Israel. © 2005 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a

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RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftarah

This week's haftarah shares with us an important perspective regarding our long dark exile and the brilliant light awaiting us at the end of it. The haftarah begins in the midst of an elaborate prophetic vision that the prophet Yechezkel was privileged to view. In the previous three chapters Hashem showed the prophet the detailed blueprints of the future and final magnificent Bais Hamikdash. In our haftarah Hashem instructed Yechezkel to share his vision with the Jewish people. Hashem said, "Tell the House of Israel the vision of the Bais Hamikdash in order that they should be embarrassed from their sins when they measure the completed structure." (43:10) Yechezkel was commanded to remind the Jewish people about their wrongdoings which ultimately led to the destruction of the previous Bais Hamikdash. They were presently in the midst of the Babylonian exile and the sight of the Bais Hamikdash was intended to remind them of all their previous faults. They could easily realize that the Bais Hamikdash would have been theirs if not for their previous sinful ways.

Hashem continued, "And if they are embarrassed for all of their wrongdoings then show them the form of the Bais Hamikdash, its specific rooms, entrances and exits... and write this before them and they should retain its entire image and all its specifications and they will construct them." The Radak explains that the prophet Yechezkel was given specific instructions to reveal these detailed plans only after the Jewish people sensed embarrassment. Only after regretting their sinful ways which caused the destruction of the first Temple would the Jews be privileged to observe the vision of the third Bais Hamikdash. Apparently the reason for this was because this edifice would be an everlasting one and could only be constructed after the world was free of sin. Therefore, even beholding the sight of the third Bais Hamikdash required special merit and only those who had forsaken their sinful ways could be privileged to view it.

But in truth, the timing of this prophecy requires serious reflection. The Scriptures reveals earlier (see 40:1) that this prophecy came to Yechezkel fourteen years into the Babylonian exile long before the second Temple was even in sight. It is therefore quite shocking for us to discover here a prophecy about the third Bais Hamikdash, rather than the second. The wounds of the first Temple's destruction were not healed and Hashem was already revealing the plans for the third Temple. Wouldn't it have been more timely and appropriate to

share with the Jewish people visions of the second Temple rather than the third?!

The lesson which can be gleaned from this is a striking perspective about Hashem's mercy and kindness. Radak explains the above passages in the following manner. The Jewish people were being presented a challenge and at the same time an extraordinary opportunity. Hashem revealed to them that they could be granted the personal privilege of erecting the third and final Bais Hamikdash. If they repented and contemplated their final redemption they could be ultimately involved in every one of its aspects. Although the Jewish people were presently in exile they were shown then a glimpse of the perfect world, the one after the revival of the deceased. They were informed that it was within their ability to merit their personal return in that final era and to actually be personally involved in the construction of the third Bais Hamikdash.

Yechezkel told them to focus on every detail of the future Bais Hamikdash and commit it to memory. If they believed in and aspired to being present during that glorious era they would merit it. And if they concentrated now on the details of the construction of the Bais Hamikdash and their participation therein they would actually merit it then. The Radak quotes as his source, the famous principle of Chazal, "Whoever believes in the advent of Mashiach will merit the redemption." Radak explains that in this same vein Hashem gave the Jewish people, then in exile, the opportunity of constructing the third Bais Hamikdash. They were informed that if they believed in it and in their participation therein they would merit it.

With the above in mind we now understand and appreciate the timely message of Hashem regarding redemption. This special revelation at its particular moment was intended to be an unbelievable comforting thought to the Jewish people. At that time they viewed themselves as rejected by Hashem and couldn't envision a glorious era awaiting themselves. They felt lost in exile and had forfeited their cherished relationship with Hashem. Suddenly during their moments of despair Hashem revealed to them His boundless love. Hashem showed them that during those very same moments, He was focusing on their most glorious era, the era of Mashiach. He reminded them not to despair because their trying predicament was but a fleeting moment on the horizon of eternity. Hashem therefore showed them a glimpse of eternity and their personal involvement in it. He invited them to rise above their present predicament and focus on their bright future. If they could display sincere faith in Hashem they would, in fact, rebuild the final Bais Hamikdash.

Hashem's love for the Jewish people is eternal and even during our most trying times Hashem is focusing on this eternity. The Jewish people were therefore given here the fullest opportunity to repent. If they could regret their past and forsake their sinful ways

eternity would be theirs. Now in the midst of their exile they could actually prepare for the construction of the final Bais Hamikdash and establish themselves as the builders of eternity. Hashem's love transcends all borders, time included, and is always focused on the eternal redemption of His people. We should learn from this never to despair and to realize that there is always a glorious moment awaiting us soon. © 2005 Rabbi D. Siegel and www.torah.org

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

In the description of the cloak worn by the High Priest, we are told, "And you shall make on its edges pomegranates of blue, purple, and red wool, all around the edges, with golden bells between them, all around... And this will be on Aharon when he performs the service, and his sound will be heard when he enters the holy site before G-d and when he leaves, and he will not die." [Shemot 28:33-35]. This verse is somewhat surprising. Why are the bells so important, such that if they are not on the cloak and their sound is missing the High Priest will be liable for death?

The Ramban explains that the death penalty stems from the requirement of respect for the Temple. "It was commanded that he make a noise in the holy site, as if asking for permission to enter before his master, just as one who enters the palace of a king without warning is put to death in accordance with royal laws, as was seen with respect to Achashverosh." That is, to enter the holy site suddenly, without making the sound of the bells, is a sign of disrespect. This is true in both an earthly kingdom and in the kingdom of heaven.

The Rashbam takes a different approach. "Since the Almighty commanded, 'And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting from when he enters to atone at the Sanctuary, until he leaves' [Vayikra 16:17], He also commanded that 'his sound will be heard when he comes' and those who hear the sound will move away." That is, the obligation to make the noise of bells does not stem from respect for the holiness but from the responsibility of the High Priest for the people of Yisrael. Since the other people are forbidden to be in the Tabernacle together with him, he must announce to all the others when he enters, and if he does not fulfill this obligation he is liable to die.

This second approach of the Rashbam seems to correspond best to the simple interpretation of the passage, both for linguistic and conceptual reasons. Based on comparing the texts, a clear correspondence can be seen between the current verse—"and his sound will be heard when he enters the holy site before G-d and when he leaves, and he will not die"—and that quoted by the Rashbam—"no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting from when he enters to atone at the holy site, until he leaves." These are the only two verses in

the Torah which contain the contrasting pair, "when he enters... when/until he leaves."

As far as the concept is concerned, the explanation given by the Rashbam helps to complete our understanding of the garments of the High Priest. With respect to the other three garments, the link between the item and Bnei Yisrael is clearly noted in the Torah. With respect to the Ephod, it is written, "You shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the Ephod, stones of memory for Bnei Yisrael, and Aharon will carry their names before G-d on his two shoulders, in memory" [Shemot 28:12]. About the Choshen, "And Aharon will carry the names of Bnei Yisrael in the Choshen of Law on his heart when he enters the Sanctuary, as a permanent memory before G-d" [28:29]. And for the Tzitz, it is written, "Let it be on Aharon's forehead, and Aharon will bear the sin of the sacrifices that Bnei Yisrael will consecrate... Let it be on his forehead forever, to bring them favor before G-d" [28:38]. We now see that the cloak also has a direct role to play with respect to Bnei Yisrael, making sure that they do not go into the Temple when the High Priest has entered to atone for their sins.

In summary, even though the purpose of the garments is for "honor and glory" [28:2], the one who wears them must always keep in mind that the honor is that of Bnei Yisrael, and that there is no limit to the high level of responsibility that he must show for the people.

YESHIVAT BEIT OROT

Orot HaParsha

From the teachings of Rav Dani Isaac, Rosh Hayeshiva

"**A**nd you will command B'nei Yisrael that they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for illumination, to light a ner tamid" (Shmot 27:20).

"And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among B'nei Yisrael, so that he shall be a Kohen to Me" (28:1)

In these two psukim Moshe's role is emphasized as the active persona to whom the olive oil, as well as Aharon and his sons, are to be brought. It is not clear why the Torah emphasizes Moshe's role in these two matters. The Ramban explains regarding the oil "the reason for the expression 'for you' is that it should be brought to him [Moshe] in order that he ascertain that it is indeed clear, crushed oil, as required". The Netziv (Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin) questions the Ramban's comment and says "Isn't it surprising that those who were responsible for the Mishkan could not be relied upon [regarding the quality of the oil]? And what would happen after Moshe's death?" The Ramban also does not explain why the Torah repeats its wording and style in reference to Aharon and his sons becoming Kohanim.

Many have also questioned the significance of the commandment regarding the Ner Tamid in the

context of topics that relate to the building of the Mishkan and its vessels - in the middle of the latter we find commandments regarding the avodah to be performed in the Mishkan. The Menorah is the physical expression of one of the central aims of the Beit Mikdash; to enlighten the world with the light of Torah. That is why the Mikdash is called "oro shel olam" (the light of the world), for without doubt, the light from the Menorah of the Mikdash brings light to the whole world.

The Torah itself is also called oro shel olam. The Gemarra (Baba Batra 4a) tells us that Herod killed all the Torah sages and left only Baba Ben Bota alive. Later, when Herod repented, he consulted with Baba Ben Bota on how to redress the wrongs he had done. "He (Herod) extinguished oro shel olam (when he killed the Torah sages), as is written 'For the commandment is a lamp and teaching is light' (Mishlei 6:24), so he [Herod] should go now and engage in oro shel olam (the Mikdash), as is written 'and all nations shall flow unto it' ." (Yeshayahu 2:2) Therefore, as soon as the Torah finishes commanding us regarding the Mishkan and its vessels, it commands us regarding the olive oil for light, in order to teach us about the avodah in the Mikdash, so that all those who are involved in building the Mishkan will focus upon the holy purpose to their work.

Moshe Rabbeinu, who "received the Torah at Sinai" in order to pass it on to all of Israel, the Rav who teaches Torah with total devotion, expresses the essence of the Menorah through his actions. Therefore, it is right that he should be the one to command Israel regarding the oil for the Menorah. This is the import of "And you will command B'nei Yisrael that they shall take for you."

It says of the clothing of the Kohanim (bigdei kehuna) "You shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor" (28:2) There is an inherent fear that because they wear special garments, the Kohanim might become arrogant and see themselves as above the people, and then allow themselves to do whatever strikes their fancy. We see evidence of this tendency in the story of the sons of Eli "And the custom of the Kohanim was, that, when any man offered a sacrifice, the Kohen's servant came while the flesh was still seething, with a flesh-hook with three prongs in his hand, and he struck it into the pan, or kettle or cauldron and all that the flesh-hook brought up the Kohen took." (Shmuel I, 2:13) The sons of Eli would regularly take more than their allotted share of the meat offerings "And they placed their table before the high table, as though the avoda to HASHEM was worthless, and its main purpose was to fill their own stomachs" (Ralbag - Rav Levi ben Gershom) (Throughout the course of human history we encounter examples of power hunger among leaders, and in our own time we also find leaders who do whatever crosses their mind without taking the interests and needs of their constituency into consideration).

Moshe Rabbeinu, the humblest of men upon the face of the earth, of whom there was never any fear of his becoming power-hungry and whose only concern was for the good of the people, is indeed worthy to appoint Aharon and his sons as Kohanim. Therefore, the Torah says "And you, bring near to yourself," inferring that by bringing Aharon and his sons close to himself [Moshe], their ways will become one with his and their greatness will make them "a Kohen to Me" - not for themselves.

Regarding special vestments for Kohanim the Torah uses the wording "You shall make garments of sanctity;"(28:2), i.e. Moshe himself shall make them [the garments], while in the next pasuk it states "And you shall speak to each of the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the garments of Aharon, to sanctify him, so he shall be a Kohen unto Me" (28:3). It is not clear whether Moshe makes [the garments] or he commands others to make them. What is clear is that Moshe takes responsibility [for the making of the garments]; he spiritually inspires those who actually fabricate the garments, imbuing their workmanship with blessing and therefore fulfilling the requirement of making clothes "to sanctify him, so he shall be a Kohen unto Me" and not, G-d forbid, for his own glory.

In order to emphasize the public nature of bigdei kehuna, the halacha requires that the clothing be prepared by the people, and remain the property of the people. In addition, the service called "avodat yechid" , i.e., "taking out the incense ladle and pan (at the end of the avoda on Yom Kippur), which is not necessary for the public, but needs to be done in order to clear the area" (Rashi: Masechet Yoma 35b), requires the Kohen to wear clothing belonging to the public (Masechet Yoma 35b)

Yehezkiel (44:19) provides the following description of the Kohanim "And when they go out to the outer court to the people, they shall take off the garments in which they served and place them in lishkot kodesh, and they shall put on other garments, so that they should not sanctify the people in their garments". The Netziv ("Harchev Davar" Vayikra 21:6) explains that the prophet's [Yehezkiel] emphasis to the changing into other clothing teaches us "That the Kohanim should not wear clothing that resembles the special garments of the Kohanim "bigdei kehuna" but should wear the clothing customary among the people, and this is the reason it is said that they did not bless the people in their clothing. Should they wear bigdei kehuna (even if they had such that were not actually worn for avoda), the people would withdraw and keep a distance from them, when they saw the Kohanim dressed in garments like those worn for the avoda ." The Torah tells us "they shall be holy to their G-d" (Vayikra 21:6), "that the holiness of the people shall be only unto their G-d, for His sake and not their glory". Therefore Moshe, who certainly was concerned with the glory of HASHEM and

not of himself, is the one who makes bigdei kehuna for glory and splendor.

It has been widely noted that Moshe is not mentioned by name in parashat Tetzaveh, unlike in the rest of the Chumash, wherein, since his birth there is no parasha in which Moshe is NOT mentioned. Ba'al Haturim (Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher) comments that this is because Moshe had said "erase me now from Your book that You have written" (32:32), and the curse of a wise man is fulfilled, even if the conditions for it do not exist (Masechet Sanhedrin 90b). Parashat Shmot speaks of the legacy of the Kehuna: Moshe should have been the first Kohen Gadol, and his descendants would then have continued in this role. But since he refused to act as HASHEM 's messenger (This refers to Moshe's refusal to go to Par'o, so that HASHEM has Aharon join Moshe and speak for him) (Shmot 4:13-14) the Kehuna was taken from him and given to Aharon. And so Moshe's name is not mentioned in this parasha, because of his distress [over the loss of the Kehuna]."

To continue the theme we have been examining, the Mikdash - as manifest by the Menorah - and the consecration of the Kohanim, are both derived from the greatness of Moshe and his attributes, most significantly his humility. To underscore this, Moshe's name is not mentioned in the entire parasha of Tetzaveh.

The Malbim (Rav Meir Libush ben Yechiel Michal) writes of Moshe's role regarding bigdei kehuna "The garments he commanded to make were external and material, as described in the literal text of the Torah, which depicts the work of the artisans in fabricating them. But in essence, these are instructions for the making of inner garments that garb the souls of the Kohanim in midot and proper thinking, which are the clothing of the soul. These garments were not made by artisans, but HASHEM commanded Moshe to create these holy vestments, to teach [the Kohanim] tikkun of the soul and midot, so that their inner spirit will be enrobed in glory and splendor".

We can now resolve the seeming contradiction in which the Torah, on the one hand, writes "You shall make garments of sanctity" implying Moshe shall make them, and on the other hand "And you shall speak to each of the wise-hearted people and they shall make the garments of Aharon." The artisans fabricated the physical clothing based on the midot of Moshe.

The entire purpose of clothing is to conceal the materialistic aspects of man, so he will not be unduly influenced by them. When Adam committed the sin of eating from etz hada'at, it was because he looked at the material aspects of life "he was detached from his inner self" (in the language of Rav Kook), and so "HASHEM G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and He clothed them" (Breishit 3:21), in order that they not be swayed by external splendor. However, since it is possible to make clothes with superficial elegance and sparkle, Mankind can again be drawn to focus upon the

material. The Torah, in this parasha, is wary lest this happen. Therefore, by connecting [the garments] with Moshe, it is understood that the purpose of clothing is to enable us to discover our inner selves, and when we do this, clothing can be both splendid and beautiful.

With the rise in our overall standard of living, there is a fear that a value system in which the material takes precedence over the spiritual, can again become manifest. Therefore, we must study this topic in earnest and in depth. © 2004 Yeshivat Beit Orot

DR. AVIGDOR BONCHEK

What's Bothering Rashi

Our parsha tells us of the making of the clothing of the priests and the High Priest, the objects which were used in the Mishkan, and the construction of the Mishkan itself. Among the garments worn by the High Priest we find the Robe. Below is a Rashi-comment and the Ramban's argument with it.

"And on its lower hem, you shall make pomegranates of blue wool, dark red wool and crimson wool, on its lower hem around. And bells of gold in their midst all around." (Exodus 28:33-34)

A gold bell and pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the lower hem of the robe all around.

"And bells of gold"—RASHI: "Bells together with their clappers in them." In their midst all around—RASHI: Between them all the way around. Between every two pomegranates there was one bell attached and hanging from the hem of the robe. A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate—RASHI: Next to it. This is a typical Type II comment. Rashi weaves his words in between the Torah's words. Its purpose is to dispel a wrong understanding of the verse.

Which misunderstanding?

An Answer: Were the bells inside these woolen pomegranates or were they placed, each one, in between the pomegranates on the hem of the garment? Rashi states his view clearly—the bells were on the hem in between the pomegranates. They were not within each of the pomegranates. This view is not held by all commentators. The Ramban, for example, disagrees with Rashi and says that the bells were, in fact, placed within the pomegranates themselves.

What evidence would you cite to support Rashi's view? Hint: See the surrounding verse.

An Answer: Look at verse 28:35. When the Torah speaks of this robe with its bells and pomegranates it says: "... and its sound shall be heard when he comes into the Holy place which is before Hashem and when he goes out so that he shall not die."

Certainly if we want the sound of the bells to be heard, it would be best to have them hanging out in the open. Were they placed inside the woolen pomegranates their sound would be muffled. This seems to support Rashi's view of the position of the bells over that of the Ramban. © 2005 Dr. Avigdor Bonchek and aish.org