

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l

Covenant & Conversation

Tetzaveh is, as is well known, the parsha in which for once Moses take second place. In fact, he is not mentioned by name at all, and all the focus is on his brother, Aaron, and on the role he came to occupy and personify, that of High Priest, the Kohen 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 God's request that he lead the Israelites.

"And 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 to remain uncorrupted. In particular, political and religious leadership, keter malchut 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 their family dynamic, 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 God 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 in reality they are far from common.

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 God 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)

And in response, 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 emphasises God'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 shall command the Israelites to bring you pure oil" (for the Menorah that Aaron and his sons would keep alight). (Ex. 27:20)

"And you shall draw your brother Aaron and his sons close to you to serve Me as priests -- Aaron and his sons Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar. Make sacred vestments for your brother Aaron, for glory and for splendour." (Ex. 28:1-2)

"And you shall speak to all the skilled craftsmen whom I have endowed with a spirit of wisdom, and ask them to make Aaron's vestments; these will consecrate him to serve Me as priest." (Ex. 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 his, whose role is different from his, someone who may be more popular, closer to the people, than Moses is -- as in



fact Aaron turned out to be.

It's rare for a leader to be able to share the spotlight so generously. 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, "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. *Covenant and Conversation* is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl zt"l © 2024 The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust rabbisacks.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Torah Lights

“**A**nd you shall command the children of Israel... And you shall bring forth your brother Aaron and his sons together with him... And you shall speak to all of the wise-hearted.” (Exodus 27:20–28:3) Often what you really have is that which you give away, what you most profoundly say is what you leave unsaid when you wisely decide not to respond, and the most commanding presence is felt most keenly when that presence is not around. An example of the third phenomenon is to be found in the Torah reading of Tetzaveh, the only portion since the opening of the book of Exodus wherein Moses' name does not appear even once! Why not?

The Midrashic answer suggests that Moses initiated his own absence. When the Israelites sinned by worshiping the golden calf less than six weeks after the divine revelation at Sinai, God's anger reaches the breaking point (as it were) and he makes Moses the following offer: "And now leave Me alone as my anger shall burn and I will destroy them, and I shall make of you a great nation." (Exodus 32:10)

God suggests that He wipe Israel, no longer worthy of His benevolence, from the pages of history by starting a new nation, a new branch, from the loins of Moses himself.

Others in his shoes might have taken up God's offer, but Moses refuses to increase his own glory at the expense of the nation. The climax of his brilliant argument is an emotional ultimatum: God must forgive the people.

"...If not [says Moses], blot me, I pray you, out of Your book which You have written." (Exodus 32:32) God

responds to Moses' pleas. But Moses' expression of identification with the people, Moses' selfless willingness for himself to be obliterated as long as his nation prevails, is eternalized by the fact that in one portion of the Torah, Tetzaveh, the master prophet's name is "missing in action."

But on an even deeper level, is there a further significance to the fact that the "blotting out" of Moses' name occurs specifically in Tetzaveh?

Even a quick glance reveals that our portion is almost entirely devoted to the priesthood. Chapters 28 and 29 deal extensively with all the garments that the priests are commanded to wear, particularly the High Priest, as well as the sacrifices that shall be brought to "sanctify the priests." In fact, Tetzaveh is often called Parashat Ha-Kohanim, the portion of the priests.

Without a temple, the priest's public role is severely limited. One area, though, where his presence is still felt (particularly here in Israel and among Sephardim even in the Diaspora) is the daily priestly blessing during the repetition of the morning Amida: at the conclusion of the blessing for peace, the priests, attended to by Levites, stand before the congregation and invoke the biblical blessing: "May God bless you and keep you..." (Num. 6:24). Before intoning these words, they recite the following blessing: "Blessed are You Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron, and has commanded us to bless His people with love."

The final words in the blessing – "with love" – raise certain questions, since kohanim, or descendants of the High Priest Aaron, are fairly typical people. Some are as sweet as cherry ices in July, and some are as cold as Alaskan ice cubes, but most change in accordance with their mood upon awakening. How can we measure the love-quotient felt by Mr. Cohen when he ascends the bimah for the blessing? How can we legislate the emotion of love which the priests are apparently expected to feel?

The first answer lies in the very nature of the priesthood, in how the Bible legislated the priestly class's means of livelihood. It's often said that if you ask a typical entrepreneur, "How 's business?" if he says, "great," it means that he is doing well and his competitor is facing bankruptcy; if he says, "good," that means it's a good market for everyone, he's doing well and so is his competitor; and if he says, "terrible," then that means he's facing bankruptcy but his competition is earning a lot of money. Gore Vidal was once quoted by Hilma Wolitzer in the *New York Times* for his poignantly honest observation: "Whenever a friend succeeds a little, something in me dies."

Enter the kohen. If there is one person who disagrees with Mr. Vidal, it would have to be a member of the priestly class who served in the Temple, received no portion of land to till or business to develop, and who made his living by tithes given him by the Israelites: 1/40,

1/50, 1/60 of their produce depending upon the generosity of the individual donor. And since the tithe was a percentage of the crop, the better the farmer makes out, the happier the kohen would be. To modify the Vidal quote, a kohen would declare: "Whenever a farmer succeeds a little [and certainly whenever he succeeds a lot], something in me lives." Hence by the very nature of the economic structure set up by the Bible, the kohen-priest could truly give the blessing of prosperity and well-being to the congregation of Israel "with love."

And it was because the kohanim were freed from professional and agricultural pursuits that they were able to devote themselves entirely to God, the Holy Temple, and the religio-moral needs of the nation. Their single-minded commitment to the holy and the divine was symbolized by the words engraved upon the highly visible gold plate (tzitz) worn around the forehead of the High Priest: "Holy unto God" (Ex. 28:36). Indeed, so important was it deemed that the religious and moral message not be compromised by political sectarian considerations that the Bible legislates a total separation between the religious and legislative spheres. The tribe of Judah was entrusted with sovereign, legislative leadership: "The specter shall not depart from Judah..." (Gen. 49:10), whereas the tribe of Levi was entrusted with religio-moral leadership: "They shall teach Jacob your law, and Israel your Torah..." (Deut. 33:10). No member of the priestly class could control the bank or become a cabinet minister. Thus the kohen, and the religio-moral voice which he represents, emerges in a totally independent position, above the economic interests of special-interest groups and beyond the intrigues of palace politics.

From this perspective we can offer a second interpretation of the words "with love" which conclude the introduction to the priestly benediction: "Love" does not describe the emotions of the kohen, but rather defines the content of the blessing. The most important blessing that can be bestowed upon the nation is that we live together in harmony and love. And only a priestly class separated from petty self-interest and competitions, truly devoted to God, can hope to inspire such love and harmony!

Now we can understand why Moses' name is absent particularly from this portion of Tetzaveh. If the kohanim are to symbolize selfless commitment to God and to the nation, they cannot possibly have a better example than Moses, who was willing to have his name removed from the Torah for the sake of the future of his people! If any act in the Torah can be singled out for demonstrating pure love, with no strings attached, it is when Moses refuses God's offer to start a new nation from his loins; Moses would rather that he remain anonymous but let the people of Israel live. Indeed, the essence of Moses' greatness emerges most clearly from the portion of his absence and anonymity. *The above*

article appears in Rabbi Riskin's book *Bereishit: Confronting Life, Love and Family*, part of his *Torah Lights* series of commentaries on the weekly parsha, published by Maggid. © 2024 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

If clothes make the man, the garments of the ordinary priests and the High Priest of Israel certainly grant them the authority and holiness of their offices. One of the major disqualifications that affected the priest's ability to perform services in the Temple was that he lacked the proper clothing that characterized and identified him. We find generally in Jewish life that clothing plays an important societal and religious role.

Modesty in dress, special clothing for the Sabbath and holidays and acceptable attire have always been the norms in Jewish society. The clothing of Jews was always affected by the influence of the countries and societies in which they lived. One need only look at the paintings of the Dutch masters of the seventeenth century, portraying the Jews and rabbis of Amsterdam at their synagogue services and homes, in order to realize how acculturated Jewish dress was, even amongst the most rigorously pious rabbis of the time.

The Church sought to regulate the colors of dress that Jews would be allowed to wear in the Middle Ages. It was the Church that made black the main color motif of Jewish dress. It seems that the Jews in Europe before the time of the Crusades wore brightly colored clothing as did their non-Jewish neighbors. It was only after the official medieval persecution of Ashkenazic Jews by the Church that restrictions were made on the color and type of clothing that could be worn by Jews.

Jews were also forced to wear ludicrous looking hats and badges of shame on their clothing. However, Jews made their forced shameful clothing items of Jewish pride and long after the decline of the Church and the abolition of such degrees (though they were restored by the Germans in World War II) Jews continued to wear informal peasant dress, strange hats and caps and mainly black clothing. The rule regarding all clothing was that it be modest and presentable.

The garments of the High Priest of Israel were ornate, unique and very luxurious in manufacture and appearance. In contrast, the garments of the ordinary priests of Israel were simple, sparse and sparkling white. If the garments of the High Priest represented majesty, grandeur and power of leadership, the garments of the ordinary priests represented holiness and service.

Not everyone could aspire to achieve majesty and grandeur – there was only one High Priest present at any one given time during the periods of the First and Second Temples. However purity of life and devotion to service of God and of Israel was something that many could achieve. This truth was reflected in the different

clothing of the High Priest and of his fellow, but ordinary, priests.

It is to be noted that the High Priest himself also always wore the vestments of the ordinary priests. He had four additional garments that he wore that were of precious metal and fabric and unique to him. But before one could don the garments of majesty, power, grandeur and importance, one had to first learn the lessons of humility, holiness, purity and service to others and to God as represented by the clothing of the ordinary priests of Israel. Though we no longer have priestly vestments present in our Jewish society today, the lessons that they taught us should be remembered and followed. ©2024 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

No individual is mentioned more often in the Torah than Moses. In fact, in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, which deal with his life, Moses is mentioned in every portion except one, Tetzaveh.

A popular explanation presented in the name of the Vilna Gaon is that Moses's name is omitted because this portion is usually read during the week marking Moses's death.

The Zohar teaches instead that this portion occurs after the incident of the golden calf when Moses tells God, if You do not forgive the sin of the Jewish People, blot my name out of the Torah (Exodus 32:33; Zohar, Pinchas 246a).

However, Moses does play a role despite the absence of his name. The Torah tells us that Moses, who Ibn Ezra notes was the first priest, brings Aaron his brother "near" to become high priest (Exodus 28:1). Moreover, Moses speaks to the wisehearted men to make Aaron's priestly garments (28:3). Additionally, Moses prepares the sacrificial service to be offered on the day Aaron assumes his post (29:1). Finally, Moses washes Aaron and his sons and actually dresses them in their priestly garments (29:4-9). But in every instance, without exception, Moses is mentioned through the use of a pronoun.

Perhaps omitting his name underscores that Moses was prepared to share leadership, to shine the spotlight on his brother, and that far from feeling jealous or cheated, he felt joyous. His joy is so great that he himself calls Aaron forward, he himself arranges for Aaron's garments, he himself prepares the sacrificial service for Aaron, and he himself washes and dresses Aaron. In fact, Moses even washes and dresses Aaron's sons, an action that perhaps could evoke great jealousy in him, as it reminds Moses that his own sons were

unworthy to inherit his position of leadership.

Much as Aaron was happy to hear that Moses would be the leader of the Jewish People (4:14), Moses was joyous when Aaron and his sons were awarded the priesthood. Hence, Moses's name is not mentioned because, even as he steps forward to facilitate every step of Aaron's becoming the high priest, he does so graciously and remains absolutely self-effacing.

Moses, the leader of leaders, is true to the Torah's description of him: "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any human being on the face of the earth"(Numbers 12:3). Moses's selfless actions emphasize the importance of stepping back and making space for others, with joyousness and with humility – traits critical to successful leadership. ©2024 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

ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

Adar Rishon & Adar Sheni

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

The Jewish leap year, which occurs seven times in a 19-year cycle, has 13 months instead of the regular year's 12. The additional month is added after Adar and is known as *Adar Sheni* (the second Adar). The question arises: During a leap year, if someone simply refers to Adar without specifying the first or the second, what does he mean? The *Tannaim* (Mishnaic Sages) disagree. Rabbi Yehudah says that if someone simply refers to Adar, we assume he means the first Adar. Thus, if a legal document is written during a leap year, when it is written during the first Adar the month may be written simply as Adar; if it is written during the second Adar, it must be specified that the month is the second Adar.

Rabbi Meir disagrees. He maintains that during a leap year, if someone refers simply to Adar, he can be assumed to be speaking of the second Adar (*Nedarim* 63a). While most of the halachic authorities accept the view of Rabbi Yehudah, the Rambam follows the view of Rabbi Meir. In any case, when writing a bill of divorce we always specify during which Adar the document was written, *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Sheni*.

This disagreement has many ramifications. For example, if a person rents a house during a leap year, and the lease expires in Adar, does this mean the start of the first Adar or the start of the second Adar? The landlord would likely claim the lease ends with the start of the first Adar, while the renter would likely insist it ends with the start of the second. In such a case, some rabbis suggest that the renter pay half for the second month (in effect splitting the difference). Others state that the landlord has the upper hand, as he owns the property. Accordingly, the burden of proof is on the tenant (to prove that the lease was meant to extend through the end of the first Adar). This is because there is a principle

that "*Ha-motzi mei-chavero alav ha-re'aya*." This means that whoever wishes to extract something (here the right of tenancy) from its current owner must prove that he is entitled to it.

The controversy also affects the commemoration of a *yahrzeit* (the day on which a relative died). For example, let us say someone passed away on the tenth of Adar. During a leap year, some recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* on the tenth of both the first Adar and the second Adar.

When it comes to the *yahrzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu on the seventh of Adar, there are indications that it should be commemorated during the second Adar, close to Purim (which during a leap year is celebrated in the second Adar).

On the Shabbat preceding the start of a new month in the Jewish calendar, a prayer is recited in *shul*, ushering in the new month by name. It is questionable which name we should use to usher in each Adar during a leap year.

In short, the disagreement about this topic extends to many areas. Therefore, the prudent thing to do is to always clarify which Adar we mean, by specifying either *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Sheini*. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and *Encyclopedia Talmudit*

RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

Cross-Currents

There's really no such thing as a kohein. At least not the way we generally pronounce the word in conversation, with the accent placed on the first syllable. In the Torah, the stress is on the second syllable, a hint to the fact that the word is not a noun but rather a verb.

That is Rashi's observation in the parsha (29:30), on the words *hakohein tachtav*, which can only be properly translated as 'who 'koheins' in his stead" -- with kohein meaning "serves." (The cantillation, Rashi notes, would not support translating the phrase as "who is a kohein in his stead.")

That may be nothing more than an interesting grammatical observation. But it may also signal something deeper.

Kohanim, of course, derive their status from being descendants of Aharon. In the non-Jewish sphere, special roles can also be transferred genealogically, as in monarchies.

But the "divine right of kings," whereby monarchs claimed authority that rendered them unaccountable for their actions by earthly laws and courts (a topic that remains germane, oddly, even today, even in democracies) could not be further from the divine role of kohanim. A kohein is as governed by the Torah's laws as any other Jew.

Kohanim are verily defined as "servers," as being charged to do Hashem's will. They are not defined by a noun but a verb -- referring to performing the acts

they are commanded to perform.

To be sure, kohanim have a special status in Klal Yisrael and are deserving of honor. But their specialness is born of mission, not license or immunity.

Truth be told, every one of us is, each in his or her way, special, whether we happen to carry a particular title or are just the unique individuals each of us is. And we all are likewise defined not by our particular statuses or identities, but by our missions. ©2024 Rabbi A. Shafran and *torah.org*

RABBI DAVID LEVIN

The Order of Names

Our study this week in Parashat Tetzaveh deals with the special clothes of the Kohein Gadol, the High Priest. The Kohein Gadol wore eight garments as opposed to the four garments worn by the Kohein Hediot, the regular Kohein. There were two places on these special clothes that contained the names of the twelve tribes. There is a difference of opinion among the Rabbis as to the order and position of these names. One place, the two stones that connected the straps of the Eiphod, had six names on each stone. The Kli Yakar explains that these stones were an atonement for the two tablets of the Ten Commandments that Moshe broke when he saw the Golden Calf. The second place for the names were the twelve stones on the Choshen, which covered four rows. Each stone was engraved with the name of a tribe. Part of this disagreement about which names were placed on which stones and the order in which those names were placed concerns interpreting the somewhat vague instructions given to Moshe.

The Torah discusses the names on the stones of the Eiphod: "They shall make the Eiphod of gold, turquoise wool, and purple wool, scarlet wool, and twisted linen, the work of an artist. It shall have two shoulder straps attached to its two ends, and it shall be connected. The cheishev with which he is beautified, which is above it, like its work, of it shall be, of gold, turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool, and twisted linen. You shall take the two Shoham (onyx) stones and engrave upon them the names of the sons of Israel; six of their names on one stone, and the names of the six remaining ones on the second stone, according to their birth."

The vague statement of six names on one stone and the other six on the second stone is qualified by the statement "according to their birth," but even this is unclear. The Ohr HaChaim explains that the qualifier (according to their birth) could have several different interpretations. The first is a chronological order that would follow the direct order of birth for all twelve tribes. This would require that the first four sons of Leah, Reuvein, Shimon, Levi, and Yehudah, would come first, followed by the four sons of the two maidservant wives (Bilhah and Zilpah), Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, followed by the last two sons of Leah, Yissachar and

Zevulun, and concluding with the two sons of Rachel, Yosef and Binyamin. Thus, the names would appear with the first six names in order on one stone and the other six names in order on the second stone. Rashi, in fact, lists the twelve names exactly in the order of their birth. The first opinion in Gemara Sotah (36ab), however, changes that simple order to place Yehudah before all the others, since he would be the source for the Kings of Yisrael.

A second opinion, according to Rebbi Chanina ben Gamliel, assumes that the qualifier (according to their birth) was in addition to another qualifier involving the order of their mothers giving birth. The qualifier (according to their birth) would then imply keeping the families together according to the birthing order of the mothers. Thus, the first stone would contain all the sons of Leah, and the second stone would list first Bilhah's sons then Zilpah's sons, and conclude with Rachel's sons. The exception to the rule was that on the second stone, Rebbi Chanina ben Gamliel started with Binyamin, then the tribes of Bilhah and Zilpah, concluding with Yosef. This coincided with the opinion in Gemara Sota that the stones should be engraved with the children of Leah on one stone, and the second stone with the sons of Rachel separated by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. It does not explain why Binyamin was placed before Yosef.

A third explanation was given by Rav Kahana, who seems to have disregarded the words "according to their birth," and places the names on the stones in the order and grouping according to the same way that the tribes were grouped on Har Gerizim and Har Eival to hear the blessings and curses. This unusual opinion is attacked because the grouping is neither in line with the order of birth nor is it grouped according to their mothers.

The second place where the names were engraved was the Choshen, or breastplate. The Torah states: "You shall make the Choshen of Judgment the work of an artist, like the work of the Eiphod shall you make it, of gold, turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool, and twisted linen shall you make it. Square shall it be, folded, a zeret (handspan) its length and a zeret its width. You shall fill it with stone filling, four rows of stone: a row of odem, pit'dah, and bareket – the one row; the second row: nofech, sapir, and yahalom; the third row: leshem, shevo, and achlamah; and the fourth row: tarshish, shoham, and yashfeh; they shall be golden settings with their fillings. The stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Yisrael, twelve according to their names, like the engraving of a signet ring, each man by his name shall they be, for the twelve tribes."

Once again, the Rabbis differ on the order of the names on the twelve stones of the Choshen. Rashi is consistent that the order followed the order of birth alone and was not concerned with keeping the mothers' children together. This does not appear to be required, as there is no instruction concerning the order of the

names. HaRav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch quotes Gemara Yoma (73b), which states that the odem, the first stone of the first row, was engraved with Reuvein's name but also the names of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov before Reuvein. Pit'dah, the second stone on the first row, was engraved with Shimon's name, and all the other stones contained one each until the last stone on the last row, yashfeh, which was engraved with Shivtei Yeshurin (the tribes of Yisrael) and the name Binyamin. HaRav Hirsch appears to combine the words of Yoma (73b) with Rashi's opinion, because the Gemara does not state which tribe was written on the first or last stone. Instead, it was concerned with the method in which the stones provided answers by the engraved letters standing out to spell words. Since there was no letter tzadi or tet among the names of the tribes, the extra names of our forefathers and the words Shivtei Yeshurin were also engraved on the stones to complete the Aleph-Bet. HaRav Abarbanel's approach is entirely different. He believes that Hashem designated four rows to parallel the four divisions of the tribes in the desert. Hashem, therefore, designated the first row to those tribes camped to the East of the Mishkan, the second row to those camped to the South, the third row to the West, and the last row to the North.

We can see from this discussion that the vagueness of the Torah can sometimes lead to many different opinions. That is part of the process of learning Torah. Hashem desires our involvement in the "conversation" of the text. Our questions illicit our involvement and our commitment to Hashem's Torah. May we always seek out the "conversations" with Hashem that require our further study of His Torah.
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RABBI JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

Migdal Ohr

"**L**ike a signet (shall they be) each man by his name, shall they be for the twelve tribes." (Shmos 28:21) The twelve stones of the Choshen had the names of the twelve sons of Yaakov etched upon them. The posuk says, "each man by his name," which Rashi says, "according to the order of their birth; Odem for Reuven, Pitda for Shimon, and so on." The commentaries clamor about this because elsewhere, in Shoftim (18:27), Rashi says the stone, "leshem" corresponded to Dan on the Choshen.

In order of birth, Dan was the fifth child born to Yaakov, but "leshem" was the seventh stone listed in the Choshen. If leshem corresponds to Dan, then the names could not have been on the breastplate in the order of their birth.

To answer this question, they explain that the stones on the Choshen were in the order of the childbearing of the tribes' mothers, Leah, Bilha, Zilpa, Rachel. Therefore, Leah's six sons came first, and Dan, the first son of Bilha, was the seventh.

Why did the Torah have to include any chronology at all? Let Betzalel be divinely inspired about which names to inscribe on each one. A further question is that the Sforno says the donor's initial intention had to be that the stone be used for the names of the tribes to be inscribed upon them, and even the craftsmen could not change stones or intentions. From beginning to end, there had to be a specific intent.

Perhaps the Torah is teaching us the importance of individuality. Each mother gave birth to the children she was intended to bear. Each of them had a role and a place within Klal Yisrael that they alone could fill. Each of us does, as well.

Aharon merited to wear the Choshen on his heart because when he heard that his younger brother, Moshe, was going to be the leader, he was "happy in his heart," i.e. truly happy for Moshe's success. He had no jealousy or ill will about it. How is it possible to reach such a level? By recognizing that each of us has our own unique mission which doesn't overlap with the missions of others. Their successes don't detract from ours, nor do ours negate those of others.

Just as the stones were engraved with names, and they could not be erased or changed, so do each of us have to seek to fulfill our personal assignment and objectives which should never be swapped for the mission of another. Hashem doesn't need two of them; He needs one of you.

Once, when R' Zusia of Hanipoli came to the Bais Medresh, his eyes were red with tears, and his face was pale with fear. "Rebbi! What's the matter? You look frightened!" "The other day," replied the sage "I had a vision. In it, I learned the question that the angels will one day ask me about my life."

The chasidim were puzzled. "But Rebbi, you are pious. You are scholarly and humble. You have helped so many of us. What question about your life could be so terrifying that you would be frightened to answer it?"

R' Zusia turned his gaze to heaven. "I have learned that the angels will not ask me, "Why weren't you a Moses, leading your people out of slavery?" And I have learned," he sighed, "that the angels will not ask me, "Why weren't you a Joshua, leading your people into the promised land?"

"They will say to me, "Zusia, there was only one thing that no power of heaven or earth could have prevented you from becoming." They will say, 'Zusia, why weren't you Zusia?'" © ©2024 Rabbi J. Gewirtz & Migdal Ohr

RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY

TorahWeb

The imagery of the Kohen Gadol wearing the bigdei kehuna is the model of a holy, exalted individual. Adorning his head is the tzitz which describes the essence of the role of the Kohen Gadol, as carved into this golden ornament are the words לקדוש לה -- Holy for

Hashem. Although the actual tzitz is only worn by the Kohen Gadol, what the tzitz symbolizes is significant for everyone.

There are several aspects of the tzitz that are strikingly similar to two mitzvos that are performed daily. The very name tzitz is related to the word tzitzis. Many interpret the word tzitz as being derived from the word describing a thread, referring to the blue thread that was connected to the golden plate of the tzitz. Not only in name are the tzitz and tzitzis related, but the blue colored string of both connect these two mitzvos as well.

Another mitzva that is similar to the tzitz is the mitzva of tefillin. The tzitz is worn on the head of the Kohen Gadol, and according to many opinions it is worn in precisely the same place that the tefillin shel rosh is placed. Chazal discuss the technical difficulty of how the Kohen Gadol was able to wear both the tzitz and the tefillin shel rosh simultaneously, and they conclude that in fact there was sufficient room for both. On both the tzitz and the tefillin shel rosh, a name of Hashem is present. On the tzitz the words "קדוש לה" appeared, and the letter ש", which represents one of the names of Hashem, is carved on the tefillin, highlighting the similarity between these mitzvos. Chazal derive from this connection that one who wears tefillin must act in a way similar to the Kohen Gadol who is adorned with the tzitz. Concerning the tzitz the Torah says "והיה על מצחו תמיד" - "he always wears it on his forehead." Chazal observe that obviously there are times when the tzitz is not actually worn, so what does it mean that it is always worn? Chazal explain that the halcha requires that when the tzitz is worn, the Kohen Gadol must be cognizant of it and cannot be involved in thoughts that are antithetical to the sanctity of the tzitz. This halacha extends to tefillin and therefore when tefillin are worn one must be careful to retain the proper focus on thoughts that are appropriate for the holiness of tefillin.

What is the underlying message which the mitzvos of the tzitz, tzitzis, and tefillin are coming to teach us? There is one theme that permeates all three of these mitzvos. There is a question whether the tzitz was worn in exactly the same place as the tefillin or slightly below. According to both opinions it was situated either directly between the eyes or slightly below above. Although the Halacha is clear that tefillin are worn higher than eye level, the Torah describes tefillin as being situated "בין עיניך" -- "between your eyes." Clearly, the tzitz and the tefillin are connected to the sense of sight. The very names for these mitzvos emphasize the significance of seeing. The word tzitz is related to tzitzis not only concerning the common blue thread but also the word tzitzis is related to the word "להציץ" -- "to see." Rashi (Bamidbar 15:38) quotes two meanings of the word tzitzis -- a thread and seeing. Tefillin shel rosh are referred to in the Torah as "טטפות". Rashi (Shemos 13:16) interprets טטפות as similar to a word describing speech. Rashi observes that when one sees the tefillin

shel rosh being worn one speaks about the miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim described in its parshiyos. Chazal interpret the passuk (Devarim 28:10), "וראו כל-עמי הארץ", "כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך" -- "the nations of the world will see the name of Hashem upon you and fear you" -- as referring to tefillin shel rosh which is visible to all. The mitzva of tzitzis is linked to sight as the purpose of tzitzis is "וראתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה'" -- "You should see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem" (Bamidbar 15:39).

These three mitzvos teach us how to look at the world. We can observe things in a way that distances us from Hashem, but we can also decide to look at everything around us as an opportunity to help us in our Avodas Hashem. We can strive to be 'קדוש לה' like the Kohen Gadol. We can place these words on our eyes and have them govern everything we see. We can look at our tzitzis and have them guide us in the challenge of, "ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם". We can be inspired by the tefillin we wear and the tefillin worn by others and see the letter "ש" that represents Hashem's name. We can see the tefillin and choose to remember the truths contained inside them and live our lives of sanctity according to those lessons.

We look forward to once again seeing the Kohen Gadol adorned with the tzitz. The spiritual leader of the Jewish people who is 'קדוש לה' serves as a role model to all. May we merit to learn the lesson of the tzitz, the tzitzis, and tefillin, and always look at the world through the holiness of these three mitzvos. ©2024 Rabbi Z. Sobolofsky & TorahWeb.org

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

RavFrاند

Transcribed by David Twersky

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Last week's parsha also contains a solicitation, but does not use the word tzav. Rather, Parshas Terumah begins with the pasuk "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion." (Shemos 25:2) Everyone was asked to donate to the Mishkan building campaign. They donated all sorts of items, precious metals -- gold, silver, and copper -- as well as animal skins, wood, spices and the like. It was a very successful campaign, during which they collected everything they needed for the Mishkan.

The sefer Abir Yaakov asks why the Torah does not use the command (Tzav es Bnei Yisrael) in Parshas Teruma like it does here in Parshas Tetzaveh, rather than the more casual statement "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me an offering..." Anytime someone solicits money -- gold, silver, or other valuable items, people don't like to part with their money. They certainly don't like to part with their precious metals. It is a request which may very well cause hesitation and resistance. Therefore, we would expect the Torah to use

a forceful word such as "tzav" there. It seems incongruous that when asking for olive oil, the Torah uses a "command" (v'ata tetzaveh) and when asking for gold and silver, the Torah uses a mere request. Which is the easier ask?

Imagine a man who wants to relax on a Sunday morning but there is a meshullach (charity collector) at the door who gives his elaborate story of desperate need and asks for \$1000. His story hits just the right way and the man writes a check for \$1,000. The following Sunday morning, the same man is trying to enjoy his coffee when a meshullach comes to the door and says that he needs \$100. Okay, the man gives him \$100. Ten minutes later another meshullach comes to the door: "I desperately need \$100." A total of ten people come to the door, each asking for \$100. Lo and behold, another Sunday went by, another \$1,000 was distributed to charity.

Which is easier and which is harder? Is it harder to give \$1,000 in one shot or is it harder to give \$100 ten times over? The Rambam writes (in his Mishna Commentary on Maseches Avos) that it is harder to give \$100 ten times than it is to give \$1,000 in one shot. Not only is it harder, but it makes a bigger impact on the giver if he gives ten times a smaller amount than if he gives the same amount in one contribution.

If someone wants to become a baal tzedakah (generous person), the way to achieve that is to donate over and over and over again. A one-time splurge of generosity may be nice, but it does not change anything in a person's neshama. Stinginess can only be overcome by repetitive action to counteract the negative character trait.

The Mishkan was a one-time building campaign. It was an unprecedented event that had never previously occurred in the history of Klal Yisrael. Everyone was excited about the prospect. They were happy to participate in this once in a lifetime event. Therefore, there was no need for a lashon ziruz (a language of diligence). "Speak to the Children of Israel and take for me..." was sufficient. However, the olive oil was a maintenance item. The appeal for shemen zayis for the Menorah needed to be made over and over again, every week, every month, every year. That is hard. That needs a lashon of tzav -- "Command the Children of Israel..." ©2024 Rabbi Y. Frand and torah.org

