

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

The institution of the Haftarah -- reading a passage from the prophetic literature alongside the Torah portion -- is an ancient one, dating back at least 2000 years. Scholars are not sure when, where, and why it was instituted. Some say that it began when Antiochus IV's attempt to eliminate Jewish practice in the second century BCE sparked the revolt we celebrate on Chanukah. At that time, so the tradition goes, public reading from the Torah was forbidden. So the Sages instituted that we should read a prophetic passage whose theme would remind people of the subject of the weekly Torah portion.

Another view is that it was introduced to protest the views of the Samaritans, and later the Sadducees, who denied the authority of the prophetic books except the book of Joshua.

The existence of haftarot in the early centuries CE is, however, well attested. Early Christian texts, when relating to Jewish practice, speak of "the Law and the Prophets," implying that the Torah (Law) and Haftarah (Prophets) went hand-in-hand and were read together. Many early Midrashim connect verses from the Torah with those from the haftarah. So the pairing is ancient.

Often the connection between the parsha and the haftarah is straightforward and self-explanatory. Sometimes, though, the choice of prophetic passage is instructive, telling us what the Sages understood as the key message of the parsha.

Consider the case of Beshallah. At the heart of the parsha is the story of the division of the Red Sea and the passage of the Israelites through the sea on dry land. This is the greatest miracle in the Torah. There is an obvious historical parallel. It appears in the book of Joshua. The river Jordan divided allowing the Israelites to pass over on dry land: "The water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away... The Priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the

Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground." (Josh. ch. 3).

This, seemingly, should have been the obvious choice as haftarah. But it was not chosen. Instead, the Sages chose the song of Devorah from the book of Judges. This tells us something exceptionally significant: that tradition judged the most important event in Beshallah to be not the division of the sea but rather the song the Israelites sang on that occasion: their collective song of faith and joy.

This suggests strongly that the Torah is not humanity's book of God but God's book of humankind. Had the Torah been the our book of God, the focus would have been on the Divine miracle. Instead, it is on the human response to the miracle.

So the choice of haftarah tells us much about what the Sages took to be the parsha's main theme. But there are some haftarot that are so strange that they deserve to be called paradoxical, since their message seems to challenge rather than reinforce that of the parsha. One classic example is the haftarah for the morning of Yom Kippur, from the 58th chapter of Isaiah, one of the most astonishing passages in the prophetic literature: Is this the fast I have chosen -- a day when a man will oppress himself?... Is this what you call a fast, "a day for the Lord's favour"? No: this is the fast I choose. Loosen the bindings of evil and break the slavery chain. Those who were crushed, release to freedom; shatter every yoke of slavery. Break your bread for the starving and bring dispossessed wanderers home. When you see a person naked, clothe them: do not avert your eyes from your own flesh. (Is. 58:5-7)

The message is unmistakable. We spoke of it in last week's Covenant and Conversation. The commands between us and God and those between us and our fellows are inseparable. Fasting is of no use if at the same time you do not act justly and compassionately to your fellow human beings. You cannot expect God to love you if you do not act lovingly to others. That much is clear.

But to read this in public on Yom Kippur, immediately after having read the Torah portion describing the service of the High Priest on that day, together with the command to "afflict yourselves," is jarring to the point of discord. Here is the Torah telling us to fast, atone and purify ourselves, and here is the

**This issue of Toras Aish is dedicated
in memory of
מיטע בת אברהם ז"ל
Mrs. Meita Citer a"h
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.**

**TORAS AISH IS A WEEKLY PARSHA
NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL
AND THE WEB AT WWW.AISHDAS.ORG/TA.
FOR MORE INFO EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

The material presented in this publication was collected from email subscriptions, computer archives and various websites. It is being presented with the permission of the respective authors. Toras Aish is an independent publication, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any synagogue or organization.

**TO DEDICATE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CALL
(973) 277-9062 OR EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

Prophet telling us that none of this will work unless we engage in some kind of social action, or at the very least behave honourably toward others. Torah and haftarah are two voices that do not sound as if they are singing in harmony.

The other extreme example is the haftarah for today's parsha. Tzav is about the various kinds of sacrifices. Then comes the haftarah, with Jeremiah's almost incomprehensible remark: For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. (Jer. 7:22-23)

This seems to suggest that sacrifices were not part of God's original intention for the Israelites. It seems to negate the very substance of the parsha.

What does it mean? The simplest interpretation is that it means "I did not only give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices." I commanded them but they were not the whole of the law, nor were they even its primary purpose.

A second interpretation is the famously controversial view of Maimonides that the sacrifices were not what God would have wanted in an ideal world. What He wanted was avodah: He wanted the Israelites to worship Him. But they, accustomed to religious practices in the ancient world, could not yet conceive of avodah shebalev, the "service of the heart," namely prayer. They were accustomed to the way things were done in Egypt (and virtually everywhere else at that time), where worship meant sacrifice. On this reading, Jeremiah meant that from a Divine perspective sacrifices were *bedi'avad* not *lechatchilah*, an after-the-fact concession not something desired at the outset.

A third interpretation is that the entire sequence of events from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 25 was a response to the episode of the Golden Calf. This, I have argued elsewhere, represented a passionate need on the part of the people to have God close not distant, in the camp not at the top of the mountain, accessible to everyone not just Moses, and on a daily basis not just at rare moments of miracle. That is what

the Tabernacle, its service and its sacrifices represented. It was the home of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, from the same root as *sh-ch-n*, "neighbour." Every sacrifice -- in Hebrew *korban*, meaning "that which is brought near" -- was an act of coming close. So in the Tabernacle, God came close to the people, and in bringing sacrifices, the people came close to God.

This was not God's original plan. As is evident from Jeremiah here and the covenant ceremony in Exodus 19-24, the intention was that God would be the people's sovereign and lawmaker. He would be their king, not their neighbour. He would be distant, not close (see Ex. 33:3). The people would obey His laws; they would not bring Him sacrifices on a regular basis. God does not need sacrifices. But God responded to the people's wish, much as He did when they said they could not continue to hear His overwhelming voice at Sinai: "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good" (Deut. 5:25). What brings people close to God has to do with people, not God. That is why sacrifices were not God's initial intent but rather the Israelites' spiritual-psychological need: a need for closeness to the Divine at regular and predictable times.

What connects these two haftarot is their insistence on the moral dimension of Judaism. As Jeremiah puts it in the closing verse of the haftarah, "I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," (Jer. 9:23). That much is clear. What is genuinely unexpected is that the Sages joined sections of the Torah and passages from the prophetic literature so different from one another that they sound as if coming from different universes with different laws of gravity.

That is the greatness of Judaism. It is a choral symphony scored for many voices. It is an ongoing argument between different points of view. Without detailed laws, no sacrifices. Without sacrifices in the biblical age, no coming close to God. But if there are only sacrifices with no prophetic voice, then people may serve God while abusing their fellow humans. They may think themselves righteous while they are, in fact, merely self-righteous.

The Priestly voice we hear in the Torah readings for Yom Kippur and Tzav tells us what and how. The Prophetic voice tells us why. They are like the left and right hemispheres of the brain; or like hearing in stereo, or seeing in 3D. That is the complexity and richness of Judaism, and it was continued in the post-biblical era in the different voices of halachah and Aggadah.

Put Priestly and Prophetic voices together and we see that ritual is a training in ethics. Repeated performance of sacred acts reconfigures the brain, reconstitutes the personality, reshapes our sensibilities. The commandments were given, said the Sages, to

refine people. (Tanhuma, Shemini, 12) The external act influences inner feeling. "The heart follows the deed," as the Sefer ha-Chinuch (Bo, Mitzvah 16) puts it.

I believe that this fugue between Torah and Haftarah, Priestly and Prophetic voices, is one of Judaism's great glories. We hear both how to act and why. Without the how, action is lame; without the why, behaviour is blind. Combine Priestly detail and Prophetic vision and you have spiritual greatness. *Covenant and Conversation 5780 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l ©2020 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org*

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"And [Moses] brought near the second ram, the consecration-inauguration ram, and Aaron and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram. And [Moses] slaughtered it" (Lev. 8:22-23) The second part of our portion of Tzav deals with the seven-day induction ceremony of Aaron and his sons as the priests-kohanim of the Sanctuary. Moses the Prophet conducts the proceedings: First he "invests" them, dressing them in their unique priestly garb, father and sons; and then he slaughters the second ram, the consecration-inauguration ram, "which fills and completes the function of the priests [father and sons] within their priesthood" (Rashi ad loc).

I would submit that the seemingly insignificant phrase "and [Moses] slaughtered it" in the introductory text to our commentary, is one of the most poignant and moving phrases of the entire Bible which also illuminates the purpose of the priest-kohen in contrast to the prophet. The secret to understanding Moses' tragedy and Aaron's gift lies in the nuances of interpretation which emanate from a rare cantillation "trope" – the shalsholet – which appears above the letter "het" in the Hebrew word vayishhat ("and he (Moses) slaughtered.") The cantillation tropes provide the musical accompaniment to the words of the Bible, telling the Torah reader when to pause (as in a comma), when to stop (at the end of a verse), when to sound decisive and when to strike a high note. None of the tropes are as distinctive, or as lengthy, as is the shalsholet; it appears only four times in the Bible, usually connoting the drama of confused hesitancy and deep apprehension.

For example, when Joseph is alone with Mrs. Potiphar, and she attempts to seduce him, he refuses – "vayi'ma'en," (Genesis 39:8). Remember he is lonely and alone, a stranger in a strange land, feeling rejected by his family and needy for even a fleeting moment of warmth and physical connection. He is mindful of how his father would view such an act of adultery, and yet apprehensive that a refusal could cause this powerful woman to destroy him. The lengthy and meandering

shalsholet atop the alef of va'yi'ma'en suggests all of the conflicting complexities within Joseph's refusal.

But what is complex about slaughtering a ram? Why does the evocative and dramatic shalsholet appear in our verse describing the consecration of Aaron and his sons? In order to understand this, we must realize that the initial plan was for Moses to have received the Kehuna— priesthood, the hereditary leadership function in Israel.

However, when the Almighty suggests to Moses that he be His emissary to Pharaoh to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses demurs, again and again refusing the mantle of leadership (Exodus 3:10-4:17), declaring himself to be unworthy. At length, "the Lord became angry with Moses, and He said, 'Is there not Aaron your brother, the Levite? He will surely speak....he will be your mouthpiece, and you will provide for him [the words] of God.'" In this context, God initially refers to Aaron as the Levite, not as the kohen-priest; But when Moses keeps refusing to be the emissary, God removes the dynastic priesthood from Moses and bestows it upon Aaron (Rashi ad loc)

And I believe that this switch in role was much more than a result of God's anger; it rather had to do with the different functions of priest and prophet and the different personalities and functions of Aaron and Moses.

Moses was a man of God (Deut. 33:1); his active intellect actually "kissed" the active intellect of the Divine, and so Moses was able, by dint of his almost "super human" qualities of mind and soul, to communicate God's Torah to Israel and all posterity. We do see from here, however, that Moses had no difficulty in communication; indeed he communicated in his words the biblical book of Deuteronomy (see the Abarbenel) so why does Moses describe himself as "heavy of speech"? I believe that what he meant was that he had little patience for small talk, for human fellowship, he was totally immersed in his discussions with God, in learning and communicating Torah. So involved was he with Divine that he divorces his wife; he even neglects to circumcise his son Eliezer (Exodus 4:24-25).

Moses only seeks Divine fellowship and Divine Torah talk; and such endowments of intellect and spirit cannot be passed down as an inheritance to the next generation; they are sui generis, to the one greatest prophet who ever lived. As the Bible confirms, "Never again has there arisen in Israel a Prophet like Moses, whom Hashem has known "face to face" (Deut: 34:10).

Aaron, on the other hand, was a man of the people, who loved making peace between individuals.

He loved all of humanity and through loving acts and words, brought everyone close to Torah (Avot 1: 13)

Moses acquired the Torah intellectually, but Aaron taught it to the masses with love. And acts of

loving-kindness can be passed down from parent to child, from generation to generation; to speak loving words and to do loving deeds can be learned and bequeathed. And so Aaron is blessed with the Kehunah-Priesthood, sanctifying him and his descendants to bless the nation Israel with love. Aaron was the loving Kohen-Priest teacher of the nation of Israel; Moses was the lonely servant of God who faithfully provided the Torah for all eternity.

Nevertheless, Moses the human being would have loved to see his sons assume religious leadership positions in Israel; but they do not. And when he is thrust in the position of directing the investiture of Aaron and his sons, and especially when he slaughters the consecration-inauguration ram expressing the dynastic aspect of the priesthood, Moses cannot help but hesitate to give vent to feelings of loss, frustration and even a little jealousy, as well as apprehension as to his own continuity within his own family line. Moses, who gave himself over completely to God and nation, understands at this pivotal moment the personal sacrifice it had cost, the loss of family closeness and continuity it had engendered. This I believe is the message of the shalshale, the tragedy of Moses' life although – or perhaps because – he was God's most faithful servant to all eternity. His pre-occupation with God may have been the reason he failed to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land; but because of that pre-occupation, the world receive its greatest legacy – God's and Moses' Torah! ©2020 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

In this week's Torah reading we are taught that the sons of Aaron, the priestly clan of Israel, were charged with the responsibility of keeping an eternal permanent flame burning on the sacrificial altar of the Temple.

This miraculous flame appeared to form the image of a crouching lion on the top of that altar. This permanent flame was in addition to another permanent eternal light that emanated from one of the arms of the great candelabra of gold that was in the southern part of the Temple.

So, the question naturally arises as to why there were two permanent flames necessary for the Temple service to be considered proper and valid. There are no extraneous commandments or rituals in the Torah. Everything has a purpose and a meaning, a valuable lesson of eternal worth.

The great commentators of the Torah over the ages have advanced many different reasons for this duality, of two eternal lights burning permanently in the Temple.

One of the well-known approaches to understanding the Torah is to appreciate that there are

many different layers of interpretation regarding any given commandment. That is what the rabbis meant when they said that sometimes the words of the Torah appear lacking in one context but will be rich and meaningful when viewed in a different light and context.

The two eternal lights in the Temple represent the two basic ingredients required in order to live a truly rewarding Jewish life. One is sacrifice. We train ourselves to consider others, for the future and for different causes and goals. The selfish individual abhors the idea of sacrifice generally and of a lifetime of permanent sacrifice particularly.

Such a person never deals with the eternal and only lives in the temporary present. Such a life is eventually seen as without warmth and light. Life becomes a very cold altar of forced events, and the crouching lion of life's events overwhelms all.

It is the eternal light of sacrifice that makes life meaningful and human souls eternal. The other eternal light of the candelabra is meant to counter and remove the abyss of fear, superstition and emptiness. It is the knowledge of Torah that sustains us and grants necessary meaning to all human behavior and actions. Both eternal lights point our way towards building our own personal sanctuary of holiness and purposeful living. ©2020 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 AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

This week's Torah portion tells us that one type of peace offering (Shlamim) is known as the thanksgiving sacrifice (Todah). (Leviticus 7:12)

Rashi notes that this sacrifice was given after experiencing a special miracle. He specifies one who has endured a sea voyage, a trip through the wilderness, a prison stay or a recovery from an illness.

To this day, those who survive difficult situations are obliged to recite the thanksgiving benediction at the Torah (birkat ha-gomel). Jewish law extends the obligation to include those who are saved from any type of peril.

For Ramban, the offering of thanksgiving at such exceptional times reminds us that all times are exceptional. Thus, God's intervention in the supernatural should give one a sense of God's involvement in the everyday. For example, from the splitting of the sea, an event in which God was so obviously manifest, one should come to recognize the input of God every day in containing waters within the boundaries of the sea shore. (Exodus 13:16) In the words of Nehama Leibowitz, "the unusual deliverances and outstanding miracles are there merely to draw our attention to the miracle of existence."

The idea that the natural is supernatural, deserving our gratitude is found in the Dayenu sung at the Seder. Some think Dayenu deals with our telling God that we have had enough suffering. In reality the song says the reverse. We say to God, had you only performed but a fraction of the larger miracle, it would have been enough. Dayenu is the quintessential statement of thanks to God.

The fact that the thanksgiving sacrifice is a type of peace offering is of great import. When giving to God, the human being achieves a level of inner peace. This is because love is not only a function of receiving, but also of giving.

How I remember writing to the Rav, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, upon his return to class after he lost his wife. After listening to his lecture (shiur), I was so taken that I wrote to him expressing my love and admiration. A few days later, he thanked me, but told me the note was unnecessary. I responded, "Rebbe I wrote the letter for you, but even more important, for myself. I had a need to tell you, 'I love you.'" The Rav nodded and told me that he understood.

If only we would learn the message of the thanksgiving offering. To say the simple words to those who mean the most to us, but whom we often take for granted — words like todah, thank you, to our closest of kin and, of course, to God Himself. ©2020 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 JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

Migdal Ohr

Yhis is the offering that Aharon and his sons shall offer to Hashem on the day he is anointed, a tenth of an efa of fine flour as a mincha, always..." (Vayikra 6:13) At first glance, this posuk seems confusing. The Kohanim are to bring an offering on the day they are inaugurated and introduced to the service in the Mishkan or Bais HaMikdash. Then, the Torah adds that this is to be done regularly, on an ongoing basis. The verse also says they all do it, but then it refers to "his" anointing.

In truth, there are two separate offerings here. First, there is the tenth of an efa brought by every Kohain on the day he enters the service of Hashem. This mincha acts as a spiritual cleansing prior to attaining a new level of holiness, much as washing one's hands before prayer. It symbolizes to the Kohain that he is reaching a higher plane and he needs to be prepared.

The Kohain Gadol, however, who was anointed, could not suffice with this one-time korban. He had to bring a grain-offering each day. He would bring an efa of fine flour and offer half in the morning and half in the evening. So why not make two separate

pesukim so it is clearer?

The answer is that there was a common purpose to these sacrifices. A Kohain was chosen by Hashem to serve Him and privileged from birth to live on a loftier plane than the rest of Klal Yisrael. He was obligated to remain pure and avoid contact with corpses, and also given special treatment and 'gifts' from Hashem through the matnos kehuna, the gifts we are obligated to give to a Kohain such as challah, bechor, and parts of any animal we slaughter. This is a big deal.

Therefore, when the Kohain first gained the opportunity to actually serve Hashem, he brought his korban as a sign of his understanding the gravity and greatness of what he was given. He offered this grain-offering as the first step in all his future service.

The Kohain Gadol, though, was even more elevated. For him, once was not enough. Rather, each day, he brought this same sacrifice which would remind him of the tremendous gift he was given to serve Hashem in an even closer fashion. Each day when he brought this korban, he re-experienced the newness of his initial inauguration, and fanned the flames of that enthusiasm, always feeling the excitement of the first time he offered his mincha.

When we left Egypt, we shot from the lowest depths of impurity to the highest heights of purity and holiness. Az Yashir was our initial offering of praise to Hashem as we began our new lives as servants of Hashem. Each day when we recall the Exodus, we, like the Kohain Gadol, should relive the thrill of being chosen by Hashem, and know that each of us is the High Priest of his or her own life, ready to serve G-d as only we can.

In the 1950's, on the lower east side of New York, there lived a man who kept his store open on Shabbos. Admittedly, he would walk to the store on Shabbos; in his home, there was a Blech over the stove, and in all other respects, he was basically compliant with Halacha.

He used to frequent Yeshiva Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, and particularly enjoyed speaking with Rav Tuvia Goldstein, one of the Magidei Shiur. In response to R' Tuvia's entreaties to close his store on Shabbos, the storekeeper would ask R' Tuvia to distinguish for him between those Melachos which were MiD'Oraisa and which were D'Rabanan (R' Tuvia refused).

One day, a woman entered the Yeshiva and asked R' Tuvia a Shaila. She had 2 sons, and their school was taking them on a trip to the Museum of Natural History. As her sons were Kohanim, she wondered if they could go, in light of the mummies displayed there. R' Tuvia allowed them to go. The storekeeper gazed with wonder at a woman who didn't speak any Yiddish, was not dressed modestly, but was concerned over her two young sons' possible Tum'ah, and decided to close his store on Shabbos.

R' Tuvia observed that one should never give up on people, because one never knew what would make them find their own greatness. (as heard from Rabbi Leibi Sternberg Shlit"a) ©2020 Rabbi J. Gewirtz and Migdal Ohr

ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

Blood Fest

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

With reference to the consumption of Blood (Dam) which the Torah prohibits and imposes the punishment of "karat" (one's life is shortened), the minimum amount to be liable for the punishment of "karat" is equal to the volume of an olive (approximately 20cc). However in tractate Yevamot 114b, the minimum amount sited is a "Riviit" (approximately 80cc) four times the amount of an olive.

In the Responsa of Bnai Zion (Responsa 49) a question was posed regarding a person who was ill and was directed by his physician to eat daily the blood of an animal. In order that this person would not receive the punishment of Karat, Rav Etlinger advised him to eat less than the minimal amount sited above. However it was unclear to him whether it should be a kazayit or a Reviit. Some wanted to differentiate between eating coagulated or clear blood; however he did not accept this explanation.

To settle this dispute we must use the text which was recently printed by the "Yad Harav Herzog" on the alternate versions (Nuschaot) in the Talmud. There we find that even though in the same Tractate sited before (Yevamot) on our printed Vilna version, the words that appear are "but blood until there is a Riviit" (This was also the text in the Soncino Talmud which was the basis of the Vilna Talmud), in the written additions (a total of six) it reads, "until there is a "Kezayit". It also appears this way in the Beit Habichira of the Meiri, a text of the Rishonim (those Rabbis who lived approximately during the tenth to the fourteenth century) which was not available in the time of Rabbi Etlinger.

Using this text showing the various versions we can now explain and understand easily the truth without resorting to difficult Talmudic discussions ("pilpulim"), to explain the contradiction. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and *Encyclopedia Talmudit*

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Fitting Work

It is not a glamorous job, but somebody has to do it. And so the Torah begins this week's portion by telling us the mitzvah of terumas hadeshen, removing the ashes that accumulate from the burnt-offerings upon the altar. The Torah teaches us: "The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen breeches on his flesh; he shall separate the ash of what the fire consumed of the elevation-offering on the Altar, and

place it next to the Altar" (Leviticus 7:3).

What is simply derived from the verse is that the service of ash-removal is done with the priestly tunic. What is noticeable to the Talmudic mind is the seemingly innocuous adjective "fitted." Rashi quotes the derivation that applies to all the priestly garments: they must be fitted. They cannot be too long, nor can they be too short. They must be tailored to fit each individual Kohen according to his physical measurements.

The question is simple. The sartorial details of the bigdei kehuna (priestly vestments) were discussed way back in the portion of Tezaveh, which we read five weeks ago. Shouldn't the directive of precise-fitting garments have been mentioned in conjunction with the laws of tailoring? Further, if the Torah waits to teach us those requisites in conjunction with any service, why not choose a more distinguished act, such as an anointment or sacrifice? Why choose sweeping ashes?

My dear friend, and the editor of the Parsha Parables series, Dr. Abby Mendelson, was, in a former life, a beat writer for the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club. In the years that we learned Torah together, he would recount amusing anecdotes and baseball minutia. Some of his stories have retained an impact on me years after I heard them. This is one of them.

Roberto Clemente was an amazing athlete who played the game of baseball with utmost dedication. One day, late in the 1968 season, he was playing outfield against the Houston team. The Pirates were no longer contenders, and the game had no statistical meaning. A ball was hit deep toward the outfield wall. As Clemente raced back, it seemed that the ball was going to hit the wall way over his head. With superhuman strength he propelled himself like a projectile toward the wall. Speeding at a forty-five degree angle he collided with the wall at the same time that the ball hit it, two feet above his head. Strictly adhering to the laws of nature, both Clemente and the baseball rebounded from the wall, the former's return to earth much less graceful than the latter's. While the white sphere gently bounced to the playing surface and rolled toward the infield, the much larger uniformed and spiked entity came crashing after it with a resounding thud. Bruised and embarrassed, Clemente clamored after the elusive orb and finally threw it to a less traumatized member of his team who completed the hapless mission.

In the post-game interview an innocent reporter asked Clemente, "Roberto, your team is out of contention. There are three games left. Why in the world did you try so hard to make that play? Was it worth bruising yourself?"

Clemente was puzzled. In a few short sentences he explained his actions. "I am not paid to win pennants. My job is to catch the ball. I tried to catch the ball. I was trying to do my job."

When the Torah tells us that the clothes have to fit perfectly for a particular service it is telling us that the job is exactly right for the man who is doing it. The ash-cleaner is not doing another Kohen's job, wearing an ill-fitted garment as if it were thrown upon him as he entered for the early morning shift. What seems to be the most trivial of jobs is the job that must be done! That is the job of the hour, and that is exactly what the Kohen is designated to do. And for the job or service that is tailor-made for the individual the clothes must also be tailor-made for the job as well!

I once asked a high-level administrator of a major institution what was his job. He answered in all seriousness, "I do whatever has to be done to get the job done and that becomes my job."

Whatever we do, and however we do it, we must realize that the end can only come through the menials. Whatever it takes to get to the goal is as integral as the goal itself. It requires devotion and commitment, and it requires self-sacrifice.

If you dress with dignity to collect the ash, if you approach every task with both with sartorial and personal pride and grace, then you are certainly up to any task. © 2000 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky & torah.org

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

"**C**ommand Aharon and his sons, saying" (Vayikra 6:2). Because the Torah uses the term "command" rather than "speak to," Rashi tells us that "command" is always used as an expression of encouragement (i.e. to motivate to act with zeal) immediately and for generations. Said Rabbi Shimon, "the verse needs to encourage more when there is a financial loss." In other words, the reason G-d told Moshe to "command Aharon and his sons" rather than "speak" to them was to encourage them to do this now, to keep doing it, and/or because doing so involves a financial loss. One of the major discussions the commentators engage in on this Rashi is whether the "financial loss" aspect is besides the "now and forever" aspects, or instead of them, including whether or not Rabbi Shimon is arguing with the first statement (that a "command" encourages immediate action and action for the long term). Let's take a closer look at Rashi's source, and similar sources, to see what we can glean from them.

The main source for Rashi's statement is the Sifra (a.k.a. Toras Kohanim), whose wording, at least according to the Vilna Gaon, is almost word for word the same as Rashi's. In B'raisa d'Rabbi Yishmael, which lists his 13 ways of things are learned exegetically from verses (and serves as the introduction to the Sifra), the 4th category is learning a precedent that can be universally applied from two verses, with the example given being that the term "command" indicates that what is being commanded applies

immediately and for generations. There is no mention of "encouragement," nor is Rabbi Shimon's opinion mentioned. If Rabbi Shimon is of the opinion that the term "command" does not indicate "immediately and for generations," he must disagree with this B'raisa. (And if he agrees with the B'raisa, we would have to explain how he adds "financial loss" to the mix when the B'raisa does not.)

The concept of "encouragement for immediate action and for generations" is taught in the Talmud as well (Kiddushin 29a) regarding circumcision, which quotes a B'raisa from the Beis Midrash of Rabbi Yishmael (albeit not the same B'raisa, as different verses are quoted as the source; we will leave a full discussion as to why for a different time, with G-d's help). Here too, Rabbi Shimon's opinion isn't referenced, but the concept of "encouragement" is (with one of the two verses quoted teaching us this).

Rabbi Yishmael's opinion that the term "command" teaches us that what is being commanded applies "immediately and for generations" is also taught in the Sifre (at the beginning of Parashas Naso, see also Bamidbar Rabbah 7:6), without including "encouragement" in his teaching. However, there are three other opinions quoted there, and encouragement plays a role in at least two of them. First, Rabbi Yehudah ben B'saira says that the word "command" is always used for encouragement, using one of the verses the B'raisa in the Talmud quoted to prove his point. Then Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (i.e. the same Rabbi Shimon quoted by Rashi and the Sifra) says that the term "command" is only used if there is financial loss involved, with one exception (Bamidbar 34:2), when they are commanded to divide the Promised Land. Although he doesn't say why or how there is an exception, he does say that in that one case "command" is used to encourage them; the question remains as to why this exception doesn't disprove the rule. The last opinion in the Sifre is Rebbe's, who understands the term (extended to other forms "commandment"), to be one of warning ("azhara").

It certainly seems as if the Sifre is quoting four separate opinions, a notion supported by the fact that their names are given first ("so-and-so says," as opposed to "said so-and-so," which would imply adding onto, or explaining, what was previously stated). This can be contrasted with the Sifra (and Rashi), where Rabbi Shimon's name is given after the verb for "says," necessitating an explanation as to why in one source Rabbi Shimon is arguing with the notion that "command" refers to "immediate and long-term" action whereas in the other he seems not to be.

The idea that "command" applies "immediately and for generations" is stated later in the Sifre as well (on Bamidbar 28:2), without any mention of encouragement, and without any indication that there were three other opinions. This mirrors the B'raisa of

Rabbi Yishmael at the beginning of *Toras Kohanim*, but Rabbi Yishmael's name is not mentioned in this part of the *Sifre*, leaving the impression that it is a universally held position. I would therefore suggest that some aspects of the opinions cited in these sources are agreed to by all, while others are not.

That the term "command" is employed in order to encourage action is agreed to by everyone; the question is why encouragement is needed. According to Rabbi Yishmael, encouragement is needed whenever something should be done immediately and for the long-term (for generations), and whenever the word "command" is used in such a situation, this is the reason it is used. It is also true that if something can apply immediately and can also apply for future generations, and the word "command" is used, the very use of that word teaches us that it applies immediately and for generations. There are cases where the word "command" is used when it was already apparent (from the context) that it applies immediately and/or for generations, and in these cases the term is used because of the encouragement necessary in such situations. There are also cases where the "command" cannot apply immediately (such as dividing land that wasn't conquered yet) or for generations (such as the "encouragement" given specifically to Yehoshua, see *D'varim* 3:28), but is used because of the encouragement needed (due to other factors) in those situations. But if it is theoretically possible that it can apply immediately and for generations, and the word "command" is used, the word itself teaches us that it does apply.

That the word "command" teaches us that something applies "immediately and for generations" when it is theoretically possible is agreed to by all, and is what the *B'raisa* at the beginning of *Toras Kohanim* and the *Sifre* in *Parashas Pinchas* are teaching us. But since this is a separate issue from why the encouragement inherent in the word "command" is necessary, no "encouragement" mentioned in these two sources.

In the *Sifre* (on *Parashas Naso*), after Rabbi Yishmael gives his opinion that not only does the "command" apply "immediately and for generations" but is also the primary reason for needing encouragement, Rabbi Yehudah ben B'saira argues, saying that the reason encouragement is needed varies from situation to situation; even when something is commanded to be done "immediately and for generations," there may be a stronger reason why encouragement is needed/given. (Because there isn't just one factor that is always the primary reason for encouragement, he doesn't give any.) Rabbi Shimon (bar Yochai) disagrees, saying that financial loss, when a factor, is always the biggest reason why encouragement is needed. (True, the word "command" is used for encouragement even in cases where there is no financial loss, but if there is financial

loss, it creates the biggest need for encouragement.) Rebbe also disagrees, telling us that whenever something is "commanded," the seriousness of the commandment, and therefore the importance of following it, is the primary message.

In summary, all agree that the word "command" is used to encourage action (or prevent wrongful action), and all agree that if something can apply immediately and for generations and the word "command" is used, it does. They only differ about which factors require the most encouragement, or if there are any factors that, when present, always require the most encouragement.

Now let's take a closer look at Rashi (and the *Sifra*). The discussion is not about whether or not the laws about to be taught apply immediately and for generations, as everyone agrees that they do. The discussion is about why the word "command" is used instead of "speak." And the answer, according to both opinions brought in the *Sifra*, is to provide additional encouragement to the Kohanim. According to the first opinion, who we know from the other sources to be Rabbi Yishmael, the fact that they apply immediately and for generations is the primary reason why additional encouragement is needed. Rabbi Shimon agrees with Rabbi Yishmael that the reason the Torah uses the word "command" instead of "speak" is to provide extra encouragement, so the verb "says" comes before his name. Nevertheless, because Rabbi Shimon is of the opinion that being commanded "now and for generations" is not the quintessential reason for needing encouragement, he adds that "there is more of a need for encouragement when there is financial loss."

© 2016 Rabbi D. Kramer

