

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

One of the Kohen Gadol's garments was the "Choshen Mishpat," which he wore on his chest ("heart," see Shemos 28:30). The Choshen is probably the most recognizable and well known of the priestly garments, partly because of the four rows of (3) precious gems, each gem engraved with the name of one of the Tribes, and partly because of its supernatural powers. Inside the Choshen was the "Urim v'Tumin," G-d's holy name (see Rashi on 28:30), which allowed the letters on the Choshen to form words, answers to questions asked of G-d, such as whether or not to wage war.

Rambam (Hilchos K'lay Hamikdash 10:10-12) describes the process of asking the questions to be answered through the Choshen, and its limitations. One of those limitations is that the only questions that can be asked are those of a national interest, asked by the leadership (and repeated, in a low voice, by the Kohen Gadol). Rambam doesn't mention which kind of questions can be asked, but the concept of "lo bashamayim hee"-that once the Torah was given to us, matters of law are not determined by heaven (see Bava Metzia 59b)--indicates that doubts about Jewish law can not be resolved by asking through the Choshen/Urim v'tumim.

Rashi (Shemos 28:15) gives two explanations for why it is called the Choshen Mishpat ("breastplate of judgment"). Just as other priestly garments atone for certain (specific) sins, the Choshen Mishpat atones for the miscarriage of justice. Additionally, the word "mishpat" can be used to describe various stages of a court case; the claims of the litigants, the final decision of the court, and the punishments meted out as a result of the decision. The Choshen clarified the final decision, and is therefore called the "Choshen Mishpat."

Rashi's second explanation does not necessarily contradict the concept of "lo bashamayim hee," as even after a decision of national interest was made, the Choshen could be consulted to verify the decision. For example, if there was a question as to whether or not to go to war, first the political advisors would be consulted, and then, if they recommended going to war, the Sanhedrin decided if it was halachically permitted. If they decided (paskened) that it was, the Urim v'tumim was asked whether it was a good

idea (Berachos 3b, see also Midrash HaGadol on Shemos 28:30). The Urim v'tumim didn't decide the halacha, but verified that besides being allowed, it was a good idea (or said it was a bad idea). This "clarification of the matter" might be what Rashi is referring to in his second explanation of why it is called the Choshen Mishpat.

Targum Yonasan translates the term "Choshen Mishpat" as "breastplate of judgment, as through it the laws of Israel that were hidden from judges become known." Peirush Yonasan says that this is the same as Rashi's second approach, but it would be difficult to fit the above approach into these words. How could the Choshen/Urim v'tumim tell us what the law is, if any laws that need to be decided must be decided by humans, using the guidelines of halacha?

Yayin HaTov, an explanation on the Targumim, quotes Rashi (Eruvin 45a, see also Shabbos 108a), who says that "matters pertaining to what's prohibited or permitted cannot be asked of the Urim v'tumim." He then postulates that only these types of laws can't be asked; laws regarding monetary issues or capital offenses can be. These categories, he suggests, are what the Targum is referring to. However, if once the Torah was given we must be the ones to decide the law, there should be no difference between any of these categories.

In the first Chapter of "Toras Nevi'im," Maharatz Chayos discusses the separation of the legislative branch (the Sanhedrin) from those who experienced direct divine communication (the prophets). Each had distinct functions, and laws could not be decided through prophecy. He references two cases where prophecy could have been, or was, consulted in order to determine laws (reconstructing laws that were forgotten), asking why it was used in one case but not the other. Regarding the custom on Hoshana Rabba to take a willow branch ("aravah"), the Talmud (Succah 44a) says it was a forgotten law restored by the prophets, with Rashi telling us it was through divine communication (and not reconstructed through the halachic process). The laws forgotten during the morning period for Moshe, on the other hand, could not be reconstructed by asking the Urim v'Tumim, since figuring out the law "is not (no longer) in heaven" (Temura 16a). Why was reconstructing the laws forgotten after Moshe died "not in heaven" but restoring the law to take an aravah on Hoshana Rabba through prophecy permitted? (Maharatz Chayos leaves this

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questioned unanswered.) I would suggest that we are not allowed to avoid having to figure out the law by asking for divine help (whether it be through the Urim v'tumim, through prophecy, or through a "bas kol"), and whenever we know that a law needs to be determined (or reconstructed), we must do it ourselves. (Otherwise, asking for divine guidance can easily become a crutch, undermining the intellectual growth accomplished by working it out ourselves.) If the custom to take an aravah had been forgotten, there was nothing to "figure out" (we had forgotten all about it), necessitating a divine communication for it to be restored.

Even if this approach has validity, it can't be applied to asking through the Urim v'tumim; if we are asking, we obviously know about the issue, and that it must be resolved, and should therefore have to figure out the law for ourselves.

"When one of the Tribes committed a sin, the stone that had its name engraved in it turned into copper, and the Kohen would see it and know that the sin was with that Tribe, and would cast lots (within that Tribe) until it became known who had committed the sin, and they judged him" (Midrash HaGadol, Shemos 28:30). The judgment wasn't made through the Urim v'tumim, it only told us whom to bring to trial. The normal halachic process, with real evidence, must be followed, but now that it was known who to prosecute, gathering evidence became easier (or possible). This is how they figured out that Uchun was the one who took from the spoils of Yericho (Yehoshua 7:16-20), with Rashi (7:16) telling us that they used the Urim V'tumim to identify which Tribe the sinner was from, then which family (etc.), until Uchun was identified. Still, they couldn't prosecute him based on the Urim v'tumim, and Yehoshua pleaded with Uchun to confess (which he did).

It is therefore possible that the "hidden judgment" Targum Yonasan is referring to is not making the final judgment; any indication based on the Urim v'tumim cannot even be used as evidence. Rather, if there was a case of national interest that came before the court, the Urim v'tumim could be used to help narrow the search, letting the judges know where to look for evidence. It couldn't be used to determine the law, but could be used to help them figure out how to bring the case to trial. Once the trial started, though, the

normal halachic process had to be followed. © 2011
Rabbi D. Kramer

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

Tetzaveh is, as is well known, the parsha in which for once Moses take second place, indeed is not mentioned by name at all, while the focus is on his brother Aaron and on the role he came to occupy and personify, that of High Priest, the Cohen Gadol.

There are many conjectures as to why this went to Aaron as opposed to Moses himself, the most obvious being that this was Moses' punishment for refusing one time too many G-d's request that he lead the Israelites. But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, He will be your spokesman, and you will be his guide." (Ex. 4:13-16)

There is though a deeper message, the principle of the separation of powers, which opposes the concentration of leadership into one person or institution. All human authority needs checks and balances if it is not to become corrupt. In particular, political and religious leadership, keter malkhut and keter kehunah, should never be combined. Moses wore the crowns of political and prophetic leadership, Aaron that of priesthood. The division allowed each to be a check on the other.

That is the theory. What is especially interesting is how this works out in terms of personal relationships, in this case that between the two brothers, Moses and Aaron. The Torah says relatively little about it, but the hints are fascinating.

Consider, first of all, the passage we've just seen from near the beginning of the book of Exodus, when G-d tells Moses that Aaron is "already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you." These sound like simple words but they are anything but.

Moses was Aaron's younger brother, three years his junior. Would it not have been natural for Aaron to be more than a little envious that his younger brother was about to become the leader he himself was not destined to be—all the more so since Moses had not spent his life among his people. He had been, first, an adopted prince of Egypt, and had then taken refuge with Yitro and the Midianites. Relative to Aaron, Moses, his younger brother, was also an outsider. Yet G-d says, "He will be glad to see you."

Aaron's ability to rejoice in his brother's rise to greatness is particularly striking when set against the entire biblical history of the relationship between

brothers thus far. It has been a set of variations on the theme of sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. The Psalm says, "How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together" (Ps. 133:1), to which, reading Bereishit, we are likely to add, "and how rare."

But now comes the second test, this time not of Aaron but of Moses. Moses is now being commanded to create a form of leadership he himself will never be able to exercise, that of the priesthood, and the person he must award it to is his elder brother. Can he do so with the same generosity of spirit that his brother showed toward him?

Note how the Torah emphasizes G-d's insistence that it be Moses who bestows this honour on Aaron. Three times the word *ve-atah*, "And you," is used early on in the parsha: "And you command the Israelites" (about the oil for the menorah that Aaron and his sons would keep alight). (27:20)

"And you bring Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, near to you..." (28:1)

"And you speak to all the wise hearted people" (and command them to make the vestments Aaron and the other priests would wear) (28:3)

Moses must show the people-and Aaron himself-that he has the humility, the *tzimtzum*, the power of self-effacement, needed to make space for someone else to share in the leadership of the people, someone whose strengths are not yours, whose role is different from yours, someone who may be more popular, closer to the people, than you are-as in fact Aaron turned out to be.

Lehavdil: in 2005 the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin published an influential book about Abraham Lincoln entitled *Team of Rivals*. In it she tells the story of how Lincoln appointed to his cabinet the three men who had opposed him as candidate for the Republican party leadership. William Henry Seward, who had been expected to win, eventually said of him that "his magnanimity is almost superhuman... the President is the best of us." It takes a special kind of character to make space for those whom one is entitled to see as rivals. Early on, Aaron showed that character in relation to Moses, and now Moses is called on to show it to Aaron.

True leadership involves humility and magnanimity. The smaller the ego, the greater the leader. That's what Moses showed in the parsha that does not mention his name. © 2011 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Built into an open democratic system of government is the idea that too much power should not be invested in any one individual. Such a policy leads to dictatorship and the forcing of a

community to comply to the demands of one person. Hence, the concept of checks and balances in which individuals in government invested with power are checked and balanced out by other individuals.

Indeed checks and balances is a basic principal of the American political system. This idea is also found in the wisdom of the Torah. Each individual in Torah leadership has unique tasks and, in the end, limits and checks the power of the other.

For example: the *navi* (prophet) serves as the bearer of ethical standards; the *melech* (king) heads the executive branch; the Sanhedrin, the judiciary. And, as our portion points out, the *kohen* serves as the ritual model for the Am (people). When a leader assumes more than one of these roles it leads to devastation. This type of devastation actually occurred in the time of the Maccabees who became not only the executive heads of the people, but also the ritual leadership.

The Torah takes the concept of checks and balances a step further. Built into the respective roles of Jewish leadership is the recognition that each of these powerful and important leaders are subservient to a higher power, to G-d. In the end, G-d is the ultimate check and balance.

The *navi* never speaks without the imprimatur of G-d. Unlike the Christian model where their man-god speaks in the first person, our *navi* speaks with the retrain, "Thus says the Lord (*ko amar Hashem*)."

Similarly, the *melech* must carry a Torah with him at all times. He does this so that he constantly understands that he does not dictate the law, rather the Torah dictates the law to him. Even the judiciary has its limits for the highest court can only offer the law based on the foundations and principles set forth at Sinai by the Almighty.

It is not only the role definitions that convey limitation of power, even the clothes worn remind the leaders of this message. Around the head of the priest is the *tzitz* (a plate of pure gold), upon which the words *kodesh L'Hashem*, "Holy to the Lord" are stated (Exodus 28:36). In contrast to the ancient priest who so often abused his power, our *kohen* is reminded constantly that whatever his power, it emerges from the Almighty.

In this sense the priest in the Tabernacle is a fixing of the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There, in the beauty of Eden they disobey G-d's words. Here, in the *mishkan*, a kind of Garden of Eden within the larger world, the *kohen* is mandated to follow the word of G-d. It is not a coincidence that in Eden after eating from the tree, G-d makes clothes, *katnot*, for Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:21) Here in the fixing story the priest also wears clothes (*khetonet*). (Exodus 28:4) Here, however, the priest wearing *khetonet* follows the word of G-d.

In contemporary times where politicians feel so entitled that they often act as if they are superhuman, the roles and messages presented in the Torah teach

us that in the end, each person, no matter her or his stature, is human and is fallible. Only G-d is infallible and stands alone as the ultimate check and balance. © 2011 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

One of the main garments that the High Priest of Israel donned was the jewel-bestudded breastplate-choshen-that he wore upon his chest. This breastplate contained twelve precious jewels of different colors and on each of the stones was engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

In addition to these stones there were two large elongated diamond stones that were embedded in the shoulder straps of the apron-eiphod-that the High Priest wore. Engraved on those shoulder strap stones were the names of the Patriarchs of Israel and a reference to all of the tribes of Israel. Thus all of the twenty two letters of the Hebrew alphabet were to be found on these stones in the breastplate and on the shoulder straps.

This allowed these stones and their engraved letters to serve as the urim v'tumim-the means of prophecy by which important national issues could be decided with Divine help and intervention. Though the letters of the answer shone on the stones, the ability to string the letters together correctly and coherently into the necessary words and message depended upon the prophets of Israel who "read" the urim v'tumim accurately.

This was symbolic of the symbiotic relationship, so to speak, of G-d and the Jewish people in pursuit of the national and spiritual goals of Israel. Only by this interaction of Heaven and humans could the message of the urim v'tumim have any constructive meaning. Heaven alone never completely determines our future. We must also work and strive, interpret and analyze, study and act in order to see our future realized successfully.

In the pocket of the choshen there was inserted a piece of parchment with the ineffable name of the Lord written upon it. This was the engine that powered the miracle of the urim v'tumim. Without its presence the choshen was a lifeless collection of jeweled stones. This significance is part of Jewish tradition.

Beauty and expensive value are only relevant when they are somehow inspired and created for a lofty purpose of spirit and service. King Solomon wisely said that "if the Lord builds not the city then those that have constructed it have toiled in vain."

In Second Temple times, the choshen was present on the breast of the High Priest. But the urim v'tumim was no longer in effective operation. The human element of service and dedication was already

lacking. There were no longer prophets present amongst Israel and the choshen therefore was merely an ornament, part of the uniform of the High Priest but no longer a G-dly guide to the future and a source of instruction to the people of Israel.

Because of this, the great men and rabbinic leaders of Second Temple times in the Land of Israel recognized early on that this Temple was ultimately doomed to be destroyed. The necessary interplay of Heaven and earth, of G-d and His creatures were no longer present. In such an environment, no matter how beautiful the structure or how handsome the jewels may have been, the whiff of eternity upon which all Jewish life is based was absent. It is our task to somehow restore the very same urim v'tumim in our personal and national lives. © 2011 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“**A**nd you shall make sacred garments for Aaron your brother for honor and glory” (Exodus 28:2).

The Torah portion of Tetzaveh is wholly dedicated to Aaron and his children, the High Priest and the Holy Temple priesthood - without even a mention of Moses' name throughout the reading. We are also given a precise description of the ritual by which they were consecrated for their Divine task, including the specific Sanctuary offerings which were to be brought.

But what is most jarring to the modern ear - and especially to those of us who have become accustomed to the informality of Israeli dress - is the painstaking description of the unique apparel of the priests, the eight special garments of the High Priest and the four special garments of the regular priests. The Torah itself commands, "and you shall make sacred garments for Aaron your brother for honor and glory" (Exodus 28:2). The Talmud stipulates that only when properly garbed, are the priests endowed with sanctity and permitted to minister in the Sanctuary (B.T. Zevachim 7). Is the Torah then teaching us that "clothes make the man?" What about the internal characteristics of knowledge, virtue and commitment?

I believe that upon deeper reflection we will come to understand that the priestly garb is not meant to endow sanctity but rather to inspire sanctity - as well as to instill within the priests the confidence that they can make the entire world sacred. Moreover, the Torah teaches that every Jew must see him/herself as a High Priest dressed in sacred vestments, a member of "a holy nation and a Kingdom of priests."

Immediately prior to the Revelation at Sinai there is a strange dialogue between G-d and Moses, in which the Almighty calls out to Moses, Moses attempts

to ascend to the top of the mountain, G-d tells him to go down to the nation, Moses complains that the nation has been disallowed from ascending the mountain, and G-d again tells Moses to go down (Exodus 19:20-25). My revered teacher and Rav J. B. Soloveitchik, zt"l, explained that Moses thought, in accordance with the other religions, that spirituality means to leave the material world and ascend to the celestial spheres of the Divine; G-d explains to Moses that Jewish spirituality means to bring G-d down into the material world and sanctify it. This is indeed the basic function of Torah: to sanctify the kitchen and dining room with kashrut, to sanctify the bedroom with family ritual purity, to sanctify the market-place with business ethics, to sanctify the calendar with holy days and sacred moments. Hence our Sages declare that what the Almighty truly has in this world is the four ells of halakha (religio-legal practices).

The previous Torah portion of Terumah began with the Divine charge: "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them". In effect, G-d gave us a world- an imperfect, incomplete world with darkness as well as light, evil as well as good (Isaiah 45:7) - and expects us to perfect it, to re-make the world into a veritable Sanctuary so that the Divine will feel comfortable dwelling among us. This is the charge as well as the challenge, the model as well as the mission, of the Sanctuary.

In order to effect this, the High Priest must first see himself as being capable of carrying out such a formidable task, he must see himself as a powerful king, representing the King of all Kings, garbed in regal robes of honor and glory. And his dress expresses a message. Just as the ideal King of Israel dare not involve himself with opulent, material blandishments like numerous wives, horses, gold and silver, but instead must demonstrate his devotion to G-d by always having with him a copy of the Torah (Deuteronomy 17:16-20), so must the High Priest wear the "tzitz" on his forehead "always," a gold head-band on a thread of tchelet (heavenly royal blue) on which was written "holy unto the Lord" (Exodus 28:36-38). And just as the ideal king of Israel must understand that his authority derives from the will of the people and for the sake of the people (Deuteronomy 17:18,19 especially in accordance with the interpretation of the Ha'amek Davar and the Talmudic dictum that a king cannot relinquish the honor due him because it is in actuality the honor of his nation, by whose will and for whose well-being he must rule), so the High Priest wears the breast-plate of justice over his heart, upon which were embroidered twelve precious stones upon which were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. "Aaron shall carry the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart when he enters the Holy Place as a constant reminder before the Lord" (Exodus 28:29). In order to succeed in his daunting task of perfecting the world in the Kingship of G-d, he must learn from his

special garb to lead the priests in total devotion to G-d and the nation.

And every Israelite must also see himself as a High Priest, as a proud representative of a holy nation and kingdom of priests. After all, does not the Israelite dress himself every day in his tefilin-phyllacteries, the head tefilin atop his forehead on the place of the High Priest's tzitz and the hand tefilin opposite his heart, the place where the breast-plate of the High Priest expressed the names of the twelve tribes? And the tefilin are called a symbol of glory (pe'er, Ezekiel 24:17), just as the regal robes are vestments of honor and glory (tife'eret - Exodus 28:2). In wearing the tefilin, the Jew becomes adorned with the four portions of the Torah-expressing love of G-d, fealty to commandments, the sanctity of the people of Israel and the sanctity of the land of Israel- placed in the tefilin batim (house-like repositories), much like the King is adorned with the copy of the Torah which must always accompany him.

Moreover, the second traditional Jewish men's garb is the ritual fringes of the talit or talit katan ("Prayer Shawl"), featuring a thread of t'chelet (heavenly royal blue) which is a salient feature of the High Priest's tzitz and is significantly called by the Bible "tzitzit," or a junior tzitz. Every Jew must share in the mission to perfect the world, and must be inspired to do so by wearing the priestly, regal garments which teach commitment to G-d and commitment to nation. © 2011 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftorah

This week's haftorah shares with us an important perspective regarding our long dark exile and the brilliant light awaiting us at the end of it. The haftorah 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 haftorah 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 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 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. © 2011 Rabbi D. Siegel & Project Genesis, Inc.

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

Virtual Beit Medrash

STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA HARAV BARUKH GIGI SHLIT" A

Translated by Kaeren Fish

In Parashat Teruma, the Torah commands the construction of the Mishkan and all its vessels. Parashat Tetzaveh opens with the completion of the construction of the Menora, and a description of its purpose: "to raise up an eternal light." We note a great difference between this and the description of the purpose of the Table. The Torah defines the latter ("and you shall place upon the Table the showbread before Me, at all times," 25:30) immediately after the description of its dimensions and its construction. Concerning the Menora, on the other hand, the description of its construction is found in parashat Teruma, and the Torah says nothing about its purpose until the beginning of parashat Tetzaveh. What is the meaning of this difference?

It seems that there is a fundamental difference between the Table and the Menora. The Table, holding the showbread, is a symbol of man's food. The Menora, on the other hand, symbolizes the connection with Torah, with wisdom, with spiritual life-as expressed in the verse, "A commandment is a candle, and Torah is light." Chazal taught (Bava Batra 25b), "One who wishes to become wise should turn south; one who wishes to become wealthy should turn north. This is alluded to in the placement of the Table on the northern side [of the Mishkan] and the Menora on the southern side."

This being so, we have a model for the man's natural development. At the outset, in his youth, he altogether occupied with his physical, material needs. Much time goes by until he is ready to involve himself in spiritual matters. Similarly, there is no way to describe the Table without the showbread. The bread is an inseparable part of its essence. In contrast, the Menora may be described as a vessel in its own right, even without its lights. Not every person engages in spirituality, and even for a person who does-this stage comes relatively late.

There is another difference between the Table and the Menora. In each case, the Torah stipulates that the service to be performed in connection with the respective vessel is ongoing. The Table holds bread constantly; the Menora offers ongoing light. However, there is a difference between the "tamid" of the showbread and the "tamid" of the lights. The showbread may not be removed from the Table, even for a moment. When the time comes to replace it with new showbread, the exchange is undertaken using the new bread to push the old bread into the hands of the kohanim. At no point is the Table left empty, devoid of bread. The Menora, in contrast, burns "from evening until morning." While the westernmost light may have burned throughout the day, the majority of the Menora burned only at night. Thus we are presented with two different definitions of constancy: the one is ongoing and unceasing; the other is at a fixed time, with regular breaks.

The Table, as noted, is a symbol of man's physical needs. At every moment man needs air to breathe, the energy his body produces from food, and the renewed strength that comes after sleep. "If one of them is opened or one of them is blocked, it would be impossible to exist and to stand before You for even the shortest time." A person cannot exist without the fulfillment of his fundamental physical needs. The human body must receive all that it needs, every day, every hour: "the showbread, before Me, at all times."

This is not the case when it comes to spiritual needs. The Talmud Yerushalmi recounts that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said that he would have asked G-d to create people with two mouths: one for Torah, and the other for the mundane matters of this world. In other words, what he wanted was the ability to involve himself

unceasingly with Torah, with no need to take breaks for the fulfillment of physical needs. Ultimately, he thanked G-d for man's single mouth, for two mouths would end up speaking double the amount of slander and improper speech.

What Rabbi Shimon's request implies is the aspiration that Torah study should maintain "constancy," like man's physical needs. However, this is not what G-d chose for the world. The constancy of Torah facilitates and requires necessary breaks for man to take care of his physical needs.

In what way?

G-d created us as mortals, not as angels. Hence, involvement in everyday, mundane affairs is essential and inevitable. Nevertheless, spiritual pursuits should be man's existential framework: "Let him return to his study," in the words of the Rambam (Hilkhot Talmud Torah 3:4), as often quoted by Rav Lichtenstein. Our everyday conduct and business, too, must be a reflection of the injunction, "In all your ways, know Him," with the understanding that the fulfillment of physical needs is also a form of Divine service, insofar as they serve one's Torah study and one's involvement in spiritual endeavors. For the Tosafot this was manifestly clear. They write that one does not recite birkat ha-Torah again after taking a break from study because "Torah differs [from other endeavors], for one never really takes his mind off learning... and it is as if one sits [in study] all day without interruption" (Berakhot 11b, s.v. she-kevar).

By its very nature, the constancy of Torah facilitates and requires breaks-on condition that they are gaps of time, not existential severance. The type of constancy that is "from evening until morning," with breaks in between each sitting, is justified-so long as the breaks are for the purpose of "raising up an eternal light."

DAN LIFSHITZ

Weekly Dvar

At the beginning of the Parshat Tetzaveh, the Jews are commanded to bring the purest olive oil as fuel for the lamp in the Tabernacle. Rashi explains that the purest olive oil is required for the lamp, but not for the flour offerings brought in the Tabernacle. What is the significance of this ritual detail?

R' Baruch Simon, quoting from the Chasam Sofer, explains that this rule runs contrary to how one would act at home. A person would use the purest, best tasting olive oil in food, and use a lower grade of oil as fuel, where the taste doesn't matter. However, in the Tabernacle, the best grade was used for the lamp and a lesser grade for the equivalent of food. The lamp symbolizes wisdom, Torah and the life of the spirit while the flour offering symbolizes material things. This detail regarding which oil should be used for which purpose in the Tabernacle is actually teaching a broad lesson

about priorities in life. Often, the inclination is to seek out the best and to expend the most effort in material matters, while settling for "good enough" in the spiritual realm. The olive oil is teaching us that the opposite outlook is the proper one. © 2011 D. Lifshitz & LeLamed, Inc.

SHLOMO KATZ

Hama'ayan

With our parashah, the Torah begins its description of the building of the mishkan / tabernacle and its implements and the laws of the sacrifices that were offered there. The Gemara (Ketubot 62b, as explained by Rashi z"l) notes that Hashem originally said (Shmot 15:17), "You will bring them and implant them on the mountain of Your heritage, the foundation of Your dwelling-place that You, Hashem, have made [i.e., Eretz Yisrael, and only afterward] the Sanctuary, my Lord, Your hands have established." Later, however, Hashem said (in our parashah--25:8), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among them." Because of His immense love for His people, He did not wait until they reached Eretz Yisrael before having them build the mishkan.

Why would one think that the mishkan / Bet Hamikdash could be only in Eretz Yisrael? R' Moshe Alshich z"l (Turkey and Israel; 1508-1593) explains: What does it mean for incorporeal G-d to have a "home" on earth? Our Patriarch Yaakov had this very question, and he answered it with the verse (Bereishit 28:17), "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens!" Yaakov realized that he felt increased awe in this place, for that is the feeling that the place instills in a person, and he described it as the place where we can be closest to G-d and from which holiness enters the world! If so, R' Alshich writes, how could there be a "house" for G-d in the desert, outside of Eretz Yisrael, where G-d does not ordinarily reveal Himself directly, especially in a wilderness which is place devoid of G-d's "flow" [which is perhaps why it is a wilderness]! (Nevertheless, in His great love for the Jewish People, Hashem allowed Himself to have a "home" in the desert with them.)

"They shall make a Sanctuary for Me-so that I may dwell among them." (25:8)

R' Yisrael Meir Hakohen z"l (the Chafetz Chaim; died 1933) quotes a midrash: When Hashem showed the prophet Yechezkel the structure of the future Bet Hamikdash and commanded him to describe it to Bnei Yisrael, the prophet replied, "Master of the Universe! As of now, we are in exile in the lands of our enemies. Yet, You are telling me to inform Bnei Yisrael about the structure of the Temple and to write it before them so that they may guard it and its laws! What are

they able to do [with this information]? Let them be until they leave the exile, and then I will tell them."

The midrash continues: Hashem replied, "Just because they are in exile, My Temple should be nullified? Their study of its laws are as great as building it! Go tell them that they should study the laws of building the Temple, and, in that merit, I will view it as if they built it." (Torah Or p.10)

"Like everything that I show you, the form of the Mishkan / Tabernacle and the form of all its vessels; and so shall you do." (25:9)

Rashi comments: "And so shall you do'-for future generations."

R' Eliezer Zusia Portugal z"l (1898-1982; the Skulener Rebbe) asks: How can building a Temple be a mitzvah for future generations when, at least according to some opinions, the Third Temple will descend from Heaven as a building of fire?

He answers: The Temple that will descend is being constructed all the time from our mitzvot. Every good deed adds a course of "bricks" to that Temple. This verse is commanding us to do those good deeds. (Noam Eliezer)

"You shall make two keruvim / cherubs of gold..." (25:18) "... with their faces toward one another." (25:20)

The Gemara (Sukkah 5b) states that the word "keruvim" is related to the Aramaic word for "baby," teaching that the keruvim were baby-faced. Regarding the second verse quoted above, the Ba'al Ha'turim z"l (14th century) explains that the keruvim faced each other "like two friends discussing a Torah topic."

R' Meir Rubman z"l (Israel; 20th century) asks: Aren't these mixed metaphors? Babies don't discuss Torah topics with each other!

He explains: Every person has hidden powers far in excess of his everyday abilities. These powers manifest themselves, for example, when a person is in danger. A person's powers are like a storekeeper's merchandise; a small amount is on display, and the rest is in the back room.

Most people use only their "visible" powers, but a great person strives to use his hidden powers. This is because the typical person feels no need to strive for greatness, while a select few do. Indeed, this is one way to differentiate between a "regular" person and a great one.

The lesson of the baby-faced keruvim who face each other like friends engaged in a Torah discussion is that every person, even one whose powers are hidden like a baby's, can bring out his full potential and achieve greatness, just as a person who is engaged in a Torah discussion with his friend should use all of his intellectual powers to prove his point. (Zichron Meir)

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