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

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

During a non-leap year, we always read Tetzaveh within a few days of Purim, either the previous week (which normally includes 7 Adar, both the birthday and yahrtzeit of Moshe) or shortly after Purim. Tetzaveh focuses on the details of lighting the Menorah in the Sanctuary, constructing the priestly garments, and inaugurating the Mishkan. How does Tetzaveh connect with Purim?

Tetzaveh is a continuation of Terumah. Indeed, Terumah opens, "Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying. . ." Tetzaveh opens, "Now you shall command. . ." The next time the Torah states that Hashem spoke to Moshe (or anyone else spoke to another person) is in the parsha for next week. The Torah is therefore indicating that Terumah and Tetzaveh consist of the same conversation. Moshe's name is hidden in Tetzaveh – the only portion in Shemot, Vayikra, or Bemidbar not to contain his name. Similarly, Hashem's name does not appear in the Megillah, although "the king" is a veiled reference to God. In the common "HaMelech" version of the Megillah, most of the columns begin with "Ha Melech" ('the king"), further to demonstrate this connection.

All of chapter 28 in Tetzaveh gives minute details of the special clothing for the Kohen Gadol. For Purim, we traditionally wear fancy costumes (connection with ch. 28), and often masks (to hide our faces the way that Moshe's name is hidden in Tetzaveh and God's name is hidden in the Megillah).

The Mishkan, subject of Terumah and Tetzaveh, is a way to bring God's presence into our lives. According to Ramban, the purpose of the Mishkan was to perpetuate the Sinai experience and thereby facilitate our people feeling close to Hashem. Rabbi David Fohrman demonstrates that the materials used to construct the Mishkan and the language of the instructions to build it are closely related to those in the Torah's instructions for Noah's ark. Both the ark and the Mishkan were ways to permit people (Noah's family and the Jews in the Midbar) to come close to God's presence and survive.

The Megillah has many parallels to Gan Eden, as Rabbi Fohrman brings out in his extensive writings on Esther. For one example, consider Haman – the man who had everything. He had power, wealth, the king's favor – all but one little thing. One man would not bow down to him. In Gan Eden, Adam and Chava had everything, except they were not able to eat from one tree that God reserved for himself. Haman obsessed on Mordechai, and Adam and Chava obsessed on the one tree that was off limits to them. After Adam and Chava ate from the fruit of Hashem's tree, God asked Adam, "Hamin Ha'eitz," "have you really eaten from that tree?" Both Haman and hamin have the same spelling in Hebrew – heh, mem, nun. According to the Gemorah, this is a hint to Haman in the Torah. (There are similar hints to Esther and Mordechai, also from Gan Eden, as Rabbi Fohrman explains.)

Esther provides a tikkun for man's sin in Gan Eden and thereby facilitates a way for man to come as close as possible to returning to Gan Eden. (I summarized some highlights of this argument in my message last week, and Rabbi Fohrman explains it in depth.) In a very brief outline, Esther starts by asking the king to save her because of his love for her. She then returns, explains that she is a member of the outcast people that Haman decreed were to be killed, and convinces the king to issue an edict permitting the Jews to fight back – because doing so would be morally right.

The laws of Purim provide a path to come close to God in a world where He operates behind the scenes. First, we must listen to every word of the Megillah from a Kosher scroll, both at night and in the morning. Second, we must give Matanot Laevyonim, gifts to at least two poor Jews on Purim day (Esther 9:22). The custom is to give Mahatzit Hashekel – a Half-Shekel (half a dollar) each for three different charities (reciting "Zacher Mahatzit Hashekel), since we read of this obligation three times in the Shekalim Torah reading. Third, we must have a festive meal and recite Al HaNisim during the Birchat HaMazon. This year the seudah should begin prior to midday and be over early enough to be hungry enough by Kiddush time to enjoy a Shabbat dinner. Fourth, we must give Mishloach Manos, gifts of at least two types of food, to at least one other Jew (9:19, 22).

A key to Esther's success was asking all the Jews in Shushan to come to the area around the palace to fast and pray with her for salvation for the Jews. Unity of all the Jews was a key to the success of Esther's daring approach to the king and attempt to convince him to save both her and the rest of the Jews. Gifts to the poor, food gifts to fellow Jews, and a festive meal (normally hosting fellow Jews) all reinforce the theme of unity of Jews and compassion for our fellows. Mahatzit Hashekel donations remind us of our obligation to help fund our religious institutions, another key to unity for Jews. These themes reinforce both Aseret Dibrot and the mitzvot in Mishpatim.

Unity of Jews was a frequent theme for my beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, whether he was leading a public protest (such as in front of the Soviet Embassy before Jews could more freely emigrate from behind the Iron Curtain) or encouraging congregants to learn from and appreciate lessons from diverse parts of the Jewish community. His message of supporting needy Jews and promoting unity among fellow Jews should be a priority at all time, not only around Purim.

Purim Samaich; Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

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

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Menachem Mendel ben Chana, Eli ben Hanina, Yoram HaKohen ben Shoshana, Gedalya ben Sarah, Mordechai ben Chaya, Baruch Yitzhak ben Perl, David Leib HaKohen ben Sheina Reizel, Zev ben Sara Chaya, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, HaRav Dovid Meir ben Chaya Tzippa; Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Amoz ben Tziviah, Reuven ben Masha, Moshe David ben Hannah, Meir ben Sara, Yitzhok Tzvi ben Yehudit Miriam, Yaakov Naphtali ben Michal Leah, Ramesh bat Heshmat, Rivka Chaya bat Leah, Zissel Bat Mazal, Chana Bracha bas Rochel Leah, Leah Fruma bat Musa Devorah, Hinda Behla bat Chaya Leah, Nechama bas Tikva Rachel, Miriam Chava bat Yachid, and Ruth bat Sarah, all of whom greatly need our prayers.

Hannah & Alan

Drasha: Tetzaveh: The Heart Before the Force

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky © 1998

[Please remember Mordechai ben Chaya for a Mishebarach!]

It takes a lot to build a Sanctuary in the desert. And it takes perhaps, even more to adorn the Kohanim (priests) who serve, in beautiful vestments that both symbolize deep spirituality while depicting splendor and glory. You need more than golden threads and fine tapestry. You need more than the ability to weave and design ornate garments. You need devotion, and you need heart. Not ordinary heart. Not the heart that pennant winners have or athletic coaches call for. You need a special type of heart. You need a heart filled with wisdom — Divine wisdom. That is why Hashem commands Moshe to gather "all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom" to make the priestly garments (Exodus 28:1).

But the Torah is unclear. Were these select people Divinely ordained with a spirit of wisdom for this particular mission, or were intrinsic "wise-hearted" people imbued with an extra "spirit of wisdom"?

If the former is correct, then what did Hashem add? And if all their wisdom was divinely-gifted, then why didn't Hashem simply ask Moshe to "gather all the people in whom I have invested a spirit of wisdom"?

Rav Sholom Shwadron, the Magid of Jerusalem, of blessed memory, once told a story about the famed Dubno Magid, Rabbi Yaakov Kranz.

The Dubno Magid once spoke in a town and a few maskilim (members of the enlightenment movement) attended. After the talk one of the cynics, who was totally unaffected by the warm and inspiring message, approached the famed Magid. "The sages tell us," began the skeptic, "'that words from the heart, penetrate the heart.' Rabbi," he snickered, "I assume that you spoke from your heart. Your words, however, have had no impact on me whatsoever! How can that be? Why didn't your words penetrate my heart?"

Rabbi Kranz smiled. In his usual fashion, he began with a parable. "A simpleton once went by the workplace of a blacksmith, who was holding a large bellows. After a few squeezes, the flames of the smith's fire danced with a rage. The man, who always found it difficult to start a fire in his own fireplace, marveled at the contraption. He immediately went and purchased the amazing invention. Entering his home, he smugly announced, "I just discovered how to make a raging fire with the simple squeeze of a lever!"

He set a few logs in the cold fireplace and began to push the two ends of the bellows together. Nothing happened. The logs lay cold and lifeless. Embarrassed, the man returned to the blacksmith and explained his predicament. "I want a refund!" he shouted. This blower doesn't work!"

"You yokel," laughed the experienced blacksmith. "You were blowing on cold logs! You must start a small fire on your own! If you don't start with a spark, a fire will never erupt!"

The Magid turned toward the maskil and sadly shook his head sadly. "If there is no spark, the largest bellows will not make a fire."

In telling Moshe whom to choose for the sacred task of designing the Mishkan, the Torah tells us how G-d invests. He wants people that were imbued with a ruach chachmah – a sprirt of wisdom. But he prefaces the statement by telling us how one receives spiritual wisdom. The gift of spiritual wisdom does not go to just anyone. Hashem looks for those who have wisdom of heart. Those who understand what it means to be kind, compassionate, and loyal. Those who have the devotion to His will and the desire for more enlightenment get His ordination. The people who were imbued with Hashem's Divine spirit previously had a spark. And from that spark grew a force – a Divine force – that propelled wise hearts into a Divine spirit of wisdom.

Hashem tells us that we must begin the process on our own. If we supply the heart, He will supply the power to have deep, spiritual, even holy insight. He will supply the force. We must make sure, however, that we put the heart before the force.

Good Shabbos!

Fulfilling the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot through the Shul's Purim Basket

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2021

Question:

May one fulfill the mitzvah of Misloach Manot through a donation to the shul to have their name added to Purim baskets that are going to multiple receivers, and where each basket has multiple names? Does it matter if one is able to do this even without making a donation?

Answer:

Ownership of the food

The overwhelming consensus is that you must own the משלוח מנות you are sending in order to fulfill the mitzvah (however, see Rav Sternbuch, Teshuvot vi'Hanhagot, 1:406, who disagrees).

How would one gain ownership of two pieces of the food in the basket, or a portion of them?

Here's how – The shul (i.e., the rabbi, the Executive Director, someone they designated) can hand the baskets to a third-party (someone who cannot be considered the original owner of them). This third party would then take possession of them for the people who were sending them.

For now, let us assume that the minimum size of Mishloach Manot is a kezayit of each food. The shul representative would give the baskets to this third part, who would take possession of them on behalf of the senders. This is based on the principle of zakhin li'adam shelo bi'fanav – that when a person wants to gift something to another, or transfer ownership for something that has already been paid for, a third party can take possession of the object on the half of the receiver (Rambam, Zekhiya u'Matanah 4:2, SA HM 122:1). This works, as stated, in the case of a gift, so it is irrelevant whether the sender paid for the basket or not. The fruit is now in his possession.

The third party would take possession on the half of the senders with the intent that each sender should own 1 kezayit each of two separate pieces of food in the baskets in which his or her name appears as a sender. This will work if there are enough kezayitm to go around. If not, but there is a total sufficient number of kezaytim in all the baskets to be divided between all the sender, then the shul representative should say something along the lines of "Everyone's name on the first basket that I am transferring to the third party, should own 1 kezayit each of two foods, then everyone's name on the 2nd basket, owns 1 kezayit each of two foods, except for anyone who already owns something in one of the previous baskets, and so on until the end."

What is the Minimum Amount Needed to Fulfill the Mitzvah

Although we have now achieved ownership of a kezayit of two food items in the baskets, this may not suffice.

We have been assuming that the minimum amount is one kezayit per food item. But this is actually a major debate in the poskim. Here are the positions regarding the minimum:

1. Perutah (the smallest amount of money, like a penny for us).

2. Kezayit (the smallest amount of food that were it ingested the act would be considered an act of eating)

3. Amount for a small meal (since it should be going towards the meal, it has to be itself considered like a meal)

4. A meaningful gift which is of significance based on the standing of the giver, and possibly even the receiver (based on the word maneh, which is taken to mean a significant portion)

For most of these positions, Ashel Avraham, Butshash –

> בהשיעור דמשלוח מנות, אני מסופק אם שיעורו במאכל כזית ומשקה רביעית, או שיעורו בכדי שוה פרוטה, או שיעורו במה שהוא ראוי להתכבד לפני אורח, כפי סגנון מנהג כל מקום… ולכאורה נוטה, שגבי מתנות לאביונים השיעור פרוטה, ולגבי מנות השיעור בראוי להתכבד, או בכזית.:

What is this debate about? First, as stated, it might be a simple question of the meaning of the word maneh, which suggests a meaningful portion (see Arukh HaSulkhan, OH 695:15). But even more so, the debate is a conceptual one: What is the purpose of Mishloach Manot? Is it:

> 1. To help provide or add to someone's seudat Purim (Trumat HaDeshen 101, and many indications this way from the Gemara). This approach would focus on the receiver – did he or she get food that contributes to his/her meal? or
> 2. An expression of closeness and friendship (see Manot HaLevi and others) – as perhaps indicated by the verses in the Megilah – which talk about the act of giving, and use the phrase Ish li'reyeihu, a man to his fellow. This approach primarily focuses on the giver – did s/he do an act of expressing their friendship?

Poskim draw halakahic conclusions from this debate. If it is about the receiver, then one does not fulfill the mitzvah if the food was never received, as opposed to if it is about friendship and the giver – this could be accomplished if the receiver knows that it was sent to her, even if it got lost along the way. Similarly, if it is sent anonymously, this would work if the goal is to help someone's seudat Purim (receiver), but not if it was to create greater friendship.

How does this play out in terms of the minimum amount?

> 1. If it is about contributing to the meal / receiver-oriented -then the minimum amount should be a significant contribution to the meal, either a meal in itself (#3, above), or possibly a minimum contribution – a kezayit (#2, above).
>
> 2. If it is about showing love and friendship / sender – then logically it should be a gift that is of a significant importance for the giver to be a sign of friendship and respect (and possibly, although likely not, for the receiver) (#4, above).

Probably the position of a perutah (#1) fits into the approach of sending a gift of friendship, as it is the size of a minimum gift. This position is largely rejected by the poskim.

So, given these various amounts, and excluding the perutah possibility, distributing ownership between the baskets would only be possible if we adopt the kezayit approach, as the other two – a minimum meal and the significant gift – are too large to allow everyone to own such this amount of food in the baskets.

There is No Sense that Anyone Sent to the Receiver Personally

What about the fact that the receiver knows only that all the people on the list donated to him by some minimum contribution, but that no one sent to him specifically? What friendship is created by the fact that I know that each sender put her name on my basket and a dozen others? Also, as we have seen, that approach focuses on the giver, and here there is no emphasis on a particular giver. Thus, this would almost definitely does not work if the focus is on friendship (b, above).

If, however, the focus is on contributing to the meal (a, above), then logically it would work. The focus here is on the receiver, and in this case you have contributed to the receiver's meal, even though she doesn't connect to any particular sender.

Conclusion:

If the shul gifts the baskets to a third party, such that everyone owns a kezayit each of two foods, as described above, one can assume that this fulfills the mitzvah of Mishloach Manot. It is of course better to do it the normal way, but when that option is not available, as might particularly be the case in the time of COVID, one can rely on this method. Again, this requires that the shul do the transferring of ownership, as discussed.

Reasoning:

1 ..There is a way to make everyone own a kezaiyt per 2 food items in each basket (assuming that there is enough to go around).

2. This amount would not be enough if we adopt the friendship approach – a larger size would be need.
3. If we adopt the approach of contributing to the meal, then there is good reason to argue that a kezayit would suffice.

4. The general understanding of the mitzvah, based on the Gemara sources and the poskim, is that this is about contributing to seudat purim.

5. Given that the mitzvah is di'rabanan (technically mi'divrei sofrim, since it is based on verses in Megilat Esther), we can assume that the size is a kezayit and not a significant contribution to the meal (although both of these sizes is consistent with the idea of contributing to seudat Purim).

6. Given the focus on the meal and the receiver, we can assume that it also suffices that the receiver receives this amount, even though he doesn't know who, or feel any connection to, a specific sender.

https://library.yctorah.org/lindenbaum/fulfilling-the-mitzvah-of-mishloach-manot-through-the-shuls-purim-basket/

Purim -- Hashem Has His Waze

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine* © 2017 Teach 613

One of the difficulties that some people have with religious perspective is that they find it hard to believe that G-d really pays attention to the individual. Perhaps their logic is, "If indeed G-d is great, why would He care about me." The Torah perspective is that indeed Hashem is great AND He does care for the individual.

This Torah perspective was felt by the Jews of the Purim story when they realized that Hashem had orchestrated Haman's edict, and their salvation from it, with the greatest precision. In fact, one of the most powerful statements in Megilas Esther is the statement that Mordechai makes to Esther when she expressed her reluctance to go to the king to plead the case of the Jews. Mordechai says, "Perhaps it is for this moment that you became queen" Mordechai is a firm believer that things happen in this world because there is a Plan. And he is fairly certain that the reason that Esther was chosen against her will to be the queen was so that she would be positioned so well to save the Jews.

Recently, with the advent of Waze, I have become less understanding of the notion that G-d can't possibly keep track of all of humanity and really care. "Interesting," I have come to muse, that we are fully understanding about a computer system that keeps track of your location and the locations of thousands of others, and directs you based on traffic patterns on the roads that you could potentially take to reach your destination. In fact the system is so opinionated that, quite frankly, I am sometimes a bit perturbed by the way it directs me make multiple turns down side-streets, just to reach a destination a minute or two earlier.

People will say, "Well, Waze makes sense. After all it is an APP."

"Correct," I reply, "And when we said that Someone was keeping track of all of humanity we weren't talking about just anybody. We were talking about G-d."

Even more remarkable than Mordechai's confidence that Hashem positioned Esther as queen so that she can help the Jews, is his confidence that if she wouldn't go, Hashem would orchestrate a different venue of salvation. Realize that the statistical odds of Esther being chosen as unwilling queen are about a gazillion to one. Yet Mordechai says with confidence that Hashem will orchestrate another, perhaps equally unlikely venue of salvation, if Esther is unwilling to play her part.

There are many other lessons one can learn from Waze. For example, "Watch out: Car stopped on shoulder ahead." Indeed, there is little quite as humbling as a luxury car stuck on the side of the road with a flat tire, and a system that reminds us that such things do happen.

Even the ability for one wazer to inform another wazer of a road block is quite instructive. Some parents think that children should discover truth on their own without guidance. The Torah perspective is that we are obligated to caution children of possible places where they might stumble so that they can meet challenge with good judgment.

But for me the most important is the awareness that all we do is being tracked, and the path we take is being guided. Hashem has many ways to bring salvation. May we be fortunate to hearken when we are called upon to play our personal role in destiny.

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Mordecai and His Critics: Thoughts for Purim

by Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Who could be more successful, more beloved, more worthy of respect than Mordecai? He was a superhero who stood up for the dignity of the Jewish people, who was largely responsible for averting Haman's evil decree to annihilate the Jews, and who rose to be the king's viceroy.

He was not only successful and powerful. He also had fine moral qualities and good values. The Megillah informs us that Mordecai—in spite of his lofty position—was characterized by "seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his seed (Esther 10:3)." He was a warm, conscientious and thoughtful leader.

Who could possibly not like Mordecai?

Yet, the Megillah informs us that Mordecai was "great among the Jews and agreeable to most of his brethren (Esther 10:3)." Our sages noted: Mordecai was agreeable to MOST of his fellow Jews, most but not all! Mordecai had his enemies and detractors. What did these dissidents have against him?

One group may have thought: Mordecai was too "Jewish." If only he had not defied Haman, the crisis would not have happened in the first place. Mordecai should not have demonstrated his Jewishness in public. He should have tried to blend in, to stay under the radar. This group felt that Jews should camouflage their Jewishness to the extent possible. You can be Jewish at home, but not in public!

Another group may have thought: Mordecai was not Jewish enough! He was too close with the Persian powers. He dressed like a Persian viceroy and had to adopt the courtly ways of the nobles of the kingdom. Mordecai would not have had much time to study Torah or attend synagogue services. He was a "court Jew" who had to sell out on his religiosity in order to hold his high position.

Yet others disliked Mordecai—just because they disliked anyone who had more success or prestige than they had. Such people enjoy tearing others down as a means of artificially building themselves up. What fun it is to ridicule leaders, and pick away at their real or perceived flaws. Sitting in the grandstands, small-minded people enjoy criticizing those who are out on the playing field.

Mordecai's critics exist in every generation and in every community. There are still those who think Jews should hide their Jewishness, should assimilate to the extent possible so as to blend in with the larger society. These people cringe at public demonstrations of Jewish religious or national expression. If only Jews would be invisible…

There are still those who suspect others of being not sufficiently religious or sufficiently proud of their Jewishness. They criticize those who adopt modern dress or modern thought; the modernists are branded as assimilationists, as betrayers of Torah.

And there are inevitably people who criticize…because that's what they enjoy doing. No matter how good and true their leaders are, the critics will find fault. They will pontificate and pose as sages who know far better than the leaders. They do this because of their weak egos, their need to assert their own worthiness by tearing down the worthiness of others. Although these are weak and pitiful human beings, they continue to flourish without self-reflection and without the desire to improve themselves.

So Mordecai—like almost everyone of eminence!—could not please everyone. No matter what he did or didn't do, someone would be sure to criticize and harass him.

How did Mordecai deal with his critics? The Megillah suggests that he did not pay any attention to them! On the contrary, he kept seeking peace and speaking good for the benefit of all his people—including his detractors. Mordecai was not in a popularity contest, he was not interested in appeasing this group or that group. He would not lose focus on his mission as a leader dedicated to the peace and wellbeing of his people.

Bravo Mordecai!

"For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went forth throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai waxed greater and greater (Esther 9:4)."

* Angel for Shabbat; Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, https://www.jewishideas.org/mordecai-and-his-critics-thoughts-purim **The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website jewishideas.org or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Instutite for Jewish Ideas and Ideals at this time**.

Living Up To Our Uniforms: Thoughts for Parashat Tetsaveh

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *****

People wear uniforms…athletes, police, firefighters, surgeons, clergy. Graduates don caps and gowns. Marching bands have their uniforms. Top hats and tails, formal gowns, business attire…each uniform is meant to define a particular role or a particular occasion. When people dress casually so that they think they are not wearing uniforms…they are wearing casual uniforms! The way they dress is meant to reflect their conformity with or rebellion from the current fashions.

The Torah goes into great detail about the uniform of the priests of the Mishkan, and especially about that of the High Priest. The latter's garments were quite impressive and were meant to evoke "honor and glory." When Israelites entered the Mishkan, and later the Temples in Jerusalem, they witnessed a priesthood with elaborate costumes.

Uniforms serve a functional purpose. They indicate to outsiders what roles the uniform-wearers are playing. But uniforms also serve a psychological role. When we see someone dressed in a particular outfit, specific emotions arise within us. Our moods and behaviors are influenced by the uniforms; in a sense, the uniforms are symbols of roles that evoke emotional responses from us.

When Israelites entered the Mishkan or Temple precincts, they witnessed priests performing the various services. When they saw the High Priest in his fancy regalia, they not only knew that he was the High Priest; they also felt the "honor and

glory" that was associated with him. They had a Pavlovian reaction: here is a man who stands close to God, who represents us in our relationship with the Divine.

How did the High Priest feel as he wore his distinctive uniform? Ideally, the special clothing would have evoked within him a heightened feeling of reverence and responsibility. He knew that everyone who saw him thought of him in lofty terms; he had to live up to their high expectations. The priestly uniform was not merely intended to impact on the Israelites, but on the priest himself. He had to live by the highest standards, to live up to the uniform he wore.

However, there may have been (and there were!) High Priests who did not live up to their uniforms. Rather, they somehow came to feel that the uniform served as a camouflage. Instead of the uniform inspiring greater piety and integrity, it was a place to hide. They wielded authority by virtue of their external costume, not by virtue of who they were.

When the priesthood's authority depended on vestments rather than on personal piety and integrity, then the public lost respect for the priests and for all that the priesthood was supposed to represent. The Temple service, as many of our Prophets lamented, became a hypocritical sham. Priests went through the specified rituals and offerings, but the feeling of the presence of God was lacking. The priests became functionaries, not religious personalities who could teach and inspire. The Israelites' religious leadership had become a group of uniforms, empty suits.

Whatever our particular uniform and our particular roles in life, it is essential that we not allow ourselves to become costumes rather than genuine, honest people. Just as clergy desecrate religion when they do not live up to their uniforms and their callings, so everyone undermines personal integrity when they depend on play-acting and costumes to impress others.

The great 20th century teacher and literary critic, Lionel Trilling, wrote of "the satisfaction with the thing that looks like the real thing but is not the real thing." People are too often satisfied with false images and do not demand the "real thing." But wise people see through the falsehoods and the play-acting. Eventually, most people will come to demand the "real thing," at least so we must hope.

Do we demand the "real thing" in others? Do we live up to our own uniforms, up to our roles in life, up to our potentialities? Do we demand the "real thing" in ourselves?

* https://www.jewishideas.org/living-our-uniforms-thoughts-parashat-tetsaveh

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Parshas Terumah

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer*

Rabbi Singer's Dvar Torah was too late for my deadline this week. Watch for his messages most weeks.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD.

Purim: Happy Almost Purim

by Rabbi Moshe Rube*

Tradition dictates that we must engage in a special type of Torah learning now called "Purim Torah". It's the type of Torah a rabbi says when hanging upside down from a jungle gym, just as Haman's evil decree turned upside down on him. Here are three bits of Purim Torah I learned to pep up your holiday.

Q1) Is the genie's magic lamp considered "land" or a "movable object"? In halacha, we assume you own the land (if you have no deed) if you've lived there for 3 years, but movable objects can be acquired by simply picking them up. So can I just pick up the magic lamp to acquire it or do I have to live in it for 3 years?

A) It is part of the binding that a genie must serve the owner of the lamp (or a comparable object such as a djinn's ring). Since this condition of ownership can be established by just claiming possession of it through picking it up, the genie's lamp counts as a "movable object."

However, please ask your estate lawyer before starting any effort to establish ownership by adverse possession of such an iiiiiiity-bitty living space claimed by a being of incredible cosmic power. (That Genie can't kill you, but you'd be astonished what you can live through. Proper general and medical powers of attorney are strongly indicated.)

Q2) Cookie monster loves cookies. So what do Jewish cookie monsters eat for Pesach? Maybe he should be allowed to eat cookies because his behavior over 30 years has shown that not having cookies for him is a life-threatening situation.

A2a) In the past, maybe CM could have eaten regular cookies because those store-bought potato starch cookies just couldn't measure up. But now that we have so many fancy flours readily available off Amazon, like almond and quinoa flour, and people who spend their whole careers making delicious chametz-free cookies, Jewish Cookie Monster should be satisfied with Kosher for Pesach cookies.

A2b) The Talmud (Shabbat 30b) says that Israel in the future will grow ready made bread and clothes straight out of the ground. Presumably, this bread will not be chametz because it did not go through the strict process of grain flour getting exposed to water. So wherever the Jewish Cookie Monster, lives he probably has been snacking on a Messianic cookie tree on Pesach all these millennia.

And now for all the computer nerds out there!

Q3) What computer programming language does the Torah consider the smartest?

A3) In Genesis 3:1 the Torah says that "The Nachash was the smartest animal in the field." Nachash means snake, which also refers to Python, so therefore the smartest programming language must be Python according to the explicit text of the Torah.

But be careful though. The Talmud says that "A person must always pay full damage costs if his Nachash does damage." So if someone does hacking damage with Python, he'd have to pay full damages, whereas he only has to pay half damage if he was using another language like HTML.

Happy Purim!
Rabbi Moshe Rube

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Rav Kook Torah
Tetzaveh: The High Priest's Clothes and the Convert

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

The Convert Who Wanted to be High Priest

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

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

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

The Gentile made the mistake of approaching Shamai. “I want you to convert me,” he told Shamai, “but only on condition that you appoint me High Priest.” Shamai rebuffed the man, pushing him away with a builder’s measuring rod.

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

So the new convert began studying Torah. One day, he came across the verse, “Any non-priest who participates [in the holy service] shall die” (Num. 3:10). “To whom does this refer?’ he asked. Even King David, he was told. Even David, king of Israel, was not allowed to serve in the holy Temple, as he was not a descendant of Aaron the kohen.

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

Shamai’s Rejection and Hillel’s Perspective

A fascinating story, but one that requires to be examined. Why did Shamai use a builder’s measuring rod to send away the potential convert? What did Hillel see in the Gentile that convinced him to perform the conversion?
Shamai felt that the man lacked a sincere motivation to convert. By chance, he had overheard the recitation of the High Priest’s special garments. The garments, beautiful though they may be, represent only an external honor. His aspirations were shallow and superficial, like clothing that is worn on the surface.

Furthermore, the chance incident did not even awaken within the Gentile a realistic goal. How could conversion to Judaism, with all of the Torah’s obligations, be based on such a crazy, impossible fancy — being appointed High Priest? The foundations of such a conversion were just too shaky. Shamai pushed him away with a builder’s measuring rod, indicating that he needed to base his goals on solid, measured objectives.

Hillel, however, looked at the situation differently. In his eyes, the very fact that this man passed by the synagogue just when this verse was being read, and that this incident should inspire him to such a lofty goal — converting to Judaism — this person must have a sincere yearning for truth planted deeply in his heart. He was not seeking the honor accorded to the rich and powerful, but rather the respect granted to those who serve God at the highest level. The seed of genuine love of God was there, just obscured by false ambitions, the result of profound ignorance. Hillel was confident that as he advanced in Torah study, the convert would discover the beauty and honor of divine service that he so desired through the sincere observance of the Torah’s laws, even without being the High Priest.

Both Traits Needed

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

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

Rav Kook noted that the converts did not talk about Shamai and Hillel. Rather, they spoke of the “strictness of Shamai” and the “humility of Hillel.” These are two distinct character traits, each one necessary in certain situations. In order to maintain spiritual attainments, we need the traits of firmness and strictness. On the other hand, in order to grow spiritually, or to draw close those who are far away, we need the traits of humility and tolerance. The three converts recognized that it was Hillel’s quality of humility that helped bring them “under the wings of God’s Presence.”

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 152-154. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, pp. 144-147.)

http://www.ravkooktorah.org/TETZAVEH60.htm

Brothers: A Drama in Five Acts (Tetzaveh 5779)

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

It is interesting to note the absence of Moses from the parsha of Tetzaveh. For once Moses, the hero, the leader, the liberator, the lawgiver, is off-stage in the only instance where the name of Moses is not mentioned at all in any parsha since the first parsha of the book of Shemot (in which he is born).

Instead our focus is on his elder brother Aaron who, elsewhere, is often in the background. Indeed, virtually the whole parsha is devoted to the role Moses did not occupy, except briefly – that of priest in general, High Priest in particular.

It is important that we have a parsha dedicated to the legacy of the priestly role for Judaism. However, need this focus have removed Moses from the passage entirely? Is there any larger significance to his absence? The commentators offered various suggestions.[1]

One given in the Talmud refers to an event at the beginning of Moses' leadership: his encounter with God at the burning bush. Moses repeatedly expressed reluctance to undertake the mission of leading the people out of Egypt. Finally we read:

But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

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 his heart will be glad when he sees 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." (Exodus 4:13–15)

The Talmud records a debate about the lasting consequences of that moment when Moses, as it were, refused one time too many. To decline a leadership challenge once or twice is a sign of humility. To continue to do so when it is God Himself issuing the challenge risks provoking divine anger, as happened here. The Talmud comments:

> *"Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses" – Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha said: every instance of [divine] anger in the Torah leaves a lasting effect, except in this instance. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: here too it left a lasting effect, for it goes on to say, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite?" Surely Aaron was a priest [not just a Levite]. Rather, what God meant was: I originally intended that you [Moses] would be a priest and he [Aaron] would merely be a Levite. But now [because of your refusal], he will eventually become a priest and you will only be a Levite.[2]*

According to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the lasting effect of Moses' reluctance to lead was that one vital leadership role – priesthood – would eventually go to Aaron rather than to Moses himself.

Basing himself on this passage, Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (1270– 1340) suggests that Moses' name is missing from Tetzaveh, which deals with the priestly garments, "to spare him distress" on seeing Aaron acquire the insignia of priesthood that might have been Moses' own.[3]

Without negating this or other explanations, there is also a more fundamental message. One of the recurring themes of Genesis is sibling rivalry, hostility between brothers. This story is told, at ever-increasing length, four times: between Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers.

There is an identifiable pattern to this set of narratives, best seen in the way each ends. The story of Cain and Abel ends with murder – fratricide. Isaac and Ishmael, though they grow up apart, are seen together at Abraham's funeral. Evidently there had been a reconciliation between them, though this can only be read between the lines (and spelled out in midrash), not directly in the text. Jacob and Esau meet, embrace and go their separate ways. Joseph and his brothers are reconciled and live together in peace, Joseph providing them with food, land, and protection.

Genesis is telling us a story of great consequence. Fraternity – one of the key words of the French revolution – is not simple or straightforward. It is often fraught with conflict and contention. Yet slowly, brothers can learn that there is another way. On this note Genesis ends. But it is not the end of the story.

The drama has a fifth act: the relationship between Moses and Aaron. Here, for the first time, there is no hint of sibling rivalry.[4] The brothers work together from the very outset of the mission to lead the Israelites to freedom. They address the people together. They stand together when confronting Pharaoh. They perform signs and wonders together. They share leadership of the people in the wilderness together. For the first time, brothers function as a team, with different gifts, different talents, different roles, but without hostility, each complementing the other.

Their partnership is a constant feature of the narrative. But there are certain moments where it is highlighted. The first occurs in the passage already cited above. God tells Moses that Aaron "is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you." How different this is from the tense encounters between brothers in Genesis!

Aaron, we may have thought, would have many reasons not to rejoice on seeing Moses return. The brothers had not grown up together. Moses had been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in an Egyptian palace, while Aaron remained with the Israelites. Nor had they been together during the Israelites' sufferings. Moses, fearing for his life after his assault on an Egyptian taskmaster, had fled to Midian.

Besides this, Moses was Aaron's younger brother, and yet it was he who was about to become the leader of the people. Always in the past, when the younger had taken something the elder might have believed belonged naturally to him, there was jealousy, animosity. Yet God assures Moses: "when Aaron sees you, he will rejoice." And so he did:

> *And the Lord said to Aaron, Go to the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.* (Exodus 4:27)

The second fascinating clue is contained in a strange passage that traces the descent of Moses and Aaron:

> *Amram married his father's sister Yocheved, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years…It was this same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions." They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. It was this same Moses and Aaron*. (Exodus 6:20, 26–27)

The repeated phrase, "It was this same," is emphatic even in translation. It is all the more so when we note two peculiarities of the text. The first is that the phrases, though at first they sound identical, in fact place the names of the brothers in a different order: the first says "Aaron and Moses," the second, "Moses and Aaron."[5] Even more striking is the grammatical oddity of the phrase. Both times, the third person singular is used. Literally, they read: "He was Aaron and Moses," "He was Moses and Aaron." The text should have said, "They" – all the more so since the pronoun "they" is used in the middle of the passage: "They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh."

The unmistakable implication is that they were like a single individual; they were as one. There was no hierarchy between them: sometimes Aaron's name appears first, sometimes Moses'. There is a wonderful Midrash that bears out this idea, based on the verse in Psalms (85:11) "Loving-kindness and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other."

Loving-kindness – this refers to Aaron. Truth – this refers to Moses. Righteousness – this refers to Moses. Peace – this refers to Aaron.[6]

The Midrash brings proof-texts for each of these identifications, but we understand them immediately. Moses and Aaron were quite different in temperament and role. Moses was the man of truth, Aaron of peace. Without truth, there can be no vision to inspire a nation. But without internal peace, there is no nation to inspire. Aaron and Moses were both necessary. Their roles were in creative tension. Yet they worked side by side, each respecting the distinctive gift of the other. As the Midrash goes on to say:

> *"And he kissed him" [the brothers kissed when they met] – This means: each rejoiced at the other's greatness.[7]*

A final Midrash completes the picture by referring to this week's parsha and the vestments of the High Priest, especially the breastplate with its Urim and Tumim:

"His heart will be glad when he sees you" – Let the heart that rejoiced in the greatness of his brother be vested with the Urim and Tumim.[8]

The Urim and Tumim were a form of oracle, carried by the High Priest in his breastplate. They conveyed divine inspiration and guidance, a kind of priestly equivalent of the divine word that came to the prophet.[9] It was precisely the fact that Aaron did not envy his younger brother but instead rejoiced in his greatness that made him worthy to be High Priest. So it came to pass – measure for measure – that just as Aaron made space for his younger brother to lead, so the Torah makes space for Aaron to lead. That is why Aaron is the hero of Tetzaveh: for once, not overshadowed by Moses.

"Who is honoured?" asked Ben Zoma. "One who honours others."[10] Aaron honoured his younger brother. That is why Moses (not mentioned by name but by implication) is told in this week's parsha, "Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him honour and splendour" (Exodus 28:2). To this day a Kohen is honoured by being the first to be called up to the Torah – the Torah that Aaron's younger brother Moses gave to the Jewish people.

The story of Aaron and Moses, the fifth act in the biblical drama of brotherhood, is where, finally, fraternity reaches the heights. And that surely is the meaning of Psalm 133, with its explicit reference to Aaron and his sacred garments: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes." It was thanks to Aaron, and the honour he showed Moses, that at last brothers learned to live together in unity.

Shabbat Shalom.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] See my earlier essay on Tetzaveh, "Priests and Prophets", Covenant and Conversation: Exodus, the book of Redemption, p. 219.

[2] Zevaĥim 102a.

[3] R. Jacob ben Asher, commentary of Baal HaTurim to Exodus 27:20.

[4] Some developed later – see Numbers, chap. 12 – but was resolved by Moses' humility.

[5] "This teaches that they were equals" (Tosefta, Kritot, end).

[6] Shemot Rabbah 5:10

[7] Ibid., ad loc.

[8] Ibid. 3:17.

[9] According to Ramban, they consisted of letters spelling out the divine name or names, some of which would light up at key moments, spelling out a message to be deciphered by the High Priest.

[10] Avot 4:1

* Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I have selected an earlier Dvar. *See* https://rabbisacks.org/brothers-a-drama-in-five-acts-tetzaveh-5779/#_ftnref1

Down to the Details: An Essay on Parshat Tetzaveh

By Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) ***** © Chabad 2021

While Parshat Terumah deals primarily with the Tabernacle's outer structure, Parshat Tetzaveh deals with what is inside, its inner workings and the daily routine within its confines.

For this reason, one section of the parshah deals with the priestly garments, in which the Torah emphasizes: “And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they enter the Tent of Meeting, or when they approach the Altar to minister in the holy place, so that they not bear iniquity and die1.” This is how they must comport themselves, and anyone who does otherwise puts his life at risk.

The other section deals with the Priests’ investiture, describing all the tasks that must be performed inside the Tabernacle. Each part of the daily service that the Priests will later perform in the Tabernacle is already represented in the proceedings of the investiture days, although not necessarily in the same order.

Are all systems go?

The section on the Tabernacle – the command, the order of the service, the construction, the dismantling, and the actual performance of the tasks - repeats itself many times, to the point where it becomes wearisome. In order to understand these numerous minutely detailed repetitions, we must first analyze the nature of the Tabernacle itself.

This instrument’s only test is whether it really works.

The Tabernacle is a type of instrument whose function is to connect the earth with heaven. To succeed in this task, it has to function properly, without any mishaps. This instrument’s only test is whether it really works. If it was assembled incorrectly, even if the error was only in the minutest detail, it does not matter if one had the best intentions when assembling it – it will not work; it will simply malfunction.

The construction of the Tabernacle can be compared to the construction of a spacecraft. A spacecraft is an extremely complex structure made of a multitude of parts, each one of which must be perfectly precise. First of all, all the calculations must all be correct. Then all the parts must be manufactured, and when construction begins, everything must be done exactly according to plan. An entire team of experts pores over each stage. One team checks the accuracy of the calculations; another checks whether the work was done according to all the specifications of the plans. Then an attempt is made to assemble all the parts, and even then everything must be checked: Do the screws really fit? Are they in the right place? Did anything fall out? Have any cracks developed? Once everything is assembled, the whole apparatus must be dismantled to verify whether all is truly in order. At the end of the entire process, after the arduous preparatory process is finally complete, comes the moment when someone presses a button and the real question arises: Will the spacecraft lift off or not?

In 1988, the Soviets sent two satellites to study Mars and its moons. The satellites were operated by solar energy, and for that purpose, they occasionally had to change their wing angle according to instructions they received from Earth. A daily communication lasting a few seconds was sent to them containing thousands of commands in computer code. These commands had to be checked on a daily basis, line after line, and then rechecked, so that no error should creep in. One day, someone erred and entered one incorrect letter in one of the lines of the program. Two days later, it was discovered that the satellite had shut down, was unable to change its wing angle, had depleted its batteries, and all contact with it was lost.

An incredibly expensive spacecraft was lost, all because of an error in one word, in one line, which caused it to shut down

Thus, an incredibly expensive spacecraft was lost, all because of an error in one word, in one line, which caused it to shut down. The device may still exist somewhere in space, but it doesn’t do anything meaningful. It changed from an instrument that could have been of great benefit to a worthless, insignificant object.

Likewise, after the assembly and construction of the Tabernacle was finished, after the anointing, the sanctification, and all the preparation, the Tabernacle had to rise heavenward – its moment of truth. In this respect, the climax of the construction of the Tabernacle is not in its “launch,” but precisely in the days of investiture,2 which, at first glance, appears to have been devoid of any suspense. After all, the Torah merely describes the attiring of the Priests and the bringing of the korbanot. In truth, however, there is a tremendous feeling of suspense that mounts with each and every verse in the narrative.

The Midrash relates that on each of the seven days of investiture, Moses would erect and dismantle the Tabernacle twice. After months of building the Tabernacle, and even though all appeared to be in order and the boards fit together, the Tabernacle was dismantled and rebuilt again and again.3 For Moses, the fact that the boards fit together was not sufficient; perhaps it does not stand securely. They checked everything, dismantling and assembling; everything is in its proper place. And yet the tension continues to mount: Does it work or not?

On each of the seven days of investiture, the Tabernacle was assembled, Aaron entered, bringing the korban and slaughtering it. Each time, nothing happened – so the Tabernacle was dismantled. It was impossible to know where an error might have crept in, so once again everything needed to be checked from the beginning to determine what might have been the problem. As Rashi and the other commentaries explain, it was only on the eighth day, when Aaron entered the Tent with Moses and they prayed together, that the heavenly fire finally descended upon the Altar. At that moment, everything suddenly happened at once: "God's glory was then revealed to all the people. Fire came forth from before God and consumed upon the Altar the whole offering and the fat parts. When the people saw this, they became ecstatic and threw themselves on their faces."4

An entire nation – all 600,000 men, and all the women and children as well – waits with bated breath. The instructions for how to proceed are complex and detailed; the more progress that is made, the more the tension mounts. What will happen in the end? The Tabernacle is meant to be an instrument that connects the earth with heaven. Will it achieve this goal? Yet the final tasks that Moses, Aaron, and the Priests perform are precisely the least dramatic: Is the Menora in place? Was the ram offered at the right time? And then – "God's glory was revealed to all the people," fire descends from heaven, there is contact and a connection. The same picture appears at the dedication of the Temple as well, with all the suspense and the sigh of relief at the end.

The Tabernacle was an instrument whose every part was made with great precision. Everything had its own specifications: where it should stand, what its function is, etc. This is what makes the Tabernacle an instrument for receiving the Divine Presence. If it is made a little differently, if the Menorah is placed even slightly to the side, it will not work. Every one of these details forms the greater whole.

Importance of the details

The passages describing the Tabernacle proceedings are so full of details that they are often perceived as some of the most boring parts of the Torah. Yet these details are repeated over and over again. Why does the Torah need to say exactly how the pants should be and where exactly the bells should be attached to the robe? The Torah also elaborates on the breastplate: It should have two rings, to which something else is attached, and to this attachment another thing is attached.

Why must the Torah mention these things? To teach us how to attach one clasp to another, or how to create gold settings? Even if these were indeed important details for us to know, why repeat these details so many times and ensconce them in the text of the Torah for eternity?

In truth, however, this story is full of suspense, almost like a cinematic thriller. How will all the intricate plans for the Tabernacle play out in reality? Did Bezalel make everything precisely according to the instructions? Did he perhaps attach one piece at the wrong angle, causing the whole enterprise to fail?

This story is full of suspense, almost like a cinematic thriller. How will all the intricate plans for the Tabernacle play out in reality?

When an ordinary garment is sewn, it makes no difference whether the seam is placed a little to the right or to the left of the proper design. But when a diving suit or space suit is produced, if it is not sewn properly and as a result a small tear develops, the result is catastrophic. This is not a children's game, where someone mistakenly moves a little out of position or three steps ahead without any major consequence. Here, it is like an untrained homeowner who tries his hand at complicated electrical repairs. Even if he has seen the electrician take a certain tool, put it in a certain place, screw it in and turn it three times with his hand, and successfully repair the problem, if the untrained individual tries to imitate these steps he will likely electrocute himself. Every detail in the parshah is intensely serious. To go too far is a fatal mistake. As Aaron was told, he should not enter the Sanctuary without wearing the robe, "so that he not die."5 In essence, the Torah is telling Aaron that this is not a test. He is dealing with a mighty flame, with the holy of holies. The story of the death of

Aaron's two sons relates to this very point. Nadav and Avihu, sons of the High Priest, enter, thinking that they are dealing with a simple matter. But when they make one misstep, they die as a result.

The Talmud describes the terror surrounding the High Priest's entry into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. He is forbidden to remain inside too long, so as not to frighten the people.6 The Zohar comments that they would tie a rope to the High Priest's foot, so that they could pull him out if he dies while inside.7 This is not because the place itself is frightening. The fact is that when inspections occasionally had to be made, people used to look inside and artisans would go in to perform renovations. If an artisan can enter, why is everyone seized with such terror when the High Priest is inside?

It is just like electricity; it depends on the situation

The answer is that it is just like electricity; it depends on the situation. On an ordinary day, it is possible to go in and touch things without ill effect. On Yom Kippur, however, all the fuses are lit, the current is flowing, and those who enter risk their lives.

Inside the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle contains two vital components for forming the connection between heaven and earth. The first component is the vessels, and in Parshat Teruma we saw how they are made and what they are made of. The second component, the Tabernacle's inner dimension, is the person who uses it. The Tabernacle is not an empty instrument; it is an instrument that depends on the people who operate it. The staff can consist of several thousand Priests, as in Second Temple times, or – as in the case of the Tabernacle – it can be a limited staff of several individuals.

In Parshat Tetzaveh we see that there are functions that are indispensable for the Tabernacle's overall structure to work and achieve its purpose; without them, it simply does not respond. The entire parshah deals with service in the Sanctuary – the inner proceedings of the Tabernacle. What allows the system to operate is the inclusion of the human component, the people themselves, who are charged with ensuring that the walls do not remain merely walls but much more than that.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Ex. 28:35.
2. Lev. 8–9.
3. Numbers Rabbah 12.
4. Lev. 9:23–24.
5. Ex. 28:35.
6. Yoma 53b.
7. Emor 102a.

* Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) (1937-2020), one of the leading rabbis of this century and author of many books, was best known for his monumental translation of and commentary on the Talmud.

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5047125/jewish/Down-to-the-Details.htm

"Because They Partook of the Banquet of the Wicked One"

Based on a sicha by Harav Aharon Lichtenstein zt"l, Translated by Kaeren Fish *****

The Gemara (Megilla 12a) records:

> *The disciples of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asked him: "Why were the haters of Israel of that generation punished with [a decree of] annihilation?"*
> *He responded: "Give your own answer."*
> *They said, "Because they partook of the banquet of the wicked one [Achashverosh]…'"*

According to this exchange, the disciples of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai propose that partaking of Achashverosh's banquet is a sin so great that the terrible decree promulgated against all the Jews of the Persian Empire may be viewed as a fitting punishment. ("Haters of Israel" is a euphemism for the Jewish people themselves, as the Talmud refrains from referencing the nation directly in such calamitous circumstances.) On the face of it, this is difficult to accept. How are we to understand this equation?

It seems that the willing participation in the banquet is an eloquent testament to the spiritual state of the Jews in Shushan at the time. Shushan is a wealthy, progressive, cosmopolitan city. Most of the provinces of the Persian Empire consist of rural agricultural settlements maintaining a more traditional way of life, with a transfer of land — the source of livelihood and a symbol of life — from one generation to the next. The urban society of Shushan, on the other hand, is characterized by a more audacious and exhilarating lifestyle, with no foundation of values or tradition. Shushan is a glamorous and captivating city, at the peak of its cultural development.

This must certainly have a direct effect on the Jews of the city, too. They are assimilated into this melting pot where the most powerful influence is not ancestral roots and heritage, but rather the contemporary scene. It is a place where one's personal identity is not defined by ethnic or national markers, and one is simply another face among "all the people who were found in Shushan" (Esther 1:5).

This, then, is the more profound significance of partaking in the banquet of the wicked Achashverosh. It represented a blurring, perhaps even a disavowal, of Jewish identity, in order to make a clear and unambiguous statement: We are part of "all the people"; we are full and equal subjects and citizens of Achashverosh's kingdom.

However, the sin goes deeper than just yielding to the surrounding culture because it is easier than retaining a unique Jewish identity. The culture of Shushan is itself morally problematic. The image arising from the description of the banquet is rather shocking (Esther 1:3-8). For over six months ("a hundred and eighty days"!), the military and political elite of the empire feast and frolic; then, for an additional week, the entire population of the capital city is occupied with nothing more than stuffing itself with food and drink.

This is simply an orgy of physical, sensual excess, intended to satisfy the lowest of human inclinations. Furthermore, beyond the problem of what people are doing for all this time, there is the problem of what they are not doing: How are they supporting themselves? How is any useful work getting done? They are altogether oriented towards consumption and gluttony, rather than creativity and productivity. The ongoing partying clearly lacks any element of self-discipline.

The repair for the sin of the Jews of Shushan who "partook of the banquet of the wicked one" has been continued by generations of Jews throughout the millennia. The repair is effected through two opposite means: one, the Fast of Esther; the other, the Purim feast. These are two very different paths of repair, but they form an organic whole.

On the Fast of Esther, we go to the extreme of refraining from all food and drink. Through this abstention, we express our rejection of the degenerate world of Shushan, immersed in decadence and endless, mindless festivity. We separate ourselves and cleanse ourselves from the debauchery of the surroundings to which the Jews of Shushan succumb in the Megilla.

The Purim feast is a repair of a different sort: not a wholesale rejection of the world of festivity and banqueting, but rather a rectification of it, raising it to the level of holiness and the service of God. Here the repair and sanctification are effected through "days of feasting and gladness" (Esther 9:22), days of a holy nature that are meant to help a one give expression to one's pure inner world. As Rabbi Chiya puts it in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 38a): "As wine enters, secrets emerge."

The fast and the feast jointly hold the key to repairing the terrible sin of partaking of the banquet of the wicked Achashverosh and all that it represents.

***** Yeshivat Har Etzion, Virtual Beit Midrash, https://www.etzion.org.il/en/%E2%80%9Cbecause-they-partook-banquet-wicked-one%E2%80%9D

Tetzaveh: A Home for G-d

By Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

G-d told Moses, "I will dwell among Israelites." (Shemot 29:45)

We might think that only righteous and holy people can create a physical sanctuary for the Divine presence. Yet the Torah makes it clear that the Tabernacle was built by every man, women, and child, regardless of their spiritual status.

This was possible only because of the giving of the Torah, when G-d made His essence--which transcends the limitations of the natural order--the inner essence of every Jew. On account of our inner Divine essence, we remain inwardly true to our Divine nature even when we appear not to be focused on holiness. At our core, our truest and purest desire is to be one with G-d and fulfill His will.

Thus, even a Jew who appears to be self oriented is capable of building a dwelling for G-d. Every one of us has the capacity to transform the world into a place about which G-d can say: "I will dwell there, among you."

— * from Daily Wisdom #2

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https://www.kehot.org/Newsletter?issue=548 Note: I am reprinting a Shabbas message from 5719, because Rabbi Friedman's message for 5781 was not ready in time for my deadline.

Purim: A Miraculous Night

An Insight by the Rebbe

By Rabbi Yosef Marcus *

On that night, the King's sleep escaped him. He told his attendants to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the King. (Esther 6:1)

Our sages state that this verse if the essence of the Purim miracle. The King's insomnia and subsequent honor to Mordechai is, in fact, a satisfying bit of irony, but is it the essence of the miracle?

The answer lies in the verse's introductory words: "On that night." These words convey the spiritual setting of the miracle of Purim, one of absolute darkness. When something is obvious, sitting right in front of us, we say, "This idea, this object." The word "that," as opposed to "this," refers to something out of reach. The word "night," of course, evokes the darkness, when we cannot "see" or discern what is valuable and good. Both words, then, allude to the elusiveness of G-d, His distance and invisibility.

This redundancy underscores the tragedy of Divine concealment. It is a "doubled darkness"—when the darkness itself is concealed, when we cannot even name our illness, it is "that," not "this." Knowing that we are ailing spiritually is one thing; to be unaware of it is another.

A story: One evening, a group of Chasidim were sitting at a farbrengen—an informal gathering devoted to introspection—and needed more wine. They sent one fellow to the wine cellar. As he descended the steps, he exclaimed, “It’s dark down here!” “Wait a few minutes,” one man said, “and your eyes will become accustomed to the dark.” R. Hillel of Paritch, a legendary Chasid, commented, “Yes. Eventually we confuse darkness for light.”

This is the state of the Jewish national soul at the time of the Purim story—estranged from G-d and unaware of its estrangement.

It is axiomatic to Judaism that G-d responds to our behavior. When we are oblivious of G-d, He retreats from view. In place of asserting His presence in our world, He seems to be absent.

This is the second esoteric detail of the verse: "The King," alluding to G-d, was “sleeping.” Exile, galut, is a time of Divine slumber, because G-d does not seem to impose order and coherence in the world. The righteous suffer while the wicked prosper. This darkness, though, is of our own making.

This leads to the miracle hidden in this opening verse, The king’s sleep was disturbed: Despite the spiritual lethargy that plagued the Jewish people in the decades leading up to Haman’s decree, they were still able to “awaken G-d” with newfound devotion. Even in the thick darkness of exile, when the Jewish people were ignorant of their own distance, they still found a way to summon their fervor. This spiritual feat “awoke” G-d from His “sleep,” and He began to reveal His providence in creation once again. This reawakening of the soul and of G-d is the essence of the Purim miracle.

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

But notice that although the King awakens, it is still night. Even after the miraculous events of Purim, the Jews remained in exile. They did not become devout Jews, scrupulously adhering to the law, piously spending their days in prayer and charity. This is the paradox of the Purim miracle: Only the deepest manifestation of G-d can wring miracles from the darkness itself. Although the exile remains in place, the exceedingly long reach of G-d pierces the veil of darkness to work miracles. This is the significance behind the custom of raising one’s voice when reciting this verse. When there is distance between us and another, we reach deep within for the strength to shout across the divide. This verse tells of how our distance elicited a deeper response from G-d, one that could work miracles even from within a dark exile.

—from the *Kehot Megillah* *

* An insight by the Rebbe on Purim, excerpted from our best selling *Kehot Megillah*

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Covenant and Conversation
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

The Counterpoint of Leadership

One of the most important Jewish contributions to our understanding of leadership is its early insistence of what, in the eighteenth century, Montesquieu called "the separation of powers"[1]. Neither authority nor power was to be located in a single individual or office. Instead, leadership was divided between different kinds of roles.

One of the key divisions – anticipating by millennia the "separation of church and state" – was between the King, the head of state, on the one hand, and the High Priest, the most senior religious office, on the other.

This was revolutionary. The kings of Mesopotamian city states and the Pharaohs of Egypt were considered demigods or chief intermediary with the gods. They officiated at supreme religious festivals. They were regarded as the representatives of heaven on earth.

In Judaism, by stark contrast, monarchy had little or no religious function (other than the recital by the King of the book of the covenant every seven years in the ritual known as hakhel.) Indeed the chief objection to the Hasmonean Kings on the part of the Sages was that they broke this ancient rule, some of them declaring themselves High Priests also. The Talmud records the objection: "Let the crown of kingship be sufficient for you. Leave the crown of priesthood to the sons of Aaron." (Kiddushin 66a) The effect of this principle was to secularise power.[2]

No less fundamental was the division of religious leadership itself into two distinct functions: that of the Prophet and the Priest. That is dramatised in this week's parsha, focussing as it does on the role of the Priest to the exclusion of that of the Prophet. Tetzaveh is the first parsha since the beginning of the book of Exodus in which Moses' name is missing. It is supremely the priestly, as opposed to prophetic, parsha.

Priests and Prophets were very different in their roles, despite the fact that some Prophets, most famously Ezekiel, were Priests also. The primary distinctions were:

The role of Priest was dynastic, that of Prophet was charismatic. Priests were the sons of Aaron. They were born into the role. Parenthood had no part in the role of the Prophet. Moses' own children were not Prophets.

The Priest wore robes of office. There was no official uniform for a Prophet.

The priesthood was exclusively male; not so prophecy. The Talmud lists seven women who were Prophets: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther.

The role of the Priest did not change over time. There was a precise annual timetable of sacrifices that did not vary from year to year. The Prophet by contrast could not know what his mission would be until God revealed in to him. Prophecy was never a matter of routine.

As a result, Prophet and Priest had different senses of time. Time for the Priest was what it was for Plato: the "moving image of eternity," [3] a matter of everlasting recurrence and return. The Prophet lived in historical time. His today was not the same as yesterday and tomorrow would be different again. One way of putting this is that the Priest heard the word of God for all The Prophet heard the word of God for this time.

The Priest was "holy" and therefore set apart from the people. He had to eat his food in a state of purity, and had to avoid contact with the dead. The Prophet by contrast often lived among the people and spoke a language they understood. Prophets could come from any social class.

The key words for the Priest were tahor, tamei, kodesh and chol: "pure", "impure", "sacred", and "secular". The key words for the Prophets were tzedek, mishpat, chessed and rachamim: "righteousness", "justice", "love", and "compassion". It is not that the Prophets were concerned with morality while the Priests were not. Some of the key moral imperatives, such as "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," come from priestly sections of the Torah. It is rather that Priests think in terms of a moral order embedded in the structure of reality, sometimes called a "sacred ontology." [4] Prophets tended to think not of things or acts in themselves but in terms of relationships between persons or social classes.

The task of the Priest is boundary maintenance. The key priestly verbs are le-havdil and le-horot, to distinguish one thing from another and apply the appropriate rules. Priests gave rulings, Prophets gave warnings.

There is nothing personal about the role of a Priest. If one – even a High Priest – was unable to officiate at a given service, another could be substituted. Prophecy was essentially personal. The Sages said that "no two Prophets prophesied in the same style" (Sanhedrin 89a). Hosea was not Amos. Isaiah was not Jeremiah. Each Prophet had a distinctive voice.

Priests constituted a religious establishment. The Prophets, at least those whose messages have been eternalised in Tanach, were not an establishment but an anti-establishment, critical of the powers-that-be.

The roles of Priest and Prophet varied over time. The Priests always officiated at the sacrificial service of the Temple. But they were also Judges. The Torah says that if a case is too difficult to be dealt with by the local court, you should "Go to the Priests, the Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict" (Deut. 17:9). Moses blesses the tribe of Levi saying that "They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel" (Deut. 33:10), suggesting that they had a teaching role as well.

Malachi, a Prophet of the Second Temple period, says: "For the lips of a Priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth" (Mal. 2:7). The Priest was guardian of Israel's sacred social order. Yet it is clear throughout Tanach that the priesthood was liable to corruption. There were times when Priests took bribes, others when they compromised Israel's faith and performed idolatrous practices. Sometimes they became involved in politics. Some held themselves as an elite apart from and disdainful toward the people as a whole.

At such times the Prophet became the voice of God and the conscience of society, reminding the people of their spiritual and moral vocation, calling on them to return and repent, reminding the people of their duties to God and to their fellow humans and warning of the consequences if they did not heed the call.

The priesthood became massively politicised and corrupted during the Hellenistic era, especially under the Seleucids in the second century BCE. Hellenised High Priests like Jason and Menelaus introduced idolatrous practises, even at one stage a statue of Zeus, into the Temple. This provoked the internal revolt that led to the events we recall on the festival of Chanukah.

Yet despite the fact that the initiator of the revolt, Mattityahu, was himself a righteous Priest, corruption re-emerged under the Hasmonean Kings. The Qumran sect known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls was particularly critical of the priesthood in Jerusalem. It is striking that the Sages traced their spiritual ancestry to the Prophets, not the Priests (Avot 1:1).

The Kohanim were essential to ancient Israel. They gave the religious life its structure and continuity, its rituals and routines, its festivals and celebrations. Their task was to ensure that Israel remained a holy people with God in its midst. But they were an establishment, and like every establishment, at best they were the guardians of the nation's highest values, but at worst they became corrupt, using their position for power and engaging in internal politics for personal advantage. That is the fate of establishments, especially those whose membership is a matter of birth.

That is why the Prophets were essential. They were the world's first social critics, mandated by God to speak truth to power. Still today, for good or otherwise, religious establishments always resemble Israel's priesthood. Who, though, are Israel's prophets at the present time?

The essential lesson of the Torah is that leadership can never be confined to one class or role. It must always be distributed and divided. In ancient Israel, Kings dealt with power, Priests with holiness, and Prophets with the integrity and faithfulness of society as a whole. In Judaism, leadership is less a function than a field of tensions between different roles, each with its own perspective and voice.

Leadership in Judaism is counterpoint, a musical form defined as "the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in such a way that they establish a harmonic relationship while retaining their linear individuality."[5] It is this internal complexity that gives Jewish leadership its vigour, saving it from entropy, the loss of energy over time.

Leadership must always, I believe, be like this. Every team must be made up of people with different roles, strengths, temperaments and perspectives. They must always be open to criticism and they must always be on the alert against groupthink. The glory of Judaism is its insistence that only in heaven is there one commanding Voice. Down here on earth no individual may ever hold a monopoly of leadership.

Out of the clash of perspectives – King, Priest and Prophet – comes something larger than any individual or role could achieve.

[1] Charles-Louis Montesquieu, The Spirit of Laws (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952).
[2] In Judaism, power, except that exercised by God, is not holy.
[3] Plato, Timaeus 37d.
[4] On this rather difficult idea, see Philip Rieff, My Life Among the Deathworks (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2006). Rieff was an unusual and insightful critic of modernity. For an introduction to his work, see Antonius A.W. Zondervan, Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
[5] American Heritage Dictionary, 5th ed., s.v. "Counterpoint" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011).

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"Make a forehead-plate of pure gold, and engrave on it…'Holy to God'. Attach a twist of sky-blue wool to it" (Exodus 28:36-37)

This week's portion of Tetzaveh, wherein Moses' name is not mentioned even once, exclusively belongs to Aaron, whose name appears more than 30 times. It is a portion devoted to the holy vestments and the consecration of Aaron's priestly descendents. This is the week of the Kohen-Priest but in actuality it is the week of the entire nation of Israel, a nation created to be wholly holy, an entire nation of priests, dedicated to God.

Such is the Divine charge to the Israelite nation immediately prior to the revelation at Sinai "and you shall be unto me a kingdom of Priest-Kohanim and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6); mark every word of the commentary of S'forno to this verse: "You shall be a kingdom of Priest-Kohanim to understand and to teach to the entire human race the necessity of the calling out in the name of the Lord, so that they might serve Him together… for from Zion shall come forth Torah(to the world)" (S'forno Adloc.).

The day of the observant Jew begins by expressing the innate "Kohen-dom" of every single member of our nation. Before the Jew does anything else he fills a large vessel with water, his left hand pours the water over the right, and the right hand pours the water over the left, for three cycles. Just as during the priestly ablutions in the Temple so is this act of ritual washing to be performed with Koach Gavra – from ones own vitality. The blessing we make as we wash, "Netilat Yadaim" refers to the lifting or consecrating of the hands. "They shall make me a Temple so that I may dwell in their Midst" – the world must become the Temple and our every action – as priests-must be consecrated to God.

Our "Kohen-Dom" continues with the two Blessings we make in which we thank God for giving us His Torah. Our commentaries explain that the first blessing refers to the Written Law and the second the Oral Law. After the blessings we must read two selections, one from the Written Torah and one from the Talmud. It is fascinating that out of all the verses of the Written Torah our Sages choose the Priestly Benediction – "May God bless you and keep you…" as the blessings which we recite. We begin the day with Priestly actions and Priestly words.

On Friday evening we greet the Sabbath by kindling the candelabrum-Menorah in every Jewish home, by reciting the blessing of sanctification over wine reminiscent of the wine livations at the alter, and bless our children once again with the Priestly blessing. Our special Sabbath Hallah-bread is our form of our Sanctuaries show-bread, and the salt in which we lightly dip the Hallah represents the salt at every sacrifice; this symbolizes the teaching just as salt never spoils, so will our covenant with God last eternally.

On Passover we dress in special white garb (kittel) at the seder, each family brought its own pascal lamb sacrifice in Jerusalem, and we even wash our hands before eating the vegetables dipped in saltwater; all of this is reminiscent of what the Priest did in the Holy Temple. On Yom Kippur we likewise wear the white robes and dramatically repeat each word of the Priestly words of confession and expiation in a dramatic re-experiencing of the words and actions of the High Priest in the Holy Temple.

And if the Priests conducted the sacrificial services in the Temple, every Jew is capable of conducting the services in our Temple. Individuals without any priestly lineage or Levitic Lineage can recite the Amidah for the congregation, cantillate the weekly Biblical portion and call people up to the Torah. Indeed, as our Biblical reading of Tetzaveh describes the High Priest's eight special garments, it emphasizes "the tzitz" – the pure gold forehead-plate, on which is written "Holy to God". A twist of royal, sky-blue wool (tkhelet) was attached to this forehead-plate, evidently expressing our descent from the royalty of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

Today, the tzitzit – ritual fringes with a string of royal sky-blue wool – may be worn by every Jew, enabling the one who wears it to feel and act with the Majesty of the High Priest of old. There is no more democratic institution in our present day synagogue, where in everyone may be draped in a prayer shawl with ritual fringes, everyone together. Just ask an unJewish visitor to distinguish between the laymen and the Clergy and he will not be able to do so. We are all Kohanim-Priests and must continue to teach first Israel and then the world.

The Person in the Parsha
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

The Leader's Clothing

Nowadays, all leaders look the same. Their typical garb is a dark business suit, a white or pale blue shirt, and a tie with a dash of color. They dress no differently from any other successful entrepreneur or professional. They wear no distinguishing sign to identify them as leaders, as men in positions of great power and responsibility.

There was a time when this was not so. Kings and queens dressed in royal cloaks and regal gowns, and they wore crowns upon their heads, clearly conveying that they were entitled to wield authority over others. Even lesser officials, mayors of small villages and local judges, dressed distinctively, thus setting themselves apart from their constituencies, aloof from the masses.

At this time of year, just before the joyous holiday of Purim, we become keenly aware of the role of the uniforms of royalty. The book of Esther reaches its happy climax when "Mordecai left the king's presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool." (Esther 8:15). This new attire mirrored the dramatic change in Mordecai's position in the Persian Empire: "…All the officials of the provinces…showed deference to the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen upon them. For Mordecai was now powerful in the royal palace, and his fame was spreading through all the provinces…" (Esther 9:3-4).

Long before the Purim story and Mordecai's rise to power, there lived another leader whose prescribed garb conveyed his special position. I refer to the passage in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Tezaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10). There we read about the special clothing worn in the Tabernacle service by the priests, the kohanim, the sons of Aaron. Of special interest are the unique components of Aaron's own uniform. Aaron was the High Priest, the Kohen Gadol, the ancestor and the archetype for all future generations of High Priests. A special set of eight garments was designated for his exclusive use. One of these, in many ways the most important of all, was the Choshen Mishpat, commonly translated as "the breast plate of judgment" or "the breast piece of decision".

As its name implies, this breastplate was prominently suspended above the High Priest's chest. The details of this sacred item include the following instruction: "Aaron shall carry the names of the Children of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart when he enters the Sanctuary for remembrance before the Lord at all times." (Exodus 28:29).

The legendary Hasidic master, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, finds this requirement very strange. He asks, "Why the names of the twelve tribes? Don't we commonly mention only the names of the three Patriarchs when we beseech the Almighty for His remembrance?" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is aware of the Talmudic passage, which indicates that the names of the twelve tribes supplemented the names of the three patriarchs which were also inscribed upon the breastplate. However, he stresses that Scripture itself only mentions the twelve tribes as having their names engraved upon the gemstones on the breastplate. "Why," he asks, "the emphasis upon the twelve tribes?"

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's response to his own question is a fascinating one. He writes: "When one individual is selected from a group for a position of importance we are inclined to conclude that that one individual is chosen, and all the others are rejected. The chosen one is loved, and the rejected are despised. Here too, we might erroneously presume that Aaron was the Almighty's favorite, and the rest of Israel somehow inferior to him. Therefore, the names of all the tribes of Israel were engraved upon the breastplate, indicating that all of Israel was equally beloved by the Almighty." (Kedushat Levi, Exodus 28:29)

Following Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's exposition, we become aware that, unlike worldly royal attire which proclaims the uniqueness and superiority of the wearer, Aaron's special clothing was designed to convince him and everyone else that he was in no way superior to those whom he represented. Quite the contrary; the fact that all of the Children of Israel are equally favored by the Almighty is the central message of the sacred breastplate, the Choshen Mishpat.

The era of the Holy Temple is sadly long gone now. There is no longer a High Priest, and although the distant descendants of Aaron still dwell among us and play a role in our rituals, their special clothing is now only a matter of historical interest. Yet, there is a trace of the lesson of the sacred breastplate that has endured.

This trace becomes apparent if one carefully examines the phylacteries, or tefilin, which Jewish men don most mornings of the year. If one gazes carefully at the undersurface of the leather phylacteries he will notice twelve stitches holding the various compartments in place. The halachic authorities inform us that these twelve stitches symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. (See Mishneh Berurah, 32:51/228).

The person who wears tefilin in our day must meticulously avoid considering himself superior to the rest of Israel, even to those who neglect the mitzvah of tefilin, just as Aaron in his day was to avoid such haughtiness.

There is a fundamental lesson here to be learned by all leaders, of small communities as well as of large nations, whether of the Jewish people or of the world at large. The lesson is that a true leader acts as the leader of all of his constituents and not merely as the leader of those who share his beliefs and convictions.

That Mordecai was such a true leader can be supported by a homiletic analysis of the very final verse of the book of Esther. It reads: "For Mordecai…was highly regarded by his many brethren; he sought the good of his people and interceded for the welfare of all his kindred."

Rashi presents an alternative translation to the phrase, "he was highly regarded by his many brethren" so that it reads, "he was highly regarded by most of his brethren"—that is, most but not all of his brethren. A contingent of Mordecai's colleagues objected to Mordecai's involvement in public affairs, which resulted in his diminished involvement in religious matters.

Many are troubled by this interpretation, wondering why the book of Esther would end with a critical remark against the heroic Mordecai. A relatively obscure Hasidic sage, Rabbi Shalom Yosef of Shpikov, creatively brushes aside this difficulty and explains that the entire verse is a salute to Mordecai's great leadership. Yes, Rabbi Shalom Yosef concedes, Mordecai had his opponents. But nevertheless, "he sought the good of his people," even those who disagreed with him. And, "he interceded for the welfare of all his kindred"—even those who were his fiercest critics.

Understanding the final words of the Purim story in this manner allows us to see Mordecai as a heroic leader from start to finish. The Megilah begins with an account of Mordecai's bravery and courage and concern for Esther. It ends with the portrait of a leader who seeks the well-being of all of his people, even of those who are deeply disappointed in him.

Purim is an opportune moment for us all to pray that our contemporary leaders, at every level and of every nation, learn to emulate Mordecai's example.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

No One Runs for the Office of Gadol HaDor

In speaking of the service to inaugurate the Mishkan, its vessels, and the bigdei kehunah (the priestly garments), the Torah says that Hashem commands Moshe, "You shall dress Aharon, your brother, and his sons with him…" [Shemos 28:41] This means that although as a matter of routine in carrying out their priestly duties, the Kohanim dressed themselves, the first time they put on the newly created bigdei kehunah, Hashem commanded Moshe Rabbeinu to personally put these garments upon them.

The truth of the matter is that we find this same type of practice in the end of Sefer Bamidbar. When (in Parshas Chukas) Aharon HaKohen dies, and Elazar, his son, takes over in the role of Kohen Gadol (High Priest), the Torah says the same thing: "And Moshe removed from Aharon his clothes and he put them upon Elazar, his son…" [Bamidbar 20:28] Thus, we see that when Aharon and his sons became Kohanim for the first time, Moshe had to put the bigdei kehunah upon them, and when Aharon died and Elazar became the Kohen Gadol for the first time, Moshe had to put Aharon's bigdei kehunah upon Elazar.

I saw in the sefer Milchamos Yehudah that this teaches us a lesson about Jewish leadership which differs from the way the nations of the world do things. When anybody runs for elected office, he calls a press conference or he stands in front of his old high school building and proclaims for everyone to hear, "I am the best and most qualified person in the country to become let's say mayor, governor, or president." This is the way it always works.

Has anyone ever run for the position of "Gadol haDor" (the greatest sage of the generation)? Did Rav Moshe Feinstein go to FDR drive and stand in front of his little apartment and say, "I am the Gadol haDor" or "Please, elect me for Gadol haDor because I am the biggest talmid chochom in the country"? It just does not happen like that. Who elects the "Gadol haDor? Nobody! The people coalesce around the person by acclamation. People see him fit to be the Gadol haDor.

This process started over here, in this week's parsha—Parshas Tezaveh. The fact that Moshe Rabbeinu dressed Aharon with these garments and made him the Kohen Gadol is setting the stage and setting the tone that this is how we inaugurate our leaders. Somebody else must appoint you.

Before his passing, Rav Elazar Schach let it be known that Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman should be the posek for the Yeshivos after he passed on. Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman did not get up and run for the office. He was appointed. Who appointed him? Someone bigger than him—Rav Schach. That is the way it has always been. Do you know where that started? It started over here in Parshas Tezaveh, and continued in Parshas Chukas (when Moshe dressed Elazar in the bigdei kehunah). Moshe Rabbeinu had to put the garments on them. Taking the mantle of leadership for oneself is not the Jewish way.

War is Not the Norm

The pasuk says, "For a seven-day period he shall don them—he who serves in his stead from among his sons, who shall enter the Tent of Meeting to serve in the Sanctuary." [Shemos 29:30] Rashi explains this pasuk to mean that the son of the previous Kohen Gadol has the right to become Kohen Gadol after his father (provided he is worthy of serving in the position). The pasuk concludes with the words "Asher yavo el Ohel Moed, l'shares b'Kodesh" (who shall enter the Tent of Meeting to serve in the Sanctuary).

The Talmud [Yoma 72b] says, "I might think that the son of the Kohen Anointed for War (Mashuach Milchama) shall succeed his father in the same way that the son of a Kohen Gadol succeeds his father…" The Gemara teaches however that this is not the case. The Gemara learns this exclusion from the very pasuk we just quoted: Only one who is "fit to enter the Tent of Meeting to serve in the Sanctuary" succeeds his father, but one who does not enter into the Tent of Meeting (because he is out on the battlefield) is not fit to serve in place of his father.

Why is this so? If the High Priesthood passes from father to son, why shouldn't the office of Mashuach Milchama also pass from father to son? It is true that the Gemara learns it out from a pasuk, but what is the rationale?

I heard an explanation in the name of Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, zt"l, regarding why we do not pass down the office of the Kohen Anointed for War through inheritance. Rav Kook explains that inheritance is all about continuity. It passes from father to son, from son to grandson, from grandson to great-grandson. It is about "hemshech" (continuity). This is appropriate for Kehuna Gedola. The Gemara says it is also appropriate for rabbinic leadership. Ideally, Rabanus should go from father to son. Ideally, the position of being head of a Talmudic Academy (Rosh Yeshiva) should go from father to son, if the son is worthy of the position. Continuity.

However, there is one area of Jewish life where continuity is not appropriate. On the contrary, we do not want to emphasize continuity. That area is the area of war. War is not supposed to be a permanent function of Jewish life. War is an exception to the rule. It is an anomaly. We do not want it to happen. There should not be a need for a Kohen Anointed for War. Linking inheritance with the role of Kohen Mashuach Milchama is saying that we view war as part of the eternal continuity of Jewish existence. We do not want that.

The Mishna states, "A man should not go out on Shabbos (into the public domain) with his sword. Rav Eliezer says that it is considered an ornament (and he may go out into the public domain wearing it). The Rabbis (disagree with Rav Eliezer and say it is not an ornament) but rather it is something that is unseemly (a g'nai) as it is written: 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation and they will no longer study warfare' [Yeshaya 2:4]." [Shabbos 63a]

The Rabbis reject the idea that a sword should be considered an ornament. A weapon should be an ornament? This is not what we live for! This is not supposed to be a function of our lives! It is true that when war occurs, we need to fight the war and be successful in our battles. However, to make it a permanent institution—to say the position of Masuach Milchama should pass down to son and grandson—that would send the wrong message. That would send the message that war needs to be a part of our lives. That is not the case. Our goal is that nation should not lift sword against nation and that they should no longer study warfare.

Dvar Torah
Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Why is the name of Hashem spelt Yud Yud in our siddurim?

The Sefer Nachalat Chamisha suggests that the origin is in Parashat Tetzaveh. There we find Hashem telling us 'vshachanti btoch bnei Yisrael' – 'and I will reside within the midst of the children of Israel'. Elsewhere Hashem says 'vshachanti btocham – I will dwell in their midst'. So why these additional words?

Says the sefer Nachlat Chamisha: the term 'Bnei Yisrael' is spelt out in full because the last letter of Bnei is a Yud and the first letter of Yisrael is Yud. When combined, Yud Yud represents the presence of Hashem in the midst of Bnei Yisrael – the people of Israel. In the prayers that we utter from the Siddur, we dearly like Hashem to be a part of our lives, to be in the midst of everything we are going through – the highs and the lows of our existence. Therefore Yud Yud is the spelling that is used for Hashem in our siddurim.

Reb Naftali of Ropshitz takes this one step further. He reminds us that in Chassidic thought, the Yud stands for a Yid – a Jewish person. Therefore when you have two Yuds together, that represents two Yidden, two Jewish people.

So when therefore is Hashem found in our midst? It is when Jewish people exist alongside each other in peace and harmony. This message is of particular poignancy at the time of the celebration of the festival of Purim, which always takes place in close proximity to the reading of Parshat Tetzaveh. At the very moment when we recall how our enemies sought to destroy us, it is of the greatest importance that we realise that Jewish people need to coexist peacefully. The last thing that we can afford is unnecessary and tragic divisiveness within our own ranks. So therefore, the spelling of Hashem's name Yud Yud comes to remind us of Hashem's desire to dwell in our midst and how we at all times need to deserve that.

OTS Dvar Torah

Moshe and Aharon, The Dream Team
Dr. Julie Lieber

Moshe and Aharon were more than siblings. They were a team. After all, it is Aharon that paves the way for Moshe's reluctantly conceding to lead B'nai Yisrael out of slavery. While Moshe may have been the leader chosen by God, he needed Aharon to stand by his side and convey his message. For this to work, the synergy and collaboration between the two of them would have to be perfect. And for many years it was. Moshe and Aharon, worked together, as a team: Aharon bringing forth the initial plagues and Moshe carrying out the final plagues.

And then we arrive at a subtle breaking point, or perhaps a shift in what had been a cohesive

team. In this week's parashat Tetzaveh, we start to see a separation between the two, as Aharon and his sons are invited to carry on the work of God through the Kehuna, and Moshe's children are left with no specific leadership role in this new stage of life for B'nei Yisrael. Moshe does not yet know it, but he will not lead the people into the land of Israel. In contrast, Aharon and his progeny will continue to be central to the spiritual story of B'nai Yisrael from this point onwards.

The text also makes a literary gesture towards this shift. Moshe's name is entirely absent from this parasha.

Yet, Moshe's presence nevertheless looms large, in a new and different way. Moshe is to oversee the crafting of the beautiful garments that the Kohanim will wear. Even more poignantly, Moshe is commanded by God to personally raise up his brother and nephews for this new position. Unlike other tasks that would be delegated to craftspeople, this transition is presented as a command from God that Moshe – and only Moshe (ve'ata) – can fulfill.

As God instructs Moshe to elevate Aharon and his sons to this new role, Aharon is always referred to as Moshe's brother, achicha, reminding us of the brotherhood and partnership that was the hallmark of their relationship for so many years.

I have often wondered, what might Moshe have been thinking as he facilitated this transition? Was he able to step into the role of loyal brother and experience joy for his brother Aharon who was finally now coming into his own as a leader? Was there a tinge of jealousy or loss, as he recognized that Aharon, once his supportive partner, would now be leaving his side and entering a new phase of service to God and not him?

I'd like to believe that Moshe Rabeinu, in his great wisdom, embraced this transition. That he understood that their years of working as a team were actually preparation for this very moment. Moshe, as a prophet, teacher and leader must have intuited that while he needed Aharon as support in those early years as he was growing into his own leadership role, it was now time for Aharon and his sons to chart a new path. This short episode in our parasha paints Moshe and his leadership in a new light, teaching us that sometimes simply being able to make room for others is the mark of a true leader and team player.

OU Dvar Torah

Balancing Diversity with Unity
Rabbi Bernie Fox

And make sacred vestments for Aharon, your brother, for honor and glory.(Sefer Shemot 28:2)

The Kohen Gadol had special vestments

Last week's parasha described the Mishcan – the tabernacle of the wilderness – and many of its most fundamental components. This week's parasha continues that discussion. It opens with a description of the special vestments of the Kohen Gadol – the high priest. One of these vestments was the Choshen – the breastplate. This vestment was fastened to a sort of apron worn by the Kohen Gadol and he bore it upon his chest. The main feature of the Choshen was the four rows of precious stones that occupied its center. Each of the four rows contained three stones, combining to a total of twelve stones. On each stone was inscribed the name of one of the tribes of Bnai Yisrael. On the first stone was inscribed Reuven, on the second Shimon, and so forth, through Binyamin.

And the stones should be according to the names of Bnai Yisrael – twelve according to their names. They should be engraved, each with its name for the twelve tribes. (Sefer Shemot 28:21)

The Choshen and its inscriptions - The Choshen had two functions. As explained above, it was one of the vestments of the Kohen Gadol. He could perform his service in the Mishcan only when attired in all of his vestments – including the Choshen. The Choshen had a second function. It was a vehicle for prophecy. Through the agency of the Choshen the nation could secure prophetic responses to questions that could not be otherwise resolved. For example, the nation could ask whether it should engage in war against an enemy or avoid confrontation. Maimonides provides a description of how the Choshen was utilized. The king or an individual acting on behalf of the entire nation would pose the question to the Kohen Gadol. The Kohen Gadol would experience a prophetic vision in which the answer to the question would be provided through the letters inscribed on the Choshen. In his vision the letters forming the answer would appear to protrude. The Kohen Gadol would then report the response provided in his vision.

Maimonides further explains that because the response in the vision was presented through its inscribed letters, it was necessary for all of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to be included on the Choshen. The names of the tribes do not encompass the entire alphabet. Rather than inscribing the missing letters in som arbitrary manner on the Choshen, a phrase was added above the first name inscribed on the Choshen and another after the last name. Above the name Reuven was inscribed "Avraham Yitzchak, and Yaakov". After Binyamin was inscribed "tribes of Hashem". With the addition of these two phrases the full complement of Hebrew letters was inscribed upon the Choshen.

The selection of these two phrases and their positions are of note. First, surely, these phrases were not selected randomly. They must have had some relevance to the Choshen. Second, these two phrases bracketed the names of the tribes. The names of the forefathers were above the name of the very first tribe and the phrase "tribes of Hashem" followed the name of the last tribe. The positioning of the names of the tribes between these two phrases suggests that these phrases referred to and commented upon the tribes. What was the message intended by these phrases and what was the relevance of that message to the names of the tribes?

And make a band of gold and engrave upon it "sanctified for Hashem". (Sefer Shemot 28:36)

The headband of the Kohen Gadol and its inscription - Let us consider another of the Kohen Gadol's vestments. On his forehead,the Kohen Gadol wore a gold band. On this band was inscribed the phrase "sanctified for Hashem". The phrase refers to the Kohen Gadol and comments upon him. It declares that he is sanctified to Hashem. It is reasonable to assume that the names on the Choshen also comment on the Kohen Gadol. They declare that he is the representative of the nation – of all of the tribes of Israel. Together, these two inscriptions describe the Kohen Gadol as sanctified to serve Hashem as the representative of the nation.

Now, we can better appreciate the inscriptions on the Choshen. The people of Israel are described on the Choshen as a conglomeration of tribes. In other words, the Choshen recognizes or acknowledges that we are a nation composed of sub-communities. In turn, this suggests that these sub-communities – the tribes – are an important aspect of the structure of our nation. Why are these tribes so important?

The tribes of Israel contribute to the cohesiveness of the community

The strength of any community is built upon the connectedness of its members. When the members of a community identify with one another and feel this connectedness, then they will work for each other's welfare and care for one another. Furthermore, the members of the community are capable of engaging in collective activities for the welfare of their overall community. The sense of connectedness is the cement that holds together the structure of the community and if it is absent the community disintegrates. A corollary of this principle is that the more diverse a community, the more difficult for the community to engage in collctive activities. In other words, as communities become larger and naturally more diverse, they tend to become less effective as working units. The capacity of a community to engage in sustained cooperative activities is compromised by the degree of its diversity.

This consideration is addressed in Bnai Yisrael through the system of tribes. These tribes were

functional sub-communities. The tribes were further divided into clans. The clans were further divided into families. These sub-communities of various sizes and degrees of diversity created a functional nation. The Choshen acknowledged and even promoted tribal identity. It expressed the importance of sub-communities for effective collective action.

Nurturing unity among the tribes of Israel However, the names of the Avot – the forefathers – preceded the name of Reuven and the phrase "tribes of Hashem" followed the name of Binyamin. What do these two phrases communicate regarding the tribes? The Avot remind us that we all share a common ancestry. In fact, our existence is the fulfillment of the promise made by Hashem to the Avot. The phrase "tribes of Hashem" reminds us that we share a common mission and destiny. We have been selected for and consecrated to the service of Hashem. The Choshen communicates the overarching themes that must unite us.

In other words, the paradox described in the opening paragraphs of this discussion is embraced by the Choshen and even promoted by it. Sub-communities are effective operational units. In a diverse community they are a necessity. If they are sacrificed in pursuit of a vision of greater unity, the cohesion necessary for effective collective action may be destroyed. However, although sub-communities have an important function, they cannot be allowed to obscure the values that unite us. We must always remember that foremost we share the same Avot and an identical mission. We are consecrated to the service of Hashem. In other words, a careful balance must be maintained between the individuality of our specific community and the ever-awareness of our shared identity as Jews.

Creating a healthy balance within a community - This paradigm provides us with some guidelines that we can apply to our communities. It is healthy to feel a stronger connection with those who are members of one's sub-community. But this connection is destructive when it yields a sense of alienation from the other sub-communities that make us one people.

A city's Jewish community may be best served by multiple schools and synagogues – but only when the members of each also celebrate the successes of all the others. A strong sense of connectedness within our individual religious streams is healthy. But our love and compassion must also extend to those who are members of our other streams.

Without this balance, our individual sub-communities tear asunder our connectedness as Jews. Our shared identity as a people is replaced by distrust and alienation. When we achieve this balance, then our sub-communities are effective vehicles for collective action and our unity as a people is preserved and even nurtured.

Torah.Org Dvar Torah
by Rabbi Label Lam

We are All in This Crock Pot Together

Ish Yehudi haya b'Shushan HaBira u'shmo Mordechi… There was a Yuhudi man in the city of Shushan and his name was Mordechai… (Esther 2:5)

The Sefas points out a critical dynamic in the "Purim Story" that explains a lot of our behavior on the day of Purim. Mordechai was the great unifier of the Jewish People. How did he do it? By being a Yehudi! How does that help us understand anything? The Talmud says that the title Yehudi, which is the source of the name "JEW", is designated for someone who denies idolatry. What does it mean to deny idolatry? How is that related to the name Yehudi?

The tribe emanating from Yehuda spells their name exactly the way HASHEM's Name is spelled (Yud- Hey Vuv Dalet- Hey) but with a DALET near the end. It's a Holy title to be a Yehudi because the DALET represents lowliness and is also a door. A Jew is an agent to carry the Name of HASHEM throughout history, and a door to let the light of HASHEM enter this lowly world.

At the time of when Mordechai was introduced in the Megilla he was the last one worthy of the title YEHUDI. He saw through all the political intrigue. He understood that there are no forces in this world independent of HASHEM's will. The Chovos HaLevavos says that a person should internalize the notion that no one can help you or hurt you without HASHEM's agreement. We are all one on ONE with HASHEM. This was all abundantly clear to at least one person and that was Mordechai. He was the Ish Yehudi! Everyone else was distracted by the power and majesty of Achashveirosh and Haman. Mordechai was unimpressed. That is how he turned out to be the great unifier.

There is a point at which we are all united and truly one. Not by the lowest common denominators but at the highest possible point. Just like, for example, all of our cell phones are connected by a common carrier. There's a satellite someplace from where all our calls are launched. In a deeper and more profound way we are all plugged in to a common meta-cosmic source, HASHEM.

Right before Haman had his miraculous downfall the entire Nation of Israel gathered together in prayer to forestall the impending doom. By connecting everyone to HASHEM we all became unified in that highest common denominator and we all became Yehudim as it is says in the Megilla, "LaYehudim haisa Ohra – To the Yehudim there was light…" Everyone now understood what Mordechai had always perceived.

Therefore we give gifts on Purim to recreate this phenomenon of unity and oneness once again. Reb Dessler points out in his Kutres HaChessed that we don't give to the ones we love only but rather we love the ones to whom we give. When two separate atoms share an electron they form a new combination, like sodium and chloride join to create salt. On Purim the whole Jewish Nation all the Yehudim share money and food as never before. Just like a giant Cholent we start out looking like a group of separate beans, and garlic, and meat and potatoes, and spices but when the water begins to heat up neat stuff starts to happen. Some of the flavor of the meat is to be found in every bean and there is no part of the Cholent that is not improved by the garlic. Kol Yisrael Areivim zeh b'zeh. Jews are responsible for one for another and we sweeten each other.

By the time Purim is over, money and food from all over the planet has literally united all of Klal Yisrael in a palpable way. We become truly one!

This is all the credit and perpetual merit of Mordechai the Yehudi and this is the highly desired result of Purim and it happens when we realize that we are all in this crock pot together.

BS"D

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When Shushan Purim Is on Shabbat
The Three-Day Purim (Purim Meshulash)

Excerpted from: **The Book of Our Heritage by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov**. Published and copyright by Feldheim Publications

When the fifteenth of Adar falls on Shabbat, Purim is celebrated over a three-day period in the "walled" cities [Jerusalem and Shushan]. Other cities fulfill all of the obligations of Purim on Friday, the fourteenth. Those who are obligated to celebrate Purim on the fifteenth, however, divide the obligations over the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth. How is this done?

The mitzvot of reading the Megillah and giving gifts to the poor are fulfilled on the fourteenth, as in the other cities. On Shabbat, the fifteenth, a second Torah scroll is taken from the Sanctuary and the portion from the parsha of Beshallach that tells of the war with Amalek is read. The Al ha-Nissim prayer is added to the Amidah and the Grace after Meals. On Sunday, the sixteenth, the festive meal is held and gifts of food are sent to friends.

Why was it decided to fulfill the mitzvot of Purim in this manner?

Although the Megillah should be read in the "walled cities" on the fifteenth, the Sages prohibited the reading of the Megillah on Shabbat, lest the Megillah scroll be inadvertently carried in the public domain by people seeking someone capable of reading it for them,a violation of the laws of Shabboat. When then was the reading not delayed until Sunday, the sixteenth? The Sages deduced from specific verses of the Megillah that when the reading cannot be done at its proper time, it should be read earlier than required rather than later. [This is in contradiction to other Rabbinic obligations, e.g., the fast of Tishah b'Av, which are fulfilled later, if the time for their fulfillment falls on Shabbat. The verse in the Megillah states: "And these days of Purim shall not pass" (Esther 9:27) – that is, we are not permitted to allow the days of Purim, the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, to pass without our having observed the mitzvah, but we are permitted to do so earlier than required.

The mitzvah of eating the festive Purim meal is delayed until the sixteenth [even though it could theoretically be fulfilled on Shabbat, the fifteenth] because of our tradition that we do not mix one celebration [in this case Shabbat] with another [in this case the Purim meal].

The giving of gifts to the poor and the exchange of mishlo'ach manot between friends cannot be fulfilled on Shabbat, again because we fear that doing so might lead one to inadvertently carry in the public domain. The former obligation is moved to the fourteenth, so that the poor might enjoy their gifts as early as possible. The latter obligation is delayed until the sixteenth since the verse in the Megillah, from which we deduce that we do not allow the days of Purim to pass, does not refer to the mitzvah of exchanging gifts. Additionally, by delaying its fulfillment until the sixteenth of Adar, we establish a noticeable difference between the celebration of Purim in the walled cities and in other cities.

Although the mitzvah of reading the Megillah can be fulfilled without a minyan, when this mitzvah is fulfilled earlier than required [i.e., when the fifteenth falls on Shabbat and the residents of the walled cities move the reading to the fourteenth] it is customary to read only in the presence of a minyan. This also applies to the reading of the Megillah for women; i.e., it should be read in the presence of ten women.

Although the sending of mishlo'ach manot is delayed until the sixteenth, it is nevertheless customary for the residents of walled cities to send a few to friends on the fourteenth. It is also traditional to make the Shabbat meal more elaborate than usual, in honor of Purim. It is customary for the residents of the walled cities to dress in festive clothing en the sixteenth to indicate that they are celebrating Purim. As noted, the A1 ha-Nissim prayer is recited on Shabbat, the fifteenth, and is not recited on the sixteenth, neither in Shemoneh Esreh nor in the Grace after Meals.

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from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> via sendingservice.net date: Mar 13, 2019, 12:02 PM

Extended Purim Seuda
by R. Daniel Mann

Question: My family likes to have the Purim seuda toward the end of the day, and then we eat well into the night. What are the halachic implications (if any)?

Answer: According to the normal rules, we would think that this is not an optimal practice. Presumably, every moment and element of festivity of Purim adds to the mitzva (Rama, Orach Chayim 695). We do not find a halacha of tosefet (adding on to the day before and/or after Purim). Therefore, it all should be during the day.

However, the Terumat Hadeshen (I:110) cites an early source and a broad minhag to start the meal late in the day and go into the night. His requirement that a (significant) part of the meal is during the day makes the matter more one of preferences than of basic fulfillment of the mitzva. After all, if one has a meal in honor of Purim, then even if the part that was eaten during the day was not elaborate, he still fulfills the mitzva, especially if part of the festive food is eaten during the day.

The way the Terumat Hadeshen paints the minhag, it developed based on trading off the preferences of one mitzva vs. another. The morning and even part of the afternoon is full with Kri'at Hamegilla, mishloach manot, and matanot la'evyonim. The latter two are open-ended mitzvot which are strongly recommended to be done on a large scale (Shulchan Aruch, OC 695:4 regarding mishloach manot; Rambam, Megilla 2:17 and Mishna Berura 294:3 regarding matanot la'evyonim). One should also daven Mincha before the big and sometimes incapacitating meal (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 232:2). Thus, allowing the meal to start later enables one not to rush the other mitzvot. One may also add that in order to enable the inclusion of

others (which is desirable, family or not), including those coming from a distance, one must give time for them to finish their mitzvot and make it.

The Terumat Hadeshen describes the minhag as having the main part of the meal in the evening, although, he also writes that he personally had his in the morning. The way the Rama (OC 695:2) sets out the minhag in the manner he considers acceptable, people should not start the meal too close to the end of the day; the main part of the meal should be during the day. It seems logical that he does not care how long one continues after nightfall but whether there was enough time to have the majority of what would have been a proper meal (including merriment and songs and words of inspiration).

Is the festivity into the next night worth anything religiously? There are three ways to explain how it can be. The Terumat Hadeshen seems to say that the two time periods of the meal form one unit, and thus the day-rooted meal was lavish, which is what is important. The Meshech Chochma (see Mikraei Kodesh (Frank) 53)) says that in the time of the Purim story, the celebrations started in the day and continued into the night (as do the laws of korbanot – see Y'mei Hapurim, p. 157) so that the night is an appropriate time for festivities. The Levush (OC 695:2) says that both days of Purim (14 & 15 Adar) are days of festivity, so that the night is appropriate as the second day of Purim. According to the Levush, this minhag should logically not be as desirable in Yerushalayim, where the evening after the seuda is the 16th. That being said, the minhag, at least for Ashkenazim (see Mikraei Kodesh (Harari), 13:5), is to allow extending the meal into the night – even in Yerushalayim.

In theory, there could be a practical consequence of this minhag. The Rosh (see Tur, OC 695) says that Al Hanisim can be said only if Birkat HaMazon is recited during the day. He says the same thing regarding R'tzei at seuda shlishit (Shut 22:6). On the other hand, the Beit Yosef cites a Hagahot Maimoniot that Al Hanism can be said at night if the meal started during the day, as we do in practice regarding seuda shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, OC 188:2). While the Shulchan Aruch elsewhere (OC 695:3) cites two opinions on the matter, his conclusion and that of the Rama is that Al Hanisim is to be recited in this case.

This column is produced on behalf of Eretz Hemdah by Rabbi Daniel Mann. Rabbi Mann is a Dayan for Eretz Hemdah and a staff member of Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel in Israel. He is a senior member of the Eretz Hemdah responder staff, editor of Hemdat Yamim and the author of Living the Halachic Process, volumes 1 and 2 and A Glimpse of Greatness.

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from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Feb 24, 2021, 6:15 PM

Parshas Tetzaveh Cloth Bells Teach Humility in Kodesh; A Purim Lesson from Charvona - By **Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1152 Hashkama Minyan That Heard Parshas Zachor From a Pasul Sefer Torah. Good Shabbos!

Ringing Cloth Bells Teach Us to Perform Kodesh Humbly

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

This is the simple reading of the pesukim and this is how Rashi interprets the reason for the alternating bells and pomegranates. The Ramban argues with Rashi's interpretation that between every two bells there was a pomegranate. If the configuration were as Rashi suggested, there would seem to be no point to the pomegranates. The Ramban understands that there were cloth pomegranates and inside each pomegranate was this pseudo bell, made also out of material in the shape of a bell. It was simply cloth against cloth and it did not ring!

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

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

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

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

Like Charvona – Always Diber tov al haMelech!

How many times is Charvona mentioned in the Megillah?

He is mentioned twice: Once in the beginning of the first chapter. He was one of the "kitchen cabinet" – namely one of the seven advisors of Achashverosh listed in the pasuk [Esther 1:10]. The second time Charvona is mentioned is when Haman finally met his downfall. "Then Charvona, one of the chamberlains in attendance before the king, said 'Furthermore, the gallows which Haman made for Mordechai – who spoke beneficially about the king – is standing in Haman's house; it is fifty cubits high.' And the king said 'Hang him on it.'" [Esther 7:9]

Charvona is mentioned a third time in the poem "Shoshanas Yakov" that we recite after the conclusion of the Megillah reading. We say there "And also Charvona, let him be remembered for good." (V'Gam Charvonah zachur l'tov).

Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer notes that the first time he appears in the Megillah, Charvona's name is spelled with an Aleph at the end and the second time he appears his name is spelled with a Hay at the end. Therefore, Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer claims they are not the same person! The real Charvona is the one mentioned in the first Perek. The "second Charvona" was really Eliyahu haNavi impersonating Charvona! Interestingly, the name Charvona in the Shoshanas Yakov poem is immediately followed by the expression "Zachur L'Tov" (let him be remembered for good). About whom else do we find this expression "Zachur L'Tov"? It is none other than Eliyahu HaNavi.

Rav Zalman Mintz told me that he once heard over a beautiful explanation of this from Rav Ephraim Waxman: The message emphasizes how and why the redemption occurred. The pasuk states "And Charvona, one of the

officers before the king, said 'Also, behold here is the gallows that Haman made for Mordechai who spoke beneficially about the King standing in Haman's courtyard 50 cubits high.' The Geulah came because Mordechai never spoke ill of the Ribono shel Olam. Chazal say that every time it says the word "HaMelech" in the Megillah it is referring to the King of Kings. So too, in the expression Mordechai asher diber tov al haMelech – it is referring to the Ribono shel Olam!

The Jews of that time, could very well have fallen into the trap of saying "What is the Almighty doing to us!" Haman came close to executing his plan to exterminate all the Jews – men, women, and children. The Jews could very well have despaired and begin questioning the Justice of Heaven. "Excuse me! What did we do? Why do we deserve this?" Complaints against G-d were very likely being murmured. But Mordechai – who spoke good about the King – never complained and never questioned G-d's Justice. He never doubted that what was happening was fair and just. He was always "Diber tov al haMelech". He accepted the Talmudic principle that whatever G-d does is for the best (Kol mai d'Avid Rachmana, l'Tav avid) [Berachos 60b].

The message is that Purim, which is the paradigm of our hope for redemption, foreshadows the way it is going to happen for us again. To ensure the speedy coming of this redemption, we must remember to always be "Diber tov al haMelech". After thousands of years of Jewish history and thousands of years of suffering – both on a national scale and on a personal scale – the key is to speak positively about the King and not to question and not to complain "Why is G-d doing this to us!"

This is sometimes very difficult, especially for people that lived through national trials and tribulations, lived through the Holocaust, lo aleinu. It is very hard for people who unfortunately have suffered tragedy and tzoros. It is a difficult nisayon. But Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer is telling us, Charvona is telling us, and Eliyahu haNavi – who is going to usher in and announce the future redemption – is telling us: The key is to act like Mordechai "asher diber tov al haMelech". If we continue to do that, then just as they merited "For the Jews there was Light, Gladness, Joy and Honor" [Esther 8:16]– so too will it be for us, Im Yirtzeh Hashem.

A Freileche Purim.

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From: YUTorah <office@yutorah.org> via imodules.com date: Feb 24, 2021, 10:02 AM subject: Benjamin and Rose Berger Purim To-Go 5781

The Berakha of Geulah

Rabbi Elliot Schrier
[Rabbi of the Albert Einstein Synagogue in the Bronx]
Rosh Beit Midrash, North Shore Hebrew Academy High School

Celebrating Partial Triumph

Imagine for a moment you were tasked with reconstructing, from memory, the tefillot we recite on Purim night. Some components of the prayer service are easy to conjure up and quickly come to mind: the recitation of Maariv, filled with eager anticipation for the Megillah reading to follow; the reading of the Megillah itself; the singing (and, in a pre-COVID world, dancing) of Shoshanat Yaakov. But, for most of us, other parts of the tefillah do not leave the same impression. Once Shoshanat Yaakov has ended, the excitement has faded, and the hunger of Taanit Esther sets in, we recite a host of additional prayers that we all-too-often mutter as we are halfway out the door, rushing to our break-fast meals. And while it is difficult to label those additional prayers a highlight of the Purim liturgy, in truth, in their own subtle way they communicate a central theme of our Purim celebration.

At the beginning of a discussion of the Purim tefillot, the Tur (O"CH 693) records a debate regarding whether or not we should recite U-Va Le-Tzion Goel — a brief paragraph that we say daily toward the end of Shacharit — after the Purim-night reading of the Megillah. While Rav Amram Gaon would recite the paragraph immediately following Megillah reading, others, the Tur notes, felt the prayers should not be said at night. The Tur explains that the paragraph of U-va Le-Tzion primarily discusses themes of salvation and redemption. Because the Purim redemption was only completed during the daytime — in the words of the Tur: Ein ikar ha-geula ba-layla — the essence of the redemption did not primarily occur at night — the paragraph should only be recited during daytime prayers.

The debate is reminiscent of a similar machloket that appears in Masekhet Berakhot (4B). The Gemara there discusses the principle of semikhut geulah le-tefillah, the halakhic obligation to ensure that the berakha of Ga'al Yisrael, which we recite immediately before Shemoneh Esrei, proceeds directly into the Shemoneh Esrei without any intervening interruption. While all agree that this principle applies during Shacharit, we encounter debate as to whether the principle should apply to Maariv as well. On the one hand, Rabbi Yochanan tells us that semikhut geulah le-tefillah should apply to Maariv as well as Shacharit, and one who is scrupulous in observing this attains the exalted status of "ben Olam Ha-ba." On the other hand, the Gemara records the opinion of Rabbi Yeshoshua Ben Levi, who maintains that semikhut geulah le-tefillah is unnecessary in the evening prayers.

The Gemara offers several explanations for the machloket, but in one, Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi's reasoning is nearly identical to the second opinion quoted by the Tur: semikhut geulah le-tefillah is all about the redemption from Egypt, and that geulah was only completed during the daytime. Hence, the practice of semikhut geulah le-tefillah should be reserved for the daytime prayer of Shacharit, and should not be observed at the nighttime prayer of Maariv.

At the heart of each dispute appears to be a question pertaining to how we view partial or incomplete geulah. For one school of thought, partial or incomplete redemption is hardly worthy of recognition, let alone celebration. If daytime is the primary time of geulah, then liturgically, the theme of geulah becomes the exclusive province of the daytime prayers, and we will not highlight the theme at all when we pray at night.

According to the second school of thought, however, redemption need not be complete to be worthy of liturgical inclusion. We say U-va Le-tzion Goel and we emphasize the berakha of Ga'al Yisrael at Maariv, despite the fact that neither the Purim redemption story nor the Exodus from Egypt was complete at night. Even partial steps toward redemption, and perhaps even anticipation of impending redemption, are part of the process of geulah and warrant recognition and appreciation.

While in practice, the Shulchan Arukh rules in accordance with the Tur's second opinion, the underlying premise of Rav Amram Gaon's stance is central to the holiday of Purim. The Gemara, Megillah 14A, offers several reasons why we do not recite Hallel on Purim. According to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha, we do not recite Hallel because the miracle of Purim occurred outside of Eretz Yisrael, and we do not recite Hallel over miracles that occurred in Chutz La-aretz. In another approach, Rava tells us that the Exodus from Egypt warranted the recitation of Hallel because we went from being slaves to Pharaoh to serving Hashem exclusively; citing Tehillim 113:1, Rava interprets: Hallelu Avdei Hashem ve-lo avdei Paroh — praise those who serve Hashem and don't serve Pharaoh. By contrast, in the Purim story, there was no such complete redemption; we started as avdei Achashverosh and ended avdei Achashverosh. Even though the immediate existential threat of Haman and his plot to destroy the Jewish people was miraculously averted, at the end of Megillat Esther, the Jews were still the

subjects of Achashverosh. Both approaches highlight the incomplete character of the Purim redemption story.

Yet, even as we omit Hallel on Purim, we still celebrate. Purim, and in certain ways, the halakhically similar holiday of Chanukah, stand as models of our ability to celebrate and appreciate even partial and incomplete redemption stories.

Often, we tend to think of geulah in the kind of binary terms espoused by the first school of thought outlined above: geulah is by its very nature complete, and, when incomplete, it cannot truly be considered geulah at all. When we use the term geulah, and particularly when we use it in reference to the Geulah Sheleimah, the Final and Complete Redemption, we at times deliberately and at times subconsciously connote a redemption that is whole. "Redemption" has a ring of finality to it.

And yet, if we attempt to translate that perception of geulah to our day-to-day lived experiences, we are all-too-often left with nothing to celebrate at all. Moments of complete redemption are difficult to come by, while life is filled with half-victories and partial triumphs. Frequently, the victories we do achieve open up their own set of new concerns and anxieties. A close family friend recently entered remission from cancer after months of grueling treatment. He noted that, now that he had finally achieved the coveted "clean scan" that he had aspired to since diagnosis, he now spends his days divided between inexpressible gratitude and paralyzing fear over the possibility of relapse. On his better days, he succeeds in focusing on the former.

And while, for most of us, that tension is far less acute, to some degree it is present for us all. We all have moments when we figuratively contemplate whether the partial geulot of our lives are truly worthy of celebration. And in those moments, the holiday of Purim stands as a model. When we recite the Al ha¬Nissim prayer on Purim and thank Hashem for the great-but-incomplete miracles that He did for our ancestors, we remember to also thank Him for the nissim she-bekhol yom imanu — the daily miracles wrought for us every day — that we mention in the very same prayer of Modim. Purim inspires us to appreciate those incomplete miracles that fill and animate our lives.

Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary • The Benjamin and Rose Berger CJF Torah To-Go Series • Purim 5781

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from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> date: Feb 24, 2021, 4:42 PM subject: Aish.com Parsha - Tetzaveh

Purim Will Never Cease

by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski

Commenting on the verse, "And these days of Purim should never cease among the Jews" (Esther 9:28), the Midrash states that even when all the other festivals are discontinued, Purim will always remain. The commentaries give various interpretations on what this Midrash may mean but it is evident from this Midrash that Purim has extraordinary significance, and surpasses in importance even the Scriptural festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. What is it that gives Purim such great significance?

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev explains that supernatural miracles, great as they may be, are of only a temporary duration. The salvation of the Israelites by the dividing of the waters of the Reed Sea was indeed an exceptional occurrence, but it was witnessed only by that generation, and for us it is a historical incident. We do not expect miracles of that type to occur.

The salvation of Purim, however, did not consist of any supernatural miracle. Every event could be seen as a perfectly natural happening. A king becomes intoxicated and in his drunken rage has the queen executed. He chooses a Jewess as his new queen, and she conceals her origin. Her uncle, who is in the royal court, discovers a palace intrigue to assassinate the king, and the queen reports this to the king, thereby saving his life. The anti-Semitic prime minister extracts a decree from the king to exterminate the Jews in his kingdom. The king is reminded that it was a Jew who saved his life. The queen turns the king's wrath against the prime minister, who is executed. The queen reveals her Jewish origin, her uncle is appointed as prime minister and the Jews are saved.

It is only when the entire sequence of events is put together that one sees the guiding Hand of G-d saving His people. In all likelihood, during the Purim episode, someone in shul related, "Did you hear what happened yesterday? The king was drunk and flew into a rage and had the queen executed!" A listener probably said, "I couldn't care less about what the king does. Politics is not my thing." At no point did anyone realize that a miracle was in the making.

Miracles such as these are with us today. No laws of nature are suspended, but the guiding Hand of G-d causes "natural" events to occur in such a way that results in our salvation.

The realization that everything in the world is orchestrated by G-d is a fundamental principle of Judaism. This teaching of Purim should be with us 354 days of every year. As we say in the Amidah, "for Your miracles are with us every day." This belief enables us to entrust our lives to the care of G-d, and should stimulate us to live our lives according to His commandments

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From: Daily Halacha <return@email.dailyhalacha.com> via torahlearningresources.org date: Feb 24, 2021, 3:05 AM subject: Purim – **Can One Fulfill the Misva by Listening to Megilla Reading Over Zoom?**

iTorah.com **DailyHalacha By Rabbi Eli J. Mansour**

Description: Purim – Can One Fulfill the Misva by Listening to the Megilla Reading Over Zoom?

Halacha requires hearing the reading of Megillat Ester from a kosher Megilla, written on parchment, on the night of Purim and again on Purim day. Before the nighttime reading, the one reading recites three Berachot – "Al Mikra Megilla," "She'asa Nissim," and "She'hehiyanu." According to Sephardic custom, only the first two of these Berachot – "Al Mikra Megilla" and "She'asa Nissim" – are recited before the daytime reading. The congregation answers "Amen" to the Berachot, but do not respond "Baruch Hu U'baruch Shemo." The reader and the congregation must have in mind that the congregation fulfills its obligation by listening to the reading of the Megilla.

This year (5781/2021), during the coronavirus pandemic, many people are unable to attend the Megilla reading in the synagogue. Some people are quarantined because they've contracted the virus or were exposed to somebody who has contracted the virus. Others have medical conditions that put them at risk of death, Heaven forbid, if they contract the virus, and are therefore required to avoid crowds to protect themselves. It goes without saying that we are required to care for our physical health, and so all those advised by medical experts to remain at home and not come to the synagogue should heed this advice. The question arises as to whether those who must remain home have the option of fulfilling their obligation by listening to the Megilla reading through a live video feed, such as Zoom. If the reader arranges the Zoom on the Teba (table in the synagogue) so that people at home can see and hear his reading, do they thereby fulfill their obligation?

This question was addressed many decades ago, during the latter part of the 20th century, in regard to the telephone. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Jerusalem, 1910-1995), in Minhat Shelomo (vol. 1, p. 64), advanced the view that one cannot fulfill an obligation to hear a recitation if he hears it via a telephone or microphone. When one speaks into such a device, Rav Shlomo Zalman writes, he causes the device to vibrate and produce a sound. Thus, the listener hears not the speaker's voice, but rather a technologically-induced reproduction of the voice. As such, one cannot fulfill his obligation to hear the Megilla by hearing it via a telephone, since he is hearing an artificial reproduction of the reader's voice, and not the voice itself. This was also the opinion of Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), in Or Le'sion (vol. 4).

Others, however, disagreed. Rav Shlomo Zalman himself, in his responsum, cites the Hazon Ish (Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953)

as ruling leniently in this regard, and maintaining that the sound heard through a telephone is regarded by Halacha as the person's actual voice. Likewise, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Russia-New York, 1895-1986), in Iggerot Moshe (Orah Haim 2:108, 4:91) maintained that since the sound one hears has been produced by the speaker, this suffices to fulfill his obligation. Even though, technically, the listener hears a reproduction of the reader's voice, nevertheless, for all intents and purposes, this sound was produced by the reader speaking into the device, and, quote obviously, the sound could not have happened on its own. Therefore, the listener fulfills his obligation. In fact, some have noted that all sounds which reach the eardrum are "reproduced," in that when a person speaks, the sounds waves reverberate and eventually reach the ear, and so there is no difference between hearing someone's voice via telephone and hearing it directly. This lenient position was held also by Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank (Jerusalem, 1873-1960), in his Mikra'eh Kodesh – Purim (p. 95). He explains that even if the listener is hearing both the speaker's actual voice and a mechanically produced sound, nevertheless, this suffices for the fulfillment of the Misva.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in several places (including Hazon Ovadia – Purim, p. 56; and Yehaveh Da'at 2:68), follows the stringent ruling of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, that one cannot fulfill his obligation by hearing a recitation via telephone. Interestingly, however, Hacham Ovadia also ruled that somebody who is deaf, and cannot hear without a hearing aid, may fulfill the Misva by listening to the reading via his hearing aid. As many have observed, these two rulings appear contradictory. After all, hearing via a hearing aid is no different than hearing via a telephone, as in both cases, one hears a reproduction of the original sound produced by the reader's voice. One author suggested reconciling these rulings by distinguishing between somebody who cannot hear at all without a hearing aid, and somebody who can hear without the hearing aid but his hearing is impaired, and he needs the device to amplify the sound. It is only in the latter case, perhaps, that Hacham Ovadia allowed one to fulfill the Misva by listening to the Megilla reading with a hearing aid. However, Rav Yisrael Bitan (contemporary), in the English edition of Yalkut Yosef, argues that from Hacham Ovadia's words it is clear that he permitted even those who cannot hear at all without a hearing aid to fulfill the Misva by wearing the device. Rav Bitan (Purim, p. 118) entertains the possibility that Hacham Ovadia retracted his stringent ruling and decided that one may, in fact, fulfill the Misva by hearing the reading over the telephone. Of course, it is difficult to rely on such a theory, as we normally assume that we must follow that which the Hacham wrote in his books.

Regardless, it would seem that in the case of somebody who is quarantined, or otherwise unable to come to the synagogue, and cannot have somebody come to his home to read the Megilla for him, we may certainly rely on the position of Rav Moshe Feinstein and the other aforementioned Poskim, and arrange for him to hear the Megilla via a live video feed. It should be noted that Rav Moshe applied this ruling to the case of a woman who was in the hospital on Shabbat, and had no possibility of reciting or hearing Habdala other than via telephone. Habdala, according to the Rambam (Rav Moshe Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135-1204), constitutes a Torah obligation, and Rav Moshe nevertheless allowed the woman to fulfill this Misva via telephone when she had no other option. Certainly, then, we may apply this ruling to the Misva of Megilla reading, which, according to many, is a Rabbinic obligation. And although some consider this obligation a Misva Mi'dibreh Kabbala (requirement from the Prophets), nevertheless, it is certainly not a higher-level obligation than Habdala according to the Rambam. Indeed, Rabbi Bitan writes that somebody who is in the hospital on Purim and cannot have the Megilla read for him in person, should try to hear the Megilla via telephone. We might even speculate that Hacham Ovadia himself – who always endeavored to find grounds for leniency in situations of great need – would approve of hearing the Megilla via a live video feed under current circumstances, when there are many people who cannot attend the synagogue due to medical concerns.

In such a case, the one listening to the Megilla by phone or over Zoom should not answer "Amen" to the Berachot recited over the Megilla.

It goes without saying that we would not approve of fulfilling the obligation in this manner simply for convenience, when a person prefers to avoid having to leave home to hear the Megilla reading. This leniency should be relied upon only under extenuating circumstances, if one has no possibility of hearing the Megilla reading in person.

Summary: The Halachic authorities of the late 20th century debated the question of whether one fulfills the Misva of listening to the Megilla reading via telephone. Although we follow the stringent opinion, that one must listen to the reading in person, nevertheless, when this is not possible, and one's only option is to hear the reading via telephone or a live video feed, such as Zoom, this is allowed. Therefore, synagogues with congregants who cannot come to the synagogue due to medical concerns, and cannot have somebody come to their home to read for them, should arrange for a live video feed so these members can hear the Megilla reading.

Torah Learning Resources, P.O. Box 230212, Brooklyn, NY 11223

From: **The Office of Rabbi Sacks** <info@rabbisacks.org> v date: Feb 24, 2021, 2:17 PM subject: The Counterpoint of Leadership (Tetzaveh 5781)

The **Counterpoint of Leadership Tetzaveh 5781**

Rabbi Sacks zt''l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Office of Rabbi Sacks will carry on distributing these essays each week, so people from all over the world can continue to learn and be inspired by his Torah.

One of the most important Jewish contributions to our understanding of leadership is its early insistence of what, in the eighteenth century, Montesquieu called "the separation of powers"[1]. Neither authority nor power was to be located in a single individual or office. Instead, leadership was divided between different kinds of roles.

One of the key divisions – anticipating by millennia the "separation of church and state" – was between the King, the head of state, on the one hand, and the High Priest, the most senior religious office, on the other.

This was revolutionary. The kings of Mesopotamian city states and the Pharaohs of Egypt were considered demigods or chief intermediary with the gods. They officiated at supreme religious festivals. They were regarded as the representatives of heaven on earth.

In Judaism, by stark contrast, monarchy had little or no religious function (other than the recital by the King of the book of the covenant every seven years in the ritual known as hakhel.) Indeed the chief objection to the Hasmonean Kings on the part of the Sages was that they broke this ancient rule, some of them declaring themselves High Priests also. The Talmud records the objection: "Let the crown of kingship be sufficient for you. Leave the crown of priesthood to the sons of Aaron." (Kiddushin 66a) The effect of this principle was to secularise power.[2]

No less fundamental was the division of religious leadership itself into two distinct functions: that of the Prophet and the Priest. That is dramatised in this week's parsha, focussing as it does on the role of the Priest to the exclusion of that of the Prophet. Tetzaveh is the first parsha since the beginning of the book of Exodus in which Moses' name is missing. It is supremely the priestly, as opposed to prophetic, parsha.

Priests and Prophets were very different in their roles, despite the fact that some Prophets, most famously Ezekiel, were Priests also. The primary distinctions were:

The role of Priest was dynastic, that of Prophet was charismatic. Priests were the sons of Aaron. They were born into the role. Parenthood had no part in the role of the Prophet. Moses' own children were not Prophets. The Priest wore robes of office. There was no official uniform for a Prophet. The priesthood was exclusively male; not so prophecy. The Talmud lists seven women who were Prophets: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther. The role of the Priest did not change over time. There was a precise annual timetable of sacrifices that did not vary from year to

year. The Prophet by contrast could not know what his mission would be until G-d revealed in to him. Prophecy was never a matter of routine. As a result, Prophet and Priest had different senses of time. Time for the Priest was what it was for Plato: the "moving image of eternity,"[3] a matter of everlasting recurrence and return. The Prophet lived in historical time. His today was not the same as yesterday and tomorrow would be different again. One way of putting this is that the Priest heard the word of G-d for all The Prophet heard the word of G-d for this time. The Priest was "holy" and therefore set apart from the people. He had to eat his food in a state of purity, and had to avoid contact with the dead. The Prophet by contrast often lived among the people and spoke a language they understood. Prophets could come from any social class. The key words for the Priest were tahor, tamei, kodesh and chol: "pure", "impure", "sacred", and "secular". The key words for the Prophets were tzedek, mishpat, chessed and rachamim: "righteousness", "justice", "love", and "compassion". It is not that the Prophets were concerned with morality while the Priests were not. Some of the key moral imperatives, such as "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," come from priestly sections of the Torah. It is rather that Priests think in terms of a moral order embedded in the structure of reality, sometimes called a "sacred ontology."[4] Prophets tended to think not of things or acts in themselves but in terms of relationships between persons or social classes. The task of the Priest is boundary maintenance. The key priestly verbs are le-havdil and le-horot, to distinguish one thing from another and apply the appropriate rules. Priests gave rulings, Prophets gave warnings. There is nothing personal about the role of a Priest. If one – even a High Priest – was unable to officiate at a given service, another could be substituted. Prophecy was essentially personal. The Sages said that "no two Prophets prophesied in the same style" (Sanhedrin 89a). Hosea was not Amos. Isaiah was not Jeremiah. Each Prophet had a distinctive voice. Priests constituted a religious establishment. The Prophets, at least those whose messages have been eternalised in Tanach, were not an establishment but an anti-establishment, critical of the powers-that-be. The roles of Priest and Prophet varied over time. The Priests always officiated at the sacrificial service of the Temple. But they were also Judges. The Torah says that if a case is too difficult to be dealt with by the local court, you should "Go to the Priests, the Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict" (Deut. 17:9). Moses blesses the tribe of Levi saying that "They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel" (Deut. 33:10), suggesting that they had a teaching role as well.

Malachi, a Prophet of the Second Temple period, says: "For the lips of a Priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth" (Mal. 2:7). The Priest was guardian of Israel's sacred social order. Yet it is clear throughout Tanach that the priesthood was liable to corruption. There were times when Priests took bribes, others when they compromised Israel's faith and performed idolatrous practices. Sometimes they became involved in politics. Some held themselves as an elite apart from and disdainful toward the people as a whole.

At such times the Prophet became the voice of G-d and the conscience of society, reminding the people of their spiritual and moral vocation, calling on them to return and repent, reminding the people of their duties to G-d and to their fellow humans and warning of the consequences if they did not heed the call.

The priesthood became massively politicised and corrupted during the Hellenistic era, especially under the Seleucids in the second century BCE. Hellenised High Priests like Jason and Menelaus introduced idolatrous practises, even at one stage a statue of Zeus, into the Temple. This provoked the internal revolt that led to the events we recall on the festival of Chanukah.

Yet despite the fact that the initiator of the revolt, Mattityahu, was himself a righteous Priest, corruption re-emerged under the Hasmonean Kings. The Qumran sect known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls was particularly critical of the priesthood in Jerusalem. It is striking that the Sages traced their spiritual ancestry to the Prophets, not the Priests (Avot 1:1).

The Kohanim were essential to ancient Israel. They gave the religious life its structure and continuity, its rituals and routines, its festivals and celebrations. Their task was to ensure that Israel remained a holy people with G-d in its midst. But they were an establishment, and like every establishment, at best they were the guardians of the nation's highest values, but at worst they became corrupt, using their position for power and engaging in internal politics for personal advantage. That is the fate of establishments, especially those whose membership is a matter of birth.

That is why the Prophets were essential. They were the world's first social critics, mandated by G-d to speak truth to power. Still today, for good or otherwise, religious establishments always resemble Israel's priesthood. Who, though, are Israel's prophets at the present time?

The essential lesson of the Torah is that leadership can never be confined to one class or role. It must always be distributed and divided. In ancient Israel, Kings dealt with power, Priests with holiness, and Prophets with the integrity and faithfulness of society as a whole. In Judaism, leadership is less a function than a field of tensions between different roles, each with its own perspective and voice.

Leadership in Judaism is counterpoint, a musical form defined as "the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in such a way that they establish a harmonic relationship while retaining their linear individuality."[5] It is this internal complexity that gives Jewish leadership its vigour, saving it from entropy, the loss of energy over time.

Leadership must always, I believe, be like this. Every team must be made up of people with different roles, strengths, temperaments and perspectives. They must always be open to criticism and they must always be on the alert against groupthink. The glory of Judaism is its insistence that only in heaven is there one commanding Voice. Down here on earth no individual may ever hold a monopoly of leadership.

Out of the clash of perspectives – King, Priest and Prophet – comes something larger than any individual or role could achieve.

[1] Charles-Louis Montesquieu, The Spirit of Laws (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952). [2] In Judaism, power, except that exercised by G-d, is not holy. [3] Plato, Timaeus 37d. [4] On this rather difficult idea, see Philip Rieff, My Life Among the Deathworks (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2006). Rieff was an unusual and insightful critic of modernity. For an introduction to his work, see Antonius A.W. Zondervan, Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2005). [5] American Heritage Dictionary, 5th ed., s.v. "Counterpoint" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011).
[1] See Shabbat 55a-b

From: **Peninim on the Torah** <peninim@hac1.org> date: Feb 24, 2021, 9:39 AM subject: Parashas Tetzaveh

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

We are happy to announce that after much effort we have successfully launched our new website www.peninim.org. This website will avail the reader access to all thirty years of Peninim Al HaTorah (over 6,000 divrei Torah) Our search engine responds to searches by year, parasha, topic and keyword . This labor of love has been sponsored l'zchus harabim by our dear friends Rabbi & Mrs. Roberto Szerer in memory of Bina bas Eliyahu Yehoshua Z"L.

ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael. (27:20) Home->Tetzaveh-> 5781 Not Moshe, just, V'atah, "Now you." Indeed, the Torah does not mention Moshe Rabbeinu's name in this parsha. This is by design, because, in his defense of Klal Yisrael, following the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe pleaded that they be forgiven. If not – m'cheini na mi'Sifrecha asher Kasavta, "Erase me from Your Book that You have written" (Shemos 32:32). When a tzaddik issues forth a declaration it is not ignored. Thus, one parsha, the one which usually is read around the seventh of Adar, which is Moshe's yahrzeit, is missing his name. From the time that the Torah records Moshe's entering the scene in Sefer Shemos, until the end

of the Torah – this is the only parsha that is missing his name. He sacrificed his name in this parsha out of his abiding love for Klal Yisrael. Hashem turned to Moshe and said, "V'atah Tetzaveh; Now you shall command." As a result of Moshe's request to have his name withheld from the Torah –as a result of his extreme devotion to his nation, Hashem said, "You" be the one to issue the command. No name, but "you," because Hashem always acknowledges and rewards sacrifice. Mesiras nefesh, sacrifice, for Klal Yisrael is not uncommon. Jews from all walks of life have sacrificed themselves for Hashem, for Judaism, and for Klal Yisrael. What is more difficult to come by is to live a life of sacrifice. Kiddush ha'chayim, sanctifying life, is the form of sacrifice that seems to be more demanding. We are prepared to fight to the death to sanctify Hashem's Name. Are we likewise prepared to live a life of commitment and devotion, regardless of what Hashem asks of us? The Chafetz Chaim, zl, was once traveling by train together with the Imrei Emes, zl, of Gur. Word spread that these two Torah giants were traveling together. As a result, Jews gathered at every stop to gaze at these holy men and receive their blessing – even if it was through a railcar window. At every stop, the Gerrer Rebbe went to the window and blessed those who had congregated at the station. The Chafetz Chaim demurred, claiming that this world is only a vestibule before the next world. The honor and acclaim one receives in this world diminishes the reward that he would otherwise receive in Olam Habba, The World-to- Come. "Why should I benefit from imaginary kavod, esteem?" he asked. The Imrei Emes replied, "For Klal Yisrael (to give a Jew satisfaction), I have long ago been mevateir, conceded, my Olam Ha'zeh (This World) and my Olam Habba (World-to-Come). The Chafetz Chaim went to the window at the next stop. One need not be a Torah giant to express his love for and commitment to Hashem via self-sacrifice. The following story demonstrates that even an ordinary Jew, who was not raised in a strong Torah-oriented background, who did not descend from an illustrious pedigree, gave up his life to proclaim commitment to Hashem. After all, a life in which we must renege our conviction is not a life worth living.

For many years, Jewish boys in Russia (from the young age of six years old) were subject to the evil decree of the Cantonists. Boys were taken captive and forced to serve in the Russian Army for up to twenty-five years, during which time they were physically and emotionally abused and subject to anti-religious laws in which Torah, Kosher and Shabbos were strictly prohibited. The Tzemach Tzedek would often visit these brave soldiers to encourage and offer them emotional and spiritual support. He would reiterate to them, "A person should give up his life, rather than renege on his Yiddishkeit. Even if the Czar himself instructs you to turn your back on your religion, you should sacrifice your life, rather than listen to him!" (In most cases, this was wishful thinking, since these men had been snatched as children, and, as a result, had little to no Jewish upbringing which would inculcate them with strong Jewish conviction and commitment.) Among the soldiers listening to the Rebbe was a sailor named Shimon Levin – a Cantonist who had been held captive for most of his life. He was an excellent soldier who enjoyed being in the Russian Navy. His friends were impressed by his bravery and ensuingly dubbed him Semion Bodri – Shimon the Brave. Shimon received a high commission as a Naval officer, stationed at a base near the Black Sea. One day, his base was informed of important news. The Czar was vacationing nearby and planned on touring the base! As the most powerful person in the country, the Czar injected a sense of fear and awe in every soldier. In his honor, the base was cleaned to a fault. Mistakes were not tolerated in the Russian Army. As part of their welcoming performance, one of the officers would perform an act of extreme bravery in honor of their esteemed guest. Shimon Levin was selected to perform the act of bravery. As everyone watched with bated breath, Shimon stood at the bottom of the tallest ship mast on the sea. He climbed up the mast without stopping, and, when he reached the very top, he dove into the sea! He immediately swam back to the boat, climbed up and saluted the Czar. The Czar was enraptured. He was thrilled. "Semion Bodri, I want to reward you at a celebration tomorrow!" the Czar declared. The next day, with many officers and important guests in attendance, the Czar announced, "Semion Bodri! Due to the bravery you demonstrated yesterday, I am promoting you and elevating your rank to admiral in the Russian Navy!" "But I am Jewish and, according to Russian law, I cannot hold a position higher than an officer." The Czar was surprised and embarrassed, "So, you will change your religion and become an admiral – now!" Shimon immediately replied, "I must first carry out the same act of bravery that I did yesterday." Shimon ran up the ship's tall mast and climbed to the top. Shouting so that everyone could hear, he declared: "Your majesty, for twelve years I have served in the Russian Navy, and I love my job. However, more important than all this, I am a Jew! I have always observed Shabbos and kept kosher during these twelve years. I will never stop being a Jew. I will never leave Hashem. Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!" Shimon took one last dive into the sea – only this time he did not emerge from the water. He had publicly given up his life Al Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify Hashem's Name. This way, the Czar could not force him to renege his Yiddishkeit. Shimon's greatest act of bravery was performed in death. May his name be a blessing.

ולקחת את שתי אבני שהם ופתחת עליהם שמות בני ישראל You should take the two Shoham stones and engrave on them the names of Bnei Yisrael. (28:9) Chazal (Sotah 36b) teach that when Yosef HaTzaddik almost fell prey to the blandishments of Potifar's wife, an image of Yaakov Avinu, his father, appeared before him and said, "Yosef, your brothers' names will eventually be engraved upon the stones of the Ephod, and your name (as of now) is destined to be included among them. Do you want your name to be omitted (if you sin)?" When Yosef heard this, he immediately withdrew. Potifar's wife was not going to cause him to be deprived of his spiritual destiny.

So much for Yosef. What about Reuven and Yehudah? It is not as if they were not involved in an activity that reflected a degree of lapse in morality (relative to their elevated spiritual plateau); yet, their names were not omitted from the stones. Veritably, this is because of their teshuvah, repentance. Does this mean that had Yosef sinned and subsequently repented, his teshuvah would have been deemed unacceptable – and his name omitted from the Ephod? If so, why was he held to a different standard than Reuven and Yehudah? [Simply, we can say that whatever questionable moral decline they experienced, it was certainly not the same as an immoral relationship with the wife of his master. True, he did not initiate the sin, in that he was seduced and compelled by an unsavory woman bent on committing an iniquitous act of infidelity. Nonetheless, the egregiousness of the sin should have sufficiently distanced him from its perpetration.]

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, offers a compelling insight into the Shoham stone's function and Yosef's connection to it. The Kohen Gadol's Choshen, Breastplate, contained twelve precious stones upon which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved. The stone on the Breastplate which corresponded with Yosef's name was the Shoham (onyx) stone. The Shoham was unique in the sense that, in addition to its placement upon the Ephod, two additional Shoham stones were on the shoulder straps of the Ephod. Six names of Tribes were engraved upon each of these stones, so that all twelve names were on both stones. In other words, Yosef's name was engraved twice upon the Shoham stones – once on the Ephod and once on the kispos ha'Ephod. Yosef's (Shoham) stone was the foundation stone upon which the names of all the tribes was engraved. This is why Yosef is called tzaddik yesod olam, 'the tzaddik, righteous person, foundation stone of the world."

Had Yosef fallen prey to Potifar's wife's seductive efforts and subsequently repented, his name would (like Reuven's and Yehudah's) still be etched on the Ephod. He would, however, have forever lost his tzaddik yesod olam status, because he had blemished it with sin. He no longer would have been the untainted, quintessential tzaddik. He was the tzaddik who had erred, repented and now was once again a tzaddik. When one is a tzaddik yesod olam, he has no room for error. When Yaakov Avinu appeared to Yosef to inform him that if he sinned his name would not appear on the

Ephod, he meant that, while his name might have a place on the Choshen, his designated stone, the Shoham, would no longer serve as the foundation stone for all Klal Yisrael.

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Down to the Details

An Essay on Parshat Tetzaveh

By Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)

While Parshat Terumah deals primarily with the Tabernacle's outer structure, Parshat Tetzaveh deals with what is inside, its inner workings and the daily routine within its confines.

For this reason, one section of the parshah deals with the priestly garments, in which the Torah emphasizes: "And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they enter the Tent of Meeting, or when they approach the Altar to minister in the holy place, so that they not bear iniquity and die1." This is how they must comport themselves, and anyone who does otherwise puts his life at risk.

The other section deals with the Priests' investiture, describing all the tasks that must be performed inside the Tabernacle. Each part of the daily service that the Priests will later perform in the Tabernacle is already represented in the proceedings of the investiture days, although not necessarily in the same order.

Are all systems go? The section on the Tabernacle – the command, the order of the service, the construction, the dismantling, and the actual performance of the tasks - repeats itself many times, to the point where it becomes wearisome. In order to understand these numerous minutely detailed repetitions, we must first analyze the nature of the Tabernacle itself.

The Tabernacle is a type of instrument whose function is to connect the earth with heaven. To succeed in this task, it has to function properly, without any mishaps. This instrument's only test is whether it really works. If it was assembled incorrectly, even if the error was only in the minutest detail, it does not matter if one had the best intentions when assembling it – it will not work; it will simply malfunction.

The construction of the Tabernacle can be compared to the construction of a spacecraft. A spacecraft is an extremely complex structure made of a multitude of parts, each one of which must be perfectly precise. First of all, all the calculations must all be correct. Then all the parts must be manufactured, and when construction begins, everything must be done exactly according to plan. An entire team of experts pores over each stage. One team checks the accuracy of the calculations; another checks whether the work was done according to all the specifications of the plans. Then an attempt is made to assemble all the parts, and even then everything must be checked: Do the screws really fit? Are they in the right place? Did anything fall out? Have any cracks developed? Once everything is assembled, the whole apparatus must be dismantled to verify whether all is truly in order. At the end of the entire process, after the arduous preparatory process is finally complete, comes the moment when someone presses a button and the real question arises: Will the spacecraft lift off or not?

In 1988, the Soviets sent two satellites to study Mars and its moons. The satellites were operated by solar energy, and for that purpose, they occasionally had to change their wing angle according to instructions they received from Earth. A daily communication lasting a few seconds was sent to them containing thousands of commands in computer code. These commands had to be checked on a daily basis, line after line, and then rechecked, so that no error should creep in. One day, someone erred and entered one incorrect letter in one of the lines of the program. Two days later, it was discovered that the satellite had shut down, was unable to change its wing angle, had depleted its batteries, and all contact with it was lost.

Thus, an incredibly expensive spacecraft was lost, all because of an error in one word, in one line, which caused it to shut down. The device may still exist somewhere in space, but it doesn't do anything meaningful. It changed from an instrument that could have been of great benefit to a worthless, insignificant object.

Likewise, after the assembly and construction of the Tabernacle was finished, after the anointing, the sanctification, and all the preparation, the Tabernacle had to rise heavenward – its moment of truth. In this respect, the climax of the construction of the Tabernacle is not in its "launch," but precisely in the days of investiture,2 which, at first glance, appears to have been devoid of any suspense. After all, the Torah merely describes the attiring of the Priests and the bringing of the korbanot. In truth, however, there is a tremendous feeling of suspense that mounts with each and every verse in the narrative.

The Midrash relates that on each of the seven days of investiture, Moses would erect and dismantle the Tabernacle twice. After months of building the Tabernacle, and even though all appeared to be in order and the boards fit together, the Tabernacle was dismantled and rebuilt again and again.3 For Moses, the fact that the boards fit together was not sufficient; perhaps it does not stand securely. They checked everything, dismantling and assembling; everything is in its proper place. And yet the tension continues to mount: Does it work or not?

On each of the seven days of investiture, the Tabernacle was assembled, Aaron entered, bringing the korban and slaughtering it. Each time, nothing happened – so the Tabernacle was dismantled. It was impossible to know where an error might have crept in, so once again everything needed to be checked from the beginning to determine what might have been the problem. As Rashi and the other commentaries explain, it was only on the eighth day, when Aaron entered the Tent with Moses and they prayed together, that the heavenly fire finally descended upon the Altar. At that moment, everything suddenly happened at once: "G-d's glory was then revealed to all the people. Fire came forth from before G-d and consumed upon the Altar the whole offering and the fat parts. When the people saw this, they became ecstatic and threw themselves on their faces."4

An entire nation – all 600,000 men, and all the women and children as well – waits with bated breath. The instructions for how to proceed are complex and detailed; the more progress that is made, the more the tension mounts. What will happen in the end? The Tabernacle is meant to be an instrument that connects the earth with heaven. Will it achieve this goal? Yet the final tasks that Moses, Aaron, and the Priests perform are precisely the least dramatic: Is the Menora in place? Was the ram offered at the right time? And then – "G-d's glory was revealed to all the people," fire descends from heaven, there is contact and a connection. The same picture appears at the dedication of the Temple as well, with all the suspense and the sigh of relief at the end.

The Tabernacle was an instrument whose every part was made with great precision. Everything had its own specifications: where it should stand, what its function is, etc. This is what makes the Tabernacle an instrument for receiving the Divine Presence. If it is made a little differently, if the Menorah is placed even slightly to the side, it will not work. Every one of these details forms the greater whole.

Importance of the details The passages describing the Tabernacle proceedings are so full of details that they are often perceived as some of the most boring parts of the Torah. Yet these details are repeated over and over again. Why does the Torah need to say exactly how the pants should be and where exactly the bells should be attached to the robe? The Torah also elaborates on the breastplate: It should have two rings, to which something else is attached, and to this attachment another thing is attached.

Why must the Torah mention these things? To teach us how to attach one clasp to another, or how to create gold settings? Even if these were indeed important details for us to know, why repeat these details so many times and ensconce them in the text of the Torah for eternity?

In truth, however, this story is full of suspense, almost like a cinematic thriller. How will all the intricate plans for the Tabernacle play out in reality? Did Bezalel make everything precisely according to the instructions? Did he perhaps attach one piece at the wrong angle, causing the whole enterprise to fail?

When an ordinary garment is sewn, it makes no difference whether the seam is placed a little to the right or to the left of the proper design. But when a diving suit or space suit is produced, if it is not sewn properly and as a result a small tear develops, the result is catastrophic. This is not a children's game, where someone mistakenly moves a little out of position or three steps ahead without any major consequence. Here, it is like an untrained homeowner who tries his hand at complicated electrical repairs. Even if he has seen the electrician take a certain tool, put it in a certain place, screw it in and turn it three times with his hand, and successfully repair the problem, if the untrained individual tries to imitate these steps he will likely electrocute himself. Every detail in the parshah is intensely serious. To go too far is a fatal mistake. As Aaron was told, he should not enter the Sanctuary without wearing the robe, "so that he not die."5 In essence, the Torah is telling Aaron that this is not a test. He is dealing with a mighty flame, with the holy of holies. The story of the death of Aaron's two sons relates to this very point. Nadav and Avihu, sons of the High Priest, enter, thinking that they are dealing with a simple matter. But when they make one misstep, they die as a result.

The Talmud describes the terror surrounding the High Priest's entry into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. He is forbidden to remain inside too long, so as not to frighten the people.6 The Zohar comments that they would tie a rope to the High Priest's foot, so that they could pull him out if he dies while inside.7 This is not because the place itself is frightening. The fact is that when inspections occasionally had to be made, people used to look inside and artisans would go in to perform renovations. If an artisan can enter, why is everyone seized with such terror when the High Priest is inside?

The answer is that it is just like electricity; it depends on the situation. On an ordinary day, it is possible to go in and touch things without ill effect. On Yom Kippur, however, all the fuses are lit, the current is flowing, and those who enter risk their lives.

Inside the Tabernacle The Tabernacle contains two vital components for forming the connection between heaven and earth. The first component is the vessels, and in Parshat Teruma we saw how they are made and what they are made of. The second component, the Tabernacle's inner dimension, is the person who uses it. The Tabernacle is not an empty instrument; it is an instrument that depends on the people who operate it. The staff can consist of several thousand Priests, as in Second Temple times, or – as in the case of the Tabernacle – it can be a limited staff of several individuals.

In Parshat Tetzaveh we see that there are functions that are indispensable for the Tabernacle's overall structure to work and achieve its purpose; without them, it simply does not respond. The entire parshah deals with service in the Sanctuary – the inner proceedings of the Tabernacle. What allows the system to operate is the inclusion of the human component, the people themselves, who are charged with ensuring that the walls do not remain merely walls but much more than that.

FOOTNOTES 1.Ex. 28:35. 2.Lev. 8–9. 3.Numbers Rabbah 12. 4.Lev. 9:23–24. 5. Ex. 28:35. 6. Yoma 53b. 7. Emor 102a.

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) (1937-2020) was internationally regarded as one of the leading rabbis of this century. The author of many books, he was best known for his monumental translation of and commentary on the Talmud. To learn more visit his website. Art by Rivka Korf Studio, a Miami-based art design studio run by Rivka Korf, a coffee lover and mother. Rivka uses her expertise and creativity to run a team that creates masterful compositions and illustrations for corporate and large nonprofit organizations.

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Queen Esther's 6 Lessons for Today

by Slovie Jungreis-Wolff

Timeless messages that Esther wanted every man, woman and child to hear.

Queen Esther asked that the scroll relaying her story, Megillat Esther, be written and shared for generations to come. She wanted every man, woman and child in every land for eternity to hear her timeless message. Queen Esther lived a legacy that speaks to us until today.

Here are six life lessons from Queen Esther:

1. Master Silence The key to Esther remaining in the palace of Achashverosh was her keeping a secret. Mordechai told Esther not to reveal her origins, that she was a Jew. The time was not yet ripe; Esther was required to master the quality of silence.

There are times in life that we must guard our privacy or someone's confidence. How many relationships have been harmed and friendships broken because we could not keep silent? We were given a trust to keep and couldn't contain ourselves. Or we overshared and exposed intimate details of our life. In our world of social media, we are privy to many photos and conversations that should really be kept hidden. Modesty isn't just about dress. It's about living with dignity and sensitivity, knowing what and when to share, and what and when to keep private.

2. You Have a Unique Life Mission Esther is told by Mordechai that she must speak to the king and plead for her people. She replies: That's impossible. Everyone knows the rule of the kingdom: If you enter the king's chambers without his beckoning, you will be killed unless he extends his golden scepter. "I haven't been called for 30 days!" she relays to Mordechai.

Mordechai's reply gives Esther direction. "You cannot remain silent. Who knows? It might be that you were chosen to be queen just for this moment!"

Every encounter, talent and strength that we have been given is for a purpose. Each of us has our own unique spiritual fingerprints to leave in this world. G-d places us exactly where we need to be to accomplish our mission. Esther is asking us to discover the meaning of our existence.

3. Live with Courage and Compassion After accepting her mission, Esther says, "I will go to the king. And if I die, I die."

I will give it my all. I will muster the courage to do my best.

As seasons of life pass, many people are left with their regrets, If only… but the moment is lost.

Esther is telling us to seize courage, step up to the plate and at least know forever that you tried to make a difference.

In one of my mother's final interviews she was asked "What do you want it to say on your gravestone?"

She replied "I want it to say two words: I cared."

4. Look for G-d's Hidden Hand In the entire Scroll of Esther there is no clear mention of G-d. The name 'Esther' means hidden in Hebrew, 'Megillah' means revelation. Esther is revealing a powerful hidden truth.

How easy it is to think that life is a series of random events. The story of Purim could seem to be a natural story that took place over the course of many years. The king just happened to choose this sweet innocent young Jewish woman, Mordechai just happened to hear a plot against the king, the king just happened to suffer from a bout of insomnia, and all the pieces just fell into place.

Esther is urging us to wake up; see G-d's hidden hand in your every day. It's not only about the big miracles, like the splitting of the sea. It's about the little moments. G-d is in every sunrise, every soul, every success or disappointment life brings. We won't always understand G-d's ways but His presence is here, even now amidst this most challenging time our world is facing.

Esther refused to lose hope when it seemed as if G-d's protective presence was lost in a dark fog. She knew that ultimately, even if it feels as if G-d's hand is hidden, He is directing and watching over us. He will never abandon us.

5. Don't Bow to Haman Mordechai refused to kneel or bow down to Haman.

Every generation has its Haman. Any force that threatens your ability to connect to your soul or tries to cool your passion for what is right and truth is 'Haman'. Haman descends from Amalek, the first nation that tried to destroy the Jewish People after leaving Egypt. We were on a high, connected to G-d, inspired to become a blessing in this world. They tried to squash our spirit.

There will always be people who belittle your desire to be better and live higher. There will be those who mock your standing for truth, for your people, and the land of Israel. Don't crumble. Don't bow. Never lose your passion for goodness. Stay strong as Mordechai did.

6. Unity brings Strength Haman describes the Jewish people as a nation "dispersed and divided" to the king. His words are jolting. "They are constantly bickering and quarreling with each other. Don't worry about them joining together and mounting a united offensive, they can't agree on anything. No one will come to their defense because they are hated. Get rid of them."

Esther succeeds in her mission to save her people by uniting the Jews and bringing them together in prayer and fasting. And she leaves a wish for us, her children. Esther asks that we celebrate this day together with joy, parties, charity, and sending food portions to one another. Esther is telling us to create a feeling of unity and peace. The antidote to all the bickering and hatred is reaching out to one another with friendship. Unity brings strength.

Our enemies never asked, "What type of Jew are you?" No one was spared the gas chamber based on their observance or head covering.

We don't have to be the same. We must only know that we are brothers and sisters, one family.

Stop judging. Start loving.

May you have a joyful Purim.

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from: Jewish Action <alerts@ounetwork.org> date: Feb 24, 2021 10:04

Speaking with Rav Hershel Schachter Interview by Rabbi Shaul Robinson Spending time this summer in the picturesque town of Tannersville, New York, where Rav Hershel Schachter—a rosh yeshivah at Yeshiva University, senior posek of OU Kosher and a leading posek in the Modern Orthodox community—has spent many summers, I had the opportunity to ask him to share his reflections on how Covid-19 has impacted the halachic process. In our hour-long discussion, we talked about the nature of the halachic questions that have arisen since the onset of the pandemic, the volume of questions, and the new way in which piskei halachos are being disseminated.

Perhaps no adjective has been applied to Covid-19 more than the term "unprecedented." In addition to the devastating toll the disease has unleashed in terms of deaths and illness, the challenges posed to every aspect of our religious lives came upon us without warning. From the closing of shuls, schools and yeshivos to challenges in every aspect of halachah—including observing yamim tovim such as Pesach and Rosh Hashanah, keeping the laws of mikveh, attending levayos and visiting shivah homes—our community found itself requiring answers to questions we never thought we would need to ask.

And yet, during these months, we have been blessed with the most extraordinary leadership. Klal Yisrael's senior posekim have not merely given us spiritual and moral encouragement but have ruled in matters of halachah in ways few could ever have imagined. As a member of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), I myself have benefited—sometimes on a daily basis—from the halachic guidance of Rav Hershel Schachter, shlita, and Rav Mordechai Willig, shlita.

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My career as a rabbi, first at Cambridge University in England and subsequently on Manhattan's Upper West Side, has brought me into contact with many Jews who question the capacity of halachah to respond to modern-day challenges. In those very fear-filled weeks when the pandemic first struck our community, a few Orthodox voices were heard on social media and in print media questioning if the halachic system could adequately deal with the impending crisis. "The Orthodox rabbinate has proven to be out of touch with the people they serve and unresponsive to their needs," opined one journalist.

And yet, those dire, if predictable, comments proved to be completely wrong. Instead, we observed once again that "lo alman Yisrael—we are not a leaderless generation." We are blessed with posekim, great leaders who have spent decades immersed in learning and teaching Torah, who are able to grasp the essence of the situation and calmly and clearly issue guidance—halachic rulings that are, on the one hand, seemingly unprecedented but, on the other hand, rooted in our Torah and mesorah.

It was eye-opening listening to Rav Schachter's insistence—an insistence I find astonishing—that from a halachic point of view, nothing in this Covid-19 situation is unprecedented! Only a posek who is familiar with every detail of the entire corpus of halachah, and experienced in answering questions of staggering complexity and significance on a daily basis, could possibly respond to the crisis we are experiencing.

Malcolm Gladwell speaks about the "10,000 hours" necessary to acquire the kind of expertise that prepares one to function in times of unique challenge. L'havdil, Chazal tell us, "You cannot compare one who has reviewed his learning 100 times to one who has reviewed 101 times."

Like most people, I do not cope well under extreme stress. On occasions when I have to deal with serious situations—such as, G-d forbid, a she'eilah pertaining to a life-and-death situation—I find that my emotions take over and thinking objectively and rationally becomes extremely challenging. Rav Schachter is famously a very emotional person, as is often evidenced during his speeches. But only a posek of his caliber can set aside his own emotions to calmly and unflinchingly lead in times such as these.

At the end of our conversation, Rav Schachter stated that great rabbanim can be considered as if "married" to the Torah, as they are able to intuit the correct answer to a question without deliberation. "Does that apply to you?" I asked. "No, that doesn't apply to me," he responded adamantly. "I don't have that yet."

It was in the word "yet" that I found encouragement. For I was sitting the day before Tishah B'Av, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, with one of the greatest posekim of our time, who insists that not only does Torah have the answers to guide us through every difficulty but that the future holds promise. It became clear to me that even when everything has changed, fundamentally nothing has changed. We have our Torah. We can delight in it, we can learn it, and we can take strength in it. In order to meet whatever challenge we may be called upon to face, we can never allow ourselves to stop growing. Baruch Hashem, we have leaders and posekim to guide us every step of the way.

Rabbi Shaul Robinson: Did the Rav ever imagine that he would one day have to pasken that all our shuls and yeshivos should close? How does a posek cope with unprecedented times and with getting hundreds of questions from all over the Jewish world? Rabbi Hershel Schachter: Of course I never imagined this, but I don't think I answer more questions now than I do during an ordinary week. In the course of a year, people ask me she'eilos all

day long. Many of the she'eilos are very serious, some concerning life and death. I don't think the recent she'eilos are more serious than those I normally get in the beis midrash.

RR: When did the Rav come to realize that the correct thing to do was to pasken that all the shuls should close? RS: I was learning in the beis midrash on Shushan Purim, which was a Wednesday. The beis midrash was half empty, because many students had already gone home. Rabbi [Marc] Penner [dean of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary] came in at around 4 pm and suggested I ask my doctor whether I should stay or not [due to the news regarding the virus]—I'm close to eighty.

I didn't take it so seriously and didn't call my doctor until around 5 PM. The doctor recommended that I go home and stay home. So I took my tallis and tefillin home, and I stayed home. I left all my sefarim in the beis midrash—I didn't realize it was going to be for months and months.

RR: I understand there was a conference call with many leading rabbanim, which took place in the days after Purim. At that point, the scale of the developing emergency and risk was not yet fully known. Most of the posekim, as well as medical experts, on the call felt that it was premature to close the shuls. The situation was serious, but it was not year clear that this was absolutely necessary. Rav Schachter disagreed. Why was it so clear to the Rav? RS: At first the consensus was to keep the shuls open. One of the doctors said it had not reached the point of [pikuach nefesh]. But I felt it was safek sakanah (a potential danger). I said, "You don't have to wait until it reaches the point of pikuach nefesh. If there's a possibility that it can reach that point, then you're not allowed to go to shul. [Right now] it's a safek sakanah [and that's enough to warrant closing the shuls]." Within twelve hours, everyone's opinion changed.

Ein somchin al hanes. One should not rely on miracles. Obviously, the Ribbono Shel Olam answers our prayers, but still, when there is a sakanah, a dangerous situation, we have to protect ourselves.

It is said that Reb Velvel Soloveitchik remarked that he is not as great as his father Reb Chaim. Reb Chaim Soloveitchik had such keen insight with regard to political issues that he would be able to tell you what would happen in fifty years if you went to the right, and what would happen if you went to the left. "I don't have that ability," said Reb Velvel, "but I think I have a ma'alah [advantage] over my contemporaries—at least I can see what's under my nose!"

I can see what's under my nose. And it was clear to me that it was a safek sakanah.

RR: One of the great changes observed during the pandemic was an acceleration of the use of technology in the halachic process. Even before Covid, congregants had been e-mailing, texting and WhatsApping questions to their rabbis. But when a she'eilah needed to be asked of a posek, people most commonly sought an in-person meeting, or at least a phone call. The sheer number of she'eilos that communities have recently faced, along with the need for social distancing, meant that a different system was urgently needed.

I know, for example, that the RCA began holding regular Zoom meetings with senior posekim, where questions could be submitted in advance. How did the process of receiving and answering many hundreds of questions work? RS: Rav Reuven Taragin [dean of overseas students at Yeshivat HaKotel] would send me a list of questions, or the RCA would interview me. The questions were e-mailed to me. I would [hand]write a response in Hebrew. My wife would scan my response—I don't know how to use the Internet—and e-mail it back. [For the sake of clarity], a group of younger roshei yeshivah at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary became involved in editing the teshuvos and adding mareh mekomos. The teshuvos would then be translated into English and placed on a web site.

RR: Before Pesach we all thought this was going to last a few weeks, but it's been going on for months and the she'eilos seem endless. I'm on the WhatsApp groups that were feeding she'eilos to Rav Schachter. Would the Rav say that these unprecedented times call for unprecedented responses? RS: There weren't that many unprecedented she'eilos. I took most of what I paskened [rulings] straight from the Gemara or the Shulchan Aruch, or halachic opinions I heard b'feirush (explicitly) from Rav [Joseph Ber] Soloveitchik. I was fortunate to have been in the Rav's shiur for ten years, from 1957 to 1967. If you paid attention to the shiur, [you realized that] in many, many cases, the Rav was deriving the halachah from the Gemara and stating his halachic opinion.

RR: Rav Schachter has been teaching on Zoom multiple times a week, even during the summer. Who taught the Rav how to use Zoom? And does the Rav feel something is lost when teaching talmidim over Zoom? RS: Every day I give shiur. Six days a week. I still don't know how to use Zoom; my wife always sets it up for me. A lot is lost when teaching over Zoom.

RR: Is Rav Schachter concerned that some of the very novel rulings issued in these last few months might become the norm in certain communities even after the current crisis is over? For example, what if people want to hold Megillas Esther readings via Zoom on Purim every year? Or host a siyum Ta'anis Bechoros over Zoom? Or conduct mechiras chametz virtually? Isn't there a danger in creating new halachic precedents? Is that something a posek has to take into account? RS: There is a danger, but we have no choice. You can't expect someone to go around reading the megillah for 1,000 people in their homes. B'she'as ha'dechak (in an extenuating circumstance), you have to rely on kulos (halachic leniencies). So this Purim we paskened that one is yotzei Megillah (fulfills the requirement to hear the Megillah) via telephone.

RR: Was there a havah amina (initial supposition) to say that we shouldn't do Zoom Megillah readings, in order to prevent the ruling from being misapplied in the future, when people might consider it a new, viable option? RS: No, I don't think so. B'she'as ha'dechak we are meikil (rule leniently). There may be reason to worry that some might use the leniency when it's not she'as ha'dechak, but we have no choice. If we want to be yotzei the mitzvah this year, what's the alternative? Tell people not to fulfill mikra Megillah this year? I don't think that's right.

RR: In a recent shiur, Rav Schachter mentioned that sometimes a posek knows intuitively what the answer is to a she'eilah. Does this reflect Rav Schachter's own approach? RS: That does not apply to me. During his last few years, when Rav Soloveitchik was ill, he was not always able to discuss things at length. The head of the Kashrus Commission of the RCA called me up and asked me what the din is on a particular issue. I said, "I don't know, I have to look it up in the Shulchan Aruch." He said, "Before you look it up, what do you say?" I said, "I have to look it up." [He persisted.] "But what's your feeling before you look it up? The Rav used to say that he always has an intuitive feeling." I said, "The Rav is the Rav. I'm not the Rav. I don't have that feeling."

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Parshas Tetzaveh: A Continual Offering

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

I. A CONTINUAL OFFERING

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

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

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

II. DEFINITIONS OF *TAMID*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One might argue that B except for R. Yose. (BT Menahot 99b): The Lehem haPanim (showbread) is to be before God ATamid@. The old loaves were replaced each week with the new loaves. According to the first opinion in the Mishna, four Kohanim slid the old loaves off of the table as four others slid the new loaves on to the table; this in order to fulfill the requirement of Tamid. R. Yose disagreed, saying that even if one set of loaves was removed totally and the other then put in its place, this still fulfilled the requirement of Tamid. In the Gemara, a more detailed opinion of R. Yose=s is quoted:

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

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

III. GENERATING PRECEDENCE

Kol haTadir meHavero Kodem et Havero (That [ritual] which is more frequent than another precedes that other.) This legal concept is derived from the law of the Olat haTamid . A fundamental question, shooting its curious arrows of inquiry

beyond the formula of Tamid, begs to be answered here. Why does frequency translate into precedence in Halakhah? Conventionally, occasional and unusual occurrences are more exciting, exotic and inspiring. That which is constant is mundane, humdrum and usual; the religious psyche seeks and thrives on the occasion, the festivity; that which removes us and helps us to transcend our everyday existence. How can we compare an everyday sunset to Halley=s comet? Isn=t the Sh=ma Yisra=el of Nei=la [at the end of Yom haKippurim] a hundredfold more inspiring than the Sh=ma Yisra=el of a midwinter=s Tuesday evening?

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

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

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

IV. RAMBAM=S APPROACH

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

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

One possible avenue of response is that of >Ikkuva (interdependence). We find other Mitzvot which are composed of various actions; since each one is necessary for the fulfillment of the Mitzvah, each is regarded as an Ikkuva to the performance of the Mitzvah; it therefore becomes part of the same Mitzvah. By way of example, each of the four species taken on Sukkot is an Ikkuva to the performance of the Mitzvah (Mishna Menahot 3:6; Mishneh Torah: Hilkhot Lulav 7:5). Therefore, if one lacked an Etrog, and took the Lulav, Hadas and Aravah, it would be (from an Halakhic standpoint) a meaningless action. Since all four species are an Ikkuva B a necessary component B to performing the Mitzvah, they must be considered one Mitzvah (one could, of course, define causality in the inverse direction thusly: Since all four comprise one Mitzva, each then becomes a necessary component to its fulfillment).
Applying Ikkuva to the T=midin would have to work as follows:

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

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

V. THE *LEHEM HAPANIM*

The Torah states:

You shall take choice flour, and bake twelve loaves of it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. You shall place them in two rows, six in a row, on the table of pure gold. You shall put pure frankincense with each row, to be a token offering for

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

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

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

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

VI. TWO DEFINITIONS OF CONSTANCY

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

By way of example, a happily married couple is endlessly in love. Nevertheless, the expression of their mutual affection must, perforce, be limited by the other demands and manifestations of their lives. Each member works, studies and perhaps plays separately. By delegating birthdays, anniversaries, certain holidays and the like, the frequent Aromantic interlude@ serves as an indication of their unending love for each other. These days function as Asignposts@ in the relationship; the mood and spirit of such occasions helps to define the ongoing nature of the relationship (Within the pale of the Shir haShirim model, this can serve as an analogy for the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Shabbat is a beautiful example of a Arelationship signpost@ which helps define the relationship during the rest of the week).
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All three questions which we asked can be answered as one: The daily offering is called Tamid, for it is the symbol of constant devotion to God. Since the daily T=midin function as daily Apoles@ to the relationship (the morning Tamid is the first sacrifice of the day. Except for the Pessah, the afternoon Tamid is the last), they are one Mitzvah; a continuous Mitzvah of Olah which has its expression at the extremes of the day. So, too, is the reading of the Sh=ma; Awhen you lie down and when you rise up@ is a way of assigning special times to that relationship- instructively, these times are, once again, at the extremes of man=s day, just as the times for the Tamid are at the extremes of the Sanctuary day (there are no sacrifices offered at night; MT Ma=aseh haKorbanot 4:1).

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

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PARSHAT TETZAVEH

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

A VERY LONG 'DIBBUR'

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

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

AN OUTLINE OF TERUMA/TETZAVEH

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

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

Introduction - Donation of the **materials** (25:1-7)
& the purpose of this project:
"Ve-asu li mikdash ve-**shachant**I betocham" (25:8-9)

Vessels in the Kodesh Kodashim (innermost sanctuary)
Aron - the ark to house the "luchot" (25:10-16)
Kaporet - the special lid for the ark (25:17-22)

Vessels in the Kodesh (main sanctuary)
Shulchan - the table for the show-bread (25:23-30)
Menora - the candelabra (25:31-40)

The Ohel Mo'ed [The tent housing these vessels] (26:1-37)
Yeriot - The canvas of the tent - from cloth & goatskins
Krashim - the wooden beams supporting this tent
Parochet - the curtain to partition the Kodesh Kdoshim

The Chatzer [The outer courtyard & its vessels]
Mizbeiach Ha-Ola (the altar / 27:1-8)
Chatzer - the outer courtyard
its curtains and poles (see 27:9-19)

Oil For The Menora (27:20-21)
[A priori, we would have expected to find this commandment with the **menorah**. See further iyun.]

The 'Bigdei Kehuna' - (28:1-43)
Six parshiot describing the priestly garments

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

Olat Tamid (29:38-46)
The daily offering on the altar (after its dedication)

The Mizbach Ha-Ktoret - the incense altar (30:1-10)
[This seems 'out of place', as we will discuss.']

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

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

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

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

OUT OF 'PLACE' and 'OUT' OF PLACE

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

"Olat tamid for all generations, in front of the ohel mo'ed - the place where we will meet to speak to you from there."
[note how this pasuk 'matches' 25:22!]
And I will sanctify the **OHEL MO'ED** (& its vessels),
[summarizing chapters 25 & 26]
the **MIZBEIACH** (i.e. the **chatzer**),
[summarizing chapter 27)
and the **KOHANIM...** (i.e. their garments & dedication)
[summarizing chapters 28 & 29]
(see 29:44)

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

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

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

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

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

BACK TO HAR SINAI

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

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

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

* The **aron**:

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

* The **keruvim**:

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

* The **mizbach ha-ola**: -

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

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

THREE MECHITZOT

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

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

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

The following table summarizes this parallel:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And you shall **place** it [the mizbach ktoret]
- in front of the **parochet**,
- which is over the **aron ha-eidut**,
- in front of the **kaporet** which is upon the **eidut**
- from where **I will meet with you.**" (see 30:6).

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

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

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

A 'PROTECTED' DIVINE ENCOUNTER

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

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

> "And Aharon shall offer the **ktoret** daily, in the morning before tending to the **menorah**, and when lighting the **menorah** in the evening..." (30:7-8).
>
> [Note also Vayikra 16:2, where Aharon must also offer ktoret to create a similar cloud of smoke to protect himself before entering the kodesh ha-kodashim on Yom Kippur!]

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

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

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

THE KTORET UNIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A PARALLEL STRUCTURE

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

The following table illustrates this parallel:

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

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

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

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

shabbat shalom,
menachem

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FOR FURTHER IYUN

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. A FULL TIME JOB

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

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

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

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

D. ADDITIONAL SOURCES & RESEARCH

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

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

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

Several different answers to the question of this parsha's location appear in other mefarshim. Some Acharonim, including the Meshech Chochma (30:1), view the location of this parsha as an allusion to the halacha allowing the offering of ktoret even without the mizbach ha-ktoret. The Or Ha-chayim (25:9) also sees here a subtle allusion to a technicality, that Shlomo Ha-melech built his own mizbach ha-ktoret rather than using Moshe's. (This assumption is somewhat controversial - see Torah Shleima, milu'im to Parshat Tetzaveh, 29.) The Tzror Ha-mor (30:1) writes that the Torah places this parsha last to indicate the unique stature of the mizbach ha-ktoret as the most important of all the klei ha-mikdash. A similar theory is advanced by Rav Dov Rabinowitz ("Da'at Sofrim"), who claims that Bnei Yisrael are worthy for the ktoret, the most exalted of all the offerings, only after they have loyally executed all the commands of the previous chapters and the Shechina has taken it residence in the mishkan. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznayim la-Torah 30:1) suggests precisely the opposite: lest one afford too much importance to the mizbach ha-zahav over the mizbach ha-nechoshet, the Torah extracted the former from the discussion of the klei ha-mikdash in order to emphasize that the mizbach ha-nechoshet actually constitutes the primary altar. The Netziv understands the Torah's structure as intended to underscore the distinct themes symbolized by the two mizbachot. The mizbach ha-nechoshet - along with the menorah - represents Torah, whereas the mizbach ha-ktoret symbolizes gemilut chasadim. The Torah emphasizes their symbolic distinction by separating them; their coexistence in the heichal points to the need for the two to work in tandem. The Malbim, who develops an elaborate system of symbolism with regard to the mishkan and its accessories, views the mizbach ha-ktoret as representing the spiritual result of the avoda performed in the mishkan. It is therefore presented last and apart from the rest of the mishkan's components, as it represents that which is attained as a result of that was discussed beforehand.

Megillat Esther: She'Asah Nissim La'Avoteinu

by Rabbi Yitzzhak Etshalom

I. WHERE IS GOD IN THE MEGILLAH?

Every year on Purim, Jews all over the world fulfill the Mitzvah of K'riat haMegillah – reading the complete Book of Esther from a proper scroll. Before beginning, the reader/leader recites three B'rakhot – the middle of which is Birkat haNes (the blessing recited at the commemoration of a miracle): Barukh…she'Asah Nissim la'Avoteinu baYamim haHeim baZ'man haZeh (Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time [of year]). Considering that, unlike the Exodus (and all other Biblical miracles), God's hand is nowhere to be found in the text of the story of Esther and Mordechai, we have to wonder which miracle is the focus of this thanksgiving to God? For which Nes are we praising God? (Parenthetically, the same question could be asked in reference to Hanukkah, where the most central "miracle" we celebrate is a military victory which did not, from the accounts we have, include any miraculous intervention in the conventional understanding of the word. To whatever extent this shiur answers the question vis-a-vis Purim, that answer should carry the same validity for the Hanukkah question. Significantly, Purim and Hanukkah are the two occasions when this B'rakhah is recited.)

A second question, certainly related to the first, focuses on one of the unique features of the Megillah. As is well known, Esther is the only book in T'nakh with absolutely no mention of God (by any Name). Much as the Midrash interprets some occurrences of "the king" in Esther (e.g. 6:1) as a reference to God, this is certainly not p'shat. Why is this story even included in the Biblical canon?

Before moving on, it is prudent to note that some approaches within Rabbinic literature see "hidden Nissim (miracles)" throughout our story; these are, however, not evident from the p'shat. In keeping with the general approach of this shiur, we will try to identify the Nes/Nissim within the text of the Megillah.

In order to provide satisfactory answers to these two questions, we will have to address two issues – the nature of a Nes and a new understanding of the story line in Megillat Esther.

II. NES L'HITNOSES

The root of Nes is N-S-S – which means "banner". See, for instance, the verse in T'hillim (60:6): "You have given those who fear You a Nes l'hitNoses – (a raised banner), to rally to it out of bowshot."

A miracle (i.e. deliberate suspension of the laws of physics in order to save the righteous individual or people) is a raising of the banner of God's Name in the world – hence the word Nes. (See also B'resheet 22:1 and see if this approach explains Avraham's "trial" – see also Midrash Rabbah ad loc.)

There is more than one way in which God's Name becomes glorified in this world. Besides an overt intervention, it is possible for human beings to make His Name manifest by demonstrating the most noble of traits. Keep in mind that we are all created in God's "Image" (whatever that may mean…conscience, free will etc.). When we demonstrate the most noble side of human existence and utilize those traits in the most productive manner possible, this is another (certainly more subtle) demonstration of God's power and glory. It is possible for a Nes to take place within the realm of human valor; although it should be stated that unless the people in question take the next step and utilize this experience to enhance their direct relationship with God, it may be that the whole enterprise would be considered a vain effort.

I would like to suggest that the two most noble human traits, each of which is a reflection of the Tzelem Elokim (Image of God) which sparks all of us, are Wisdom and Courage. I am not talking about wisdom or courage in the usual sense; rather about a special kind of wisdom, a unique type of courage and a special synthesis of the two. We will explore these two characteristics throughout the story and clarify how each was utilized in the most productive and positive manner to bring about the successful salvation of the Jews.

Instead of focusing on one or two passages in the Megillah, we're going to read through the whole story and point out the key "Nes-points" along the way. You'll need a copy of the text – all citations, unless otherwise noted, refer to chapters and verses within the Book of Esther.

As we read through, I will point out several other "layers" of the story – or, alternately, several other ways to read the story and the various messages embedded in the text. As usual, we will be reading the text alone; I will point out various Rabbinic interpolations and interpretations as needed for support and illustration.

III. CHAPTER 1

A) THE PARTY (1:1-1:8)

One other "layer" of the story is satiric; especially when viewed within the context of the rest of T'nakh (as will be explained later), the text is a clear parody. Of what…we will see.

As the story opens, we meet our first player: Achashverosh. Although he is described as a powerful king, ruling over 127 provinces from Hodu (India?) to Kush (Ethiopia?) – we soon find that his power is more illusion than reality.

First of all, the party about which we read in the first chapter (1:3-8) seems to be his inauguration ball (see v. 2); yet it only takes place in the third year of his rule. This seems to indicate that the transfer of power into his hands was not so smooth. We will soon see that plots abound in and around his court and that his control over the realm is not very secure.

The description of the party brings three issues to the fore:

The many allusions to the Mishkan (Tabernacle) / Mikdash (Temple). Keep in mind that the Ba'al haMegillah (author) expects every reader to be familiar with T'nakh and will pick up any word-associations made here. Among the materials described here are several which are prominent in the Mishkan: T'khelet (royal blue), Argaman (purple), Kessef (silver) and Shesh (marble). Indeed, the Midrash posits that the vessels which Achashverosh used at this party were the vessels of the Mikdash – this interpretation was probably motivated by the many Mikdash-associations in the description of the party.

(Rav Menachem Liebtag has a fascinating shiur on exactly this point – with many more illustrations. You can find it at his Tanach Study Center Website: it comes highly recommended!)

Achashverosh seems to be very insecure – both personally and politically. He spares no expense to show off his wealth – and specifically invites the governors, ministers and soldiers of the Persian and Medean armies. It seems that he is trying to consolidate his power and bring the military into his good graces. At the end of his six-month party (!), he invites all the citizenry of Shushan to his gala bash. This insecurity will increase and become a prominent feature in the events of the Megillah.
The image of Achashverosh's kingdom, a monarchy governed by protocol. Note how often the word Dat – a Persian word meaning "custom" or "protocol – shows up in the Megillah: 20 times! (Save for one verse in Daniel, it doesn't appear in any other books of the T'nakh). This would seem to indicate that everything in Achashverosh's realm was done "properly" and that the system was orderly and just. We soon find that this kingdom of Dat is just as illusory as his power.

B) VASHTI (1:9-22)

Vashti is not, properly speaking, a "player" in this narrative. She is much more of a foil, presented as the set-up for the story to unfold. Even after she is gone (dead? exiled?), her shadow hangs over the palace – but more on that later.

The first indication that Achashverosh's power is a lot of fluff is when he decides to show off his beautiful queen (presumably to outshine the beauty of their wives) – and she refuses to come out! This great king, protector of the realm, defender of the empire, ruler of Persia, etc. etc. controls nothing! His own queen refuses him and is not obeisant to his wishes. (Although in modern times this would seem to prove nothing about his political power – in Persia of 2500 years ago, this "failing" was quite telling – as we see from the tone of the letters sent out at the end of the first chapter).

We soon learn something else about the king. For all of his power – he never makes any decisions (is he passive-aggressive?). As a matter of fact, he doesn't ever say "no" to any of his advisors! A strange king – a classic "yes-man" sitting on the throne.

We get some insight into how his advisors have learned to "play him". Memuchan (who the Gemara identifies as Haman) knows that if he advises the king to kill (or banish) Vashti on account of her defiance of the king – the drunk monarch may wake up on the morn and feel foolish and humiliated that he had to exile the queen for his own honor – and take out his anger on Memuchan. In order to get the king to "get rid" of Vashti, Memuchan appeals to Achashverosh's sense of justice. He is the defender of men's rights throughout the kingdom and must act decisively on behalf of all the poor princes and governors throughout the Empire whose wives will surely rebel, following Vashti's (unpunished) lead. By appealing to Achashverosh's sense of nobility, the wise advisor allows the king to do what he wants without feeling a sense of humiliation.

Two more notes about the first chapter. First of all, as the Gemara points out, this first set of letters (v. 22) seems to be quite foolish. The king sends out letters to every province, announcing that every man rules in his own house!!???! (According to the Gemara, this caused the second letters – announcing the "loosing" of Jewish blood – to be taken less seriously by the citizenry who already case a jaundiced eye on this king's pronouncements).

Second, as R. David Hentschke points out (Megadim vol. 23), the kings has to send these letters to each province in their own language (v. 22 – this phrasing shows up several times in the Megillah). As powerful as the king may be, he hasn't been successful in establishing Persian as the language of the realm; perhaps his rule is not so ironclad as it might seem (reminds us a bit of the USSR???).

IV. CHAPTER 2

A) A NEW QUEEN (2:1-4)

We are quickly reminded of Achashverosh's inability to decide anything for himself. It takes his servants to suggest finding a new queen by gathering all of the maidens to Shushan for a "tryout" with the king.

As any student of T'nakh remembers, such a call went out once before – when David was old and near death. As we read in the beginning of Melakhim (Kings), they searched for a young maiden throughout Yisra'el – and found Avishag haShunamit. Note the contrast – whereas the one girl was found (although many undoubtedly would have wanted to be chosen); here, all the girls have to be forcibly brought to Shushan (note the wording in v. 3). And why not…who would want follow Vashti?

There is another interesting allusion in v. 3: The phrase v'Yafked haMelekh P'kidim v'Yik'b'tzu reminds us of a nearly similar phrase used in the first "Jew in the foreign court" story. When Yosef successfully interprets Pharaoh's dreams, he advises that Pharaoh appoint officers to collect the wheat of the seven plentiful years – Ya'aseh Pharaoh v'Yafked P'kidim…v'Yik'b'tzu… (B'resheet 41:34-35). This allusion is not for naught; the Ba'al haMegillah is showing us how Achashverosh and his servants viewed these young girls – just like wheat to be collected and brought to the palace.

B) MORDECHAI AND ESTHER (2:5-20)

We are immediately introduced to our two heroes – Mordechai and Esther. It is critical to note that both of these names are not only Persian (and not Hebrew) – they are both pagan names related to various gods of the pantheon! The Esther-Ishtar-Astarte connection is well-documented (besides the fact that the Megillah explicitly gives her "real" name – Hadassah); our heroine is named for the goddess of fertility. The Gemara (BT Menahot 65) gives Mordechai a more "Jewish" name – Petah'ya – and, again, the Mordechai-Marduk (god of creation in many mythologies throughout the Near East) connection has been extensively written up.

Why do these two righteous people, through whom God saves His people, have such names?

[note: Jews taking – or being given – non-Jewish "alternate" names when in the foreign court is the norm in T'nakh. Note Yoseph, who is named "Tzoph'nat Pa'a'ne'ach" by Pharaoh; Daniel, who is named "Belt-Shatzar" by N'vuchadnetzar, as well as Daniel's three companions. Note that Jews were occasionally given names which were associated with pagan gods – compare Daniel 1:7 with 4:5. Mordechai and Esther seem to be two examples of the same phenomenon. Note that according to the Gemara (BT Megillah 13a), the name "Esther" was given to her by the non-Jews, in response to her beauty.]

Even more curious is Mordechai's insistence that Esther not reveal her identity (as a Jewess) while in the palace (v10, 20). As we shall

soon see, even Mordechai's identity was not obvious; he was not distinguished in any external way from any other citizen.

There are a couple of verses which are telling within the scope of Esther's successful entrance into the palace.
(v. 16) – Esther was finally chosen in the seventh year of Achashverosh's reign – in other words, the selection of a queen took four years. (One very tired king! – See 2:12; even in his hedonistic behavior, he followed Dat!).

(v. 17-19) Compare the royal feast in honor of his queen (ironically – "in place of Vashti" – the dead (or exiled) queen's shadow hangs over the palace and Esther is likely aware that her fate may be no better than her predecessor's) with v. 19. As much as the king loves Esther – his servants are bringing more virgins into the palace! Insecure is the best description of anyone with a position of power in this court.

C) THE PLOT (2:21-23)

As we all know, this little paragraph is critical to the later success of our heroes. Note, however, that it is Achashverosh's own guards – who are charged with defending him – who are plotting against him. This kingdom is, indeed, unstable and always ready for a shake-up.

V. CHAPTER 3

A) ENTER HAMAN (3:1-7)

Suddenly – and very much out of the blue – Haman is elevated to a position of importance in the kingdom. This again demonstrates – despite the appearance of Dat – the helter-skelter way in which power and impotence, success and failure – even life and death – are handled most capriciously in the palace.

As much as we know about Achashverosh's terrible insecurity – we quickly learn about Haman's personal devil – his ego. Imagine that the king of the greatest empire on earth has just appointed a relative nobody (as it seems Haman was beforehand) to be grand vizier and that all citizens should pay him homage. Wouldn't he be too enthralled with the sudden attention and respect to care about one or two people who don't bow down? Not Haman – his ego just takes him right past all the knee-benders and focuses his attention on the one person who refuses to bow – Mordechai. As much as we would expect him to be happy with the new position – he is merely enraged (and seemingly obsessed with that rage) at Mordechai.

Note that it isn't obvious to Haman that Mordechai is Jewish – Haman has to find that out from someone else in order to figure out which nation to destroy (as he wants to annihilate all of Mordechai's people. By the way, this paints Haman as much less of an ideological anti-Semite than we are used to thinking – but that belongs to another shiur.) Evidently, Mordechai's behavior – or, at least his dress and external demeanor – did not mark him as a Jew. Just like his niece, he seems to have been quite assimilated (see the Book of Ezra for more background on this phenomenon).

Now – Haman, the grand vizier of the kingdom of Dat, decides to wipe out an entire nation due to the slight to his ego. How does he decide when to do it? By lottery (Pur)! What a joke this Dat proves to be!

B) ACHASHVEROSH AND HAMAN (3:8-15)

There isn't a whole lot say here; the dialogue between these two speaks for itself. Although everything is done properly, the reader instinctively feels that a king who is willing to condemn a people without even finding out who they are (read 3:8-11 carefully) is not doing a good job of running his empire.

In order to keep an eye on the story, let's put together the chronology of events. The king's party (Vashti's farewell bash) took place in the third year of his reign. Esther was crowned – and Mordechai saved the king's life – in the seventh year. Haman had the letters (allowing the anti-Semites to kill the Jews) sent out on Nissan 13 in the twelfth year of the king's reign. In other words, Esther has been queen for a bit more than four years by this time – and her identity was still a total secret.

VI. CHAPTER 4

A) ESTHER AND MORDECHAI (4:1-17)

Mordechai finds out about this plot – and begins to demonstrate signs of "Teshuvah" (repentance). (Compare 4:1,3 with Yonah 3:5,6,8) He does not, however, do this in front of the palace gate, where he seems to retain his composure. He does, however, get the message in to Esther as to what is going on and he pleads with her to go to the king and have Haman's order overturned.

We are immediately reminded of how capricious this king really is. The beloved queen hasn't seen the king in thirty days (v. 11) (and probably wonders in whose arms he sleeps tonight) – and even she is subject to death if she comes to him unbeckoned unless he agrees to see her (shades of Vashti again)!

At this point, Mordechai sends the message which turns Esther around – and she begins to demonstrate not only her tremendous commitment and courage to her nation; but also an amazing type of wisdom – those very characteristics which reflect her Tzelem Elokim in the most powerful way.

For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this. (4:14)

Mordechai told her about the B'rit (covenant) between God and the B'nei Yisra'el. We are promised that we will outlive all of the Hamans – but that B'rit only applies to the nation as a whole, not to individuals or families. Esther – you may make it through this next upheaval – and you may not. In any case, the Jews will be saved, as God always has His ways of keeping the B'rit.

Esther realizes the wisdom and truth of this argument and acquiesces to Mordechai's plea. Now, she plans her strategy…let's take a peek behind the scenes. First, a few words about this remarkable type of wisdom.

It is natural to see everything in life through the eyes of our experience. This is why honest people often find it difficult to disbelieve

others or question their motivations; they cannot recognize the lie in the other person's words because they have no such possibility inside of their own hearts. In the same way, kind people often ascribe positive motives to questionable behavior of others – because they could never recognize mean thoughts in others as they have no such thoughts in their own persona.

It takes a tremendous type of wisdom to separate yourself from what you instinctively feel and how you usually view the world and to see it from the other person's perspective. While this may be easy in a sympathetic conversation (although not nearly as easy as it seems); it is most difficult when deciding how to fight an enemy. The trick is to learn how to think like the enemy – without becoming the enemy.

This was perhaps the greatest miracle of Hanukkah – that the Maccabees were able to think like Greeks (it certainly took great strategy to outfox that mighty army with a small band) – without becoming Greeks (well, not for a couple of generations at least).

In the same way, we will see how Esther manipulates Achashverosh and Haman into a fateful (and, for Haman, fatal) collision course – simply by playing them according to their own personalities and weaknesses.

VII. CHAPTER 5

A) ESTHER AND ACHASHVEROSH (5:1-5)

Let's keep in mind that Esther is risking her life to come into Achashverosh's throne room – and she knows that the king knows this. In other words, she is aware that Achashverosh will consider her request to be very important – important enough to risk her life. We would think that when the king favors her and agrees to grant nearly any request – "even until half the kingdom" – that she would seize this opportunity and ask for salvation and for Haman's orders to be rescinded.

Instead, she invites Achashverosh and Haman to a special party she has prepared for that very evening. Why didn't she ask for salvation at this point?

Esther understood a great deal about politics. Remember – she hasn't seen the king for thirty days. Even if she is still his favorite – she is still not on the "inside" right now. Haman, on the other hand, has just had a drinking party with the king (3 days earlier), celebrating their letters sent out to kill the Jews. If she were to accuse Haman, the king might not believe her and the whole effort would be lost.

She invites the two of them to a party. As disgusting as the prospect sounds, it is the first step in a brilliant plan of psychological warfare.

Let's consider how each of them would react to this invitation:

Haman, as the consummate egotist, has his ego blown up even bigger than before (as we will soon see). He alone is invited to sup with the king and queen!

Achashverosh, on the other hand, must be suspicious. There has already been (at least) one plot on his life – now, Esther risked her life just to invite him and Haman to a party? Is something going on between the two of them (more on this later)? Are they plotting against me?

B) THE FIRST PARTY (5:6-8)

At this party, the king expects to find out what Esther really has on her mind – maybe his suspicions were for naught? Instead, she surprises him by asking him to return – with Haman – for another party the next night!

Following the psychological makeup of our two party guests – each of the states of mind described above became exacerbated.

Esther knew that Haman's ego would continue to grow – and she also knew that he would leave the palace via the gate – and see Mordechai sitting there. Just feed his ego – and he will self-destruct.

C) HAMAN AT HOME (9-14)

Indeed, Haman becomes so enraged when he sees Mordechai that, after a short bragging session with his family, he runs back to the palace to ask Achashverosh to allow him to hang Mordechai immediately. He cannot wait eleven months to kill his arch-nemesis – he needs satisfaction right away (ah, the impetuous egotist.)

VIII. CHAPTER 6

A) HAMAN AND ACHASHVEROSH (6:1-10)

Why couldn't the king sleep? The Gemara provides the obvious answer – he had thoughts of plot and coup on his worried mind. Why did he call for his chronicles to be read? It seems that this powerful king, ruler over 127 provinces – had no friends. There was no one he could trust or turn to. Esther had planted a terrible bug in his mind – two parties in a row with Haman – what are the two of them planning to do? Indeed – what have they already done?

Just as the king discovers that he owes Mordechai a favor from over four years ago – and decides that the way to gain the allegiance of the citizenry is to publicly demonstrate the rewards of loyalty to the crown – Haman turns up in the outer courtyard of the palace. The king had to wonder what Haman was doing there so late at night (!?!) The king summoned Haman for some advice – and for a chance to take him down a peg or two. Now, the king demonstrates some acumen of his own.

In 6:6, the king asks Haman what to do for someone he really favors. Haman, that old egotist, is so caught up in his own power, that he describes a truly regal parade which he assumes will feature him as the honoree. How very surprised he is when the king orders him to take the self-same Mordechai and lead him on the king's horse.

(Note that the phrase to be called out while leading this honoree: Kakhah ye'Aseh la'Ish Asher… shows up in one other place in T'nakh. This is the beginning of the formula of Halitza – the refusal of Levirate marriage, which accompanies the woman's disdainful spit. [D'var[D'varim 25:9]ur own conclusions about the satiric effect accomplished by the Ba'al haMegillah).

B) HAMAN AND MORDECHAI (6:11-14)

Haman returns to his house “in mourning”. The Rabbis have a lot to say about the events of this morning – but, even on a p’shat level, it is clear that Haman’s fortunes have taken a significant turn for the worse. He is quickly rushed to the second party – and, in his case, his own farewell.

IX. CHAPTER 7

A) THE SECOND PARTY (7:1-9)

This is the denouement of the story as far as we are concerned. Haman still doesn’t know who Esther is – but he is clearly shattered and his ego is as fragile as ever. Achashverosh is equally disturbed and must be getting more confused by Esther’s repeated parties without asking for what she really wants (it is clear that the king knows she wants something more – which is why he keeps asking her).

Now, she pulls out all the cards. The king thinks that she and Haman are hatching a plot against him (and have been having an affair?) – and suddenly Haman is revealed as the villain who is plotting against her. Haman thinks that he is still on the road to satisfaction in the matter of the Jews; he’ll just need to wait until Adar. He has no idea that Esther is one of “them”.

Esther points to Haman and all is lost. The confusion and anger of the king, the confusion and fear of Haman – create an emotional jumble which ultimately leads to the king’s explosion when he finds Haman lying on Esther’s divan, begging for mercy. Haman is erased and (here we go again) Mordechai takes his place (compare 8:2 with 3:10). The capricious king has (for the meantime) elevated the Jews and they are saved. We all know, however, that the happy ending of the story isn’t permanent and that the rocky shores of existence in exile (which is probably one of the sub-messages of the Megillah) are not safe for Jews.

X. POSTSCRIPT

We have taken a cursory look at some of the events as described in the Megillah and found that Esther displayed extraordinary wisdom and courage in her successful effort to save her people. We are very right to regard this as a Nes as it is a reflection of God’s Image as found within our heroine. God’s Name is not found – because, unlike Pesach, this is not a story about the suspension of the laws of nature. It is, rather, a story about human strength and nobility used in the most positive and productive effort imaginable – the salvation of Am Yisra’el. (That and a really great satire of the Persian Kingdom)

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MEGILLAT ESTHER, ITS 'HIDDEN' MESSAGE

Is the Megilla a satire? It certainly contains many strange details that beg interpretation. But if so, why would a satire be included in the Tanach. In the following shiur, we attempt to 'unmask' Megillat Esther by considering its historical and prophetic setting.

INTRODUCTION

We begin our study with one of the most well known psukim of the Megilla:

> "Ish **yehudi** haya be-Shushan ha-**bira** - u-shmo **Mordechai**" (see Esther 2:5).

Even though this pasuk is proudly read aloud by the entire congregation, most people do not appreciate its prophetic 'sting'. However, an ear tuned to the prophecies of Zecharya and familiar with Tanach immediately catches its irony, as:

ish yehudi - implies more than simply someone who is Jewish;
ha-bira - implies more than just 'the capital city'; and
Mordechai - is not a Jewish name!

* The phrase **ish yehudi** is mentioned only one other time in the entire Tanach - in Sefer Zecharya 8:23. There it describes a devout Jew in the city of Jerusalem - leading a group of non-Jewish followers in search of God.

* the word **ha-bira** in Divrei Ha-yamim (see 29:1 & 29:19) is used by King David to describe specifically the bet ha-mikdash (the Temple). Prior to the time period of Megillat Esther, the Hebrew word bira finds no other mention in Tanach.

* The name **Mordechai** is probably the most provocative word in the entire Megilla for it stems from the name of the Babylonian deity -Marduk (see II Kings 25:27 & Yeshayahu 39:1!). Prior to the Babylonian exile, no one would have dared give his son such a 'goyish' name.

[This does not imply that Mordechai was assimilated, rather his name may reflect the assimilation of his generation.]

And this may be only one of many psukim of the Megilla that are filled with irony and possibly satire. Yet, if this conclusion is correct, we must explain why the Megilla would employ satire to deliver its prophetic message. Furthermore, we must also determine more precisely what that prophetic message is, and how it relates to our celebration of Purim.

To answer these questions, our shiur will take the following steps:

I. Base our above assumption that the Megilla should contain a prophetic message, related to its historical setting.
II. Review both the historical and prophetic setting of the time period of the Megilla.
III Search for a thematic connection between this setting and the story in the Megilla, and support it with both textual and thematic parallels from other books in Tanach.
IV. Explain why the Megilla employs this unique style.
V. Explain how the celebration of Purim, as defined in the Megilla, relates to this theme.

PART I - 'HESTER PANIM'

As every book of the Tanach contains a prophetic message, Megillat Esther should be no different. It is commonly understood that the Megilla teaches us how to see the 'hidden hand' of God behind the events that ultimately lead to Bnei Yisrael's salvation from Haman. Some even suggest that the Megilla's use of the name Esther (from the Hebrew verb 'lehastir' - to hide) instead of her real name - Hadassa (see 2:7) teaches us this very lesson.

However, if the Megilla wants to show us how God saved His people, why isn't this message explicit? Furthermore, why isn't God's Name ever mentioned? Most every other sefer in Tanach expresses this point explicitly. Why is Megillat Esther different?

Furthermore, most all other seforim in Tanach explain not only how God saves Am Yisrael, but also why they are being punished. This theme of divine retribution is explicit in the Torah in the tochachot (Vayikra 26:3-46, Devarim 11:13-17, 28:1-69, etc.) and reiterated over and over again by all of the prophets. In fact Chazal's explanation of the name Esther reflects this very same concept:

> "Esther min ha-Torah minayin?"
> [What is the source in Torah for the story of Esther?]
> "ve-Anochi haster aster panai ba-yom ha-hu"
> [I will surely hide my face from you on that day.]
> (Devarim 31:18 / See Chullin 139b).

However, if we take a closer look at that pasuk in Devarim, we find that its message is significantly different. Rather than explaining how God 'saves' Am Yisrael in a 'hidden manner', it explains how God 'punishes' them:

> "And God told Moshe, after you die... this nation will leave Me and break My covenant...And My anger will be kindled against them on that day and I will forsake them, ["ve-histarti panai"] and I will hide My face from them... and many evils and troubles shall befall them - & they will say on that day, these evils are because God is not among us.
> - Ve-anochi haster astir panai ba-yom ha-hu -
> and I will hide My face from them on that day because of all the bad that they have done... [Therefore,]
> - Write down this song and teach it to Bnei Yisrael, so that it will be My witness..." (see Devarim 31:16-18).

In these psukim, God warns Bnei Yisrael that should they betray His covenant, great evil will befall them. Even though it may appear to Bnei Yisrael that God has left them, these psukim teach them that God only appears to be 'hiding His face' ['hester panim"] from them. Nonetheless, Bnei Yisrael are expected to realize that their punishment is from God. Therefore, Moshe is to teach Bnei Yisrael Shirat Ha'azinu in order that they recognize this. The shira will teach Am Yisrael to contemplate their predicament and relate their punishment to their wayward behavior. To verify this point, simply read Shirat Ha'azinu [note especially 31:19-20.]

Above all, Shirat Ha'azinu explains how we are to determine why we are being punished. In that song, we are told:

> "Zechor yemot olam, binu shnot dor va-dor..." (Devarim 32:7).
> [Remember the days of old; consider the years of ages past.]

The shira teaches us to contemplate our history, especially how and why we were chosen (see 32:8-9), in order to realize why we are being punished. It reminds us that when something does go wrong, it is our fault, not God's (see 32:4-6!).

Even though God may hide His face, Shirat Ha'azinu does promise that God will ultimately redeem His people, however, not necessarily because they deserve redemption. Rather, God will have mercy on our pitiful predicament (see 32:26-27, also 32:37-38) and save us at the 'last minute'.

Most all of the prophets deliver a very similar message. They explain to Bnei Yisrael what they have done wrong, and hence why they are being punished. Prophecy teaches man not only to thank God for salvation, but also to recognize his faults and correct his mistakes.

Therefore, the Megilla should be no different, and especially because its name alludes to the pasuk in Chumash that commands us to search for a reason why we are punished.

[This supports the Gemara's question in Masechet Megilla 12a (middle) "sha'alu talmidav et Rashb"i: mipnei ma nitchayvu..."]

Even though the Megilla does not provide an explicit reason for this impending punishment, this background and its name suggest that we search for a 'hidden' (or implicit) one. To find that reason, we must consider prophetic and historical setting of that time period.

PART II - HISTORICAL AND PROPHETIC SETTING

The opening psukim of the Megilla immediately point us to its time period (see 1:1-3). Achashverosh is a Persian king who reigns from India to Ethiopia in the city of Shushan. Considering that Cyrus (=Koresh) was the first Persian king, the story in Megillat Esther takes place during the Persian time period and thus after the time period when the Jews had an opportunity to return to Jerusalem.

Even though there is a controversy concerning precisely which Persian King Achashverosh was, he most certainly reigned after Koresh (the first Persian king), and thus, after Yirmiyahu's seventy years were over.

[Note: If you are not familiar with this time period, it is highly recommended that you review Kings II 23:31-25:12, Ezra 1:1-10 and 3:1-4:7, and Yirmiyahu 29:1-15. As you read Ezra 1:1-9, note how the Jews who did not make 'aliya' were encouraged to send 'money' instead! Seems like not much has changed in 2500 years!]

For those of you unfamiliar with this time period, here is a quick overview:

In the first year of his reign, Koresh issued his famous proclamation allowing and encouraging all of the Jews of the Persian Empire to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. The prophets clearly understood this historic decree as the fulfillment of Yirmiyahu's prophecy (see Ezra 1:1-9, II Divrei Ha-yamim 36:20-23). As God had promised, the time of redemption from the Babylonian Exile had come.

YIRMIYAHU'S SEVENTY YEARS

To appreciate the prophetic importance of this opportunity, we need only quote Yirmiyahu's final message to the Babylonian Exile in regard to what was 'supposed' to happen when these seventy years were over:

"Thus said the Lord, when the 70 years are complete, I shall remember you and keep my promise to return you to this land.... [At that time.] you shall call out to Me - you shall come and pray to Me - and I will hear you...and you will ask for Me and find Me; if you will search for me with all your heart. Then I will be there for you, and I shall turn away your captivity and gather you from all the nations wherein you may be dispersed... and I will return you to the land from which you were exiled ..." (29:10-14).

According to Yirmiyahu, the return of the Exile would not be automatic. Rather, it was God's hope that their return would be catalyzed by sincere repentance and a yearning to return. In other words, God intended for the Babylonian Exile [as the word 'exile' implies] to be temporary. People don't stay in 'exile' unless they are forced to be there. Exile implies that one cannot return to his own land. [Otherwise the translation of 'galut' would be 'diaspora' instead of 'exile' / hey, not a bad idea!]

Note as well how Yirmiyahu's message is congruent with a primary theme of Chumash, i.e. God's desire for the Jewish people to become His 'model' nation - a vehicle through which all nations will come to recognize God (see Devarim 4:5-8 & Shmot 19:4-6). Recall as well that in that ideal setting, the bet ha-mikdash in Yerushalayim was to serve as a symbol of this national purpose.

[See previous shiurim on Parshiot Re'eh, Noach, and Vayetze. Recall that the mikdash is referred to as: "ha-makom asher yivchar Hashem le-shaken **shmo** sham"/ see Devarim 12:5-14.]

God's decision to destroy that Temple and exile his people was for a rehabilitative purpose. According to Yirmiyahu, God's hope was for the Exile to 'learn its lesson' during these seventy years in Bavel. Afterward, God hoped that the nation would be spiritually ready and anxious to return to their homeland, and to reconstruct their symbolic shrine - the Temple in Jerusalem.

Precisely as Yirmiyahu had predicted (seventy years after Bavel had risen to power), the opportunity to return arose when the Babylonian empire fell to Koresh (= Cyrus the Great), the first king of the Persian Empire (see Yirmiyahu 25:11-12, Ezra 1:1).

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Unfortunately, the response of the Exile to this historic opportunity was less than enthusiastic. A group of some forty thousand did return; however, the majority of Am Yisrael remained in Bavel. For an insight into the tragedy of the missed opportunity we need only quote the explanation given by Rav Yehuda Ha-Levi in Sefer Ha-Kuzari (II.24):

"Had the entire nation enthusiastically answered the divine call to return to the Land, the idyllic prophecies of the return to Zion would have been fulfilled and the Shchina would have returned. In reality, however, only a small portion returned. The majority remained in Bavel, willfully accepting the exile, as they did not wish to leave their homes & businesses etc." (sounds familiar...)

Even those who did return lacked enthusiasm. The apathy of the returnees is echoed in the prophecies of Chagai and Zecharya, the prophets of this time period (see Chagai 1:1-3; 2:3 see also Zecharya 4:10; 6:15; 7:4-7; 8:6.

. How does all of this relate to Megillat Esther?

How could it not relate!

Could the fact that Am Yisrael remained scattered among the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire, while they could have returned a generation or two earlier to Jerusalem, not relate to the prophetic message of the Megilla?

Considering that Yirmiyahu's seventy years are over, why are so many Jews living in Shushan and all over the Persian empire during the time period of Achashverosh?

Could not this fact alone supply sufficient reason for God to consider Am Yisrael negligent of their covenantal responsibilities?

With this in mind, we must now take a second look at the Megilla in search of at least a 'hint' of this theme.

PART III - THE THEME OF THE MEGILLA AND ITS SATIRE

Based on this historic and prophetic setting, one could suspect that the impending destruction of Am Yisrael by Haman may be a Divine punishment for their apathy. After all, the Jews living in the Persian empire appear to have:

* preferred Shushan over Yerushalayim;
* opted to subjugate themselves to Achashverosh rather than respond to God's call to return to their land;
* Replaced the bet ha-mikdash with the palace of Achashverosh! ["ve-nahafoch hu"]

Even though this prophetic message is not explicit in the Megilla, we will now show how it may be hidden in its satire.

[Note: Before we continue, it is important to clarify a problematic issue. We are about to relate many elements in the story of the Megilla to a satiric commentary on Persian Jewry. This does not mean that these events did not actually occur. The story of the Megilla is true and based on historic facts. However, its prophetic message is conveyed through the use of literary tools, such as satire and irony. Often, criticism is more poignant when delivered implicitly rather than explicitly. (Lehavdil, take for example George Orwell's criticism of the Russian revolution in 'Animal Farm'.)]

TEXTUAL AND THEMATIC SUPPORT

For a start, we will bring two examples where there appears to be an 'echo' of God's voice behind certain statements in the Megilla.

For example, the story of Vashti may reflect God's utter disappointment with Am Yisrael for not returning to Israel to fulfill their divine purpose, to become God's 'model' nation:

"[Vashti was called to] come to the king and show all the nations her beauty... but she did not come as the King commanded, and he became very angry..." (see Esther 1:9-12).

Is not Vashti's behavior similar to that of Am Yisrael? Is not the King's conclusion similar to God's? Is not the fear that all the women in the Persian kingdom will now disobey their husbands ironic? If Am Yisrael (destined to be an 'or la-goyim') does not respond to its divine call, what could God expect from other nations?

[Note that in earlier prophecy, Am Yisrael is often compared to God's wife - see Hoshea 2:4,16-18. See also Zecharya 1:1-3, note 'shuvu eilai...' and 'va-yiktzof', compare 1:12.]

Furthermore, who is the real king in the Megilla? Chazal raise the possibility that the word 'ha-melech' [the King] in the Megilla may be 'kodesh', as it often [in a hidden manner] may be referring to God and not to Achashverosh.

Even Haman's petition to Achashverosh to destroy Am Yisrael may echo a similar complaint that God may have against His own nation:

> "There is a certain nation scattered among the nations whose laws are different than any other nation, but the laws of the King they do not keep, and it is not worthwhile for the King to leave them be" (3:8).

In a certain way, Haman's accusation is similar to God's threat in Shirat Ha'azinu to destroy am Yisrael for not keeping His laws (32:26). After all, what purpose is there for God to keep His people if they refuse to obey Him and fulfill their divine goal?

Even though these first two examples may appear a bit 'stretched', a more convincing textual proof is found in the parallel between Achashverosh's palace and the bet mikdash. This parallel is significant for it reflects the fact the Bnei Yisrael had neglected the bet ha-mikdash in Yerushalayim, preferring instead to be dependent on the palace of Achashverosh. We begin by comparing the overall structure of each:

KODESH KODASHIM - CHATZER PNIMIT

The Megilla refers to the most inner chamber of the king's palace as the 'chatzer ha-pnimit' (5:1), where entry to anyone is forbidden under threat of death - unless called to enter (as Esther feared in 4:11). Here we find an obvious parallel to the kodesh ha-kodashim in the mikdash (Purim - kippurim!).

KODESH - CHATZER CHITZONA

The 'waiting area' outside the inner chamber is called the 'chatzer ha-chitzona' (6:4). Here 'ro'ei pnei ha-melech' (1:14) like Haman himself are allowed to enter freely. This is parallel to the kodesh where kohanim are permitted to enter.

> [See description of the Temple in Yechezkel 40:18-19.]

AZARA - SHA'AR BET HA-MELECH

In front of the palace is 'sha'ar bet ha-melech' where people like Mordechai are permitted to stand (2:18,21). However, here one must dress properly ('aveilut' is not permitted), therefore he cannot be there dressed in sackcloth (see 4:2!). This area is parallel to the azara in the mikdash.

YERUSHALAYIM - REHOV HA-IR SHUSHAN

This is the area 'lifnei sha'ar ha-melech' (4:2) or 'rechov ha-ir' (4:6) where Mordechai can dress in sackcloth. This is parallel to the city of Yerushalayim surrounding the mikdash.

This parallel is strengthened by the Megilla's use of the word bira to describe Shushan. As we explained in our introduction, in Divrei Ha-yamim, the only other time in Tanach prior to Megillat Esther where this word is mentioned, bira describes specifically the bet ha-mikdash, and in the context of its purpose to serve as a national center and symbol of God's Name. [See DH I 29:1 & 19, you should read from 29:1-25 to see the context. (You'll find there a familiar passage from davening, which maybe you will now understand a little better.)]

> [See also Masechet Middot I:9, where the Mishna refers to the bet ha-mikdash as the bira.]

Other parallels to mikdash are found in the use of key words such as 'yekar ve-tif'eret' (1:4); 'tekhelet, butz, ve-argaman' (1:6) in the Megilla's description of the king's party.

> [Based on these psukim, the gemara (Megilla 12a) claims that Achashverosh donned the 'bigdei kohen gadol' at his party!]

Even the 6-month party followed by a seven-day special celebration may parallel the six months that it took to build the mishkan (from Yom Kippur till Rosh Chodesh Nissan) followed by the seven-day 'milu'im' ceremony. Likewise, Chazal explain, 've-keilim mi-keilim shonim' (1:7) as referring to the vessels of the bet ha-mikdash.

Chazal even suggest that Haman's decree may have been Am Yisrael's punishment for drinking from these keilim or alternately for their participation in and enjoyment of the royal party (see Megilla 12a).

> [Note that according to pshat, the keilim had returned with Sheshbatzar during the time of Koresh (see Ezra 1:7-8). However, the Midrash emphasizes the thematic connection between the party and Bnei Yisrael's lack of enthusiasm to build the mikdash.]

Hence we can conclude that the Megilla's satire suggests that during this time period Am Yisrael had replaced:

* God with Achashverosh;
* God's Temple with Achashverosh's palace; and
* Yerushalayim ha-bira with Shushan ha-bira! ['ve-nahafoch hu']

70 DAYS / 70 YEARS

Another seemingly unimportant detail in the Megilla concerning when the two decrees were sent might also allude to this prophetic backdrop.

Recall that the original decree calling for the destruction of the Jews was sent out on the 13th day of Nisan (3:12). Several days later Haman was hanged and Esther pleaded from the king to repeal this decree (8:3-6). Achashverosh agreed; however, the actual letters were not sent out until the 23rd of Sivan - some two months later (8:9)! What took so long?

By carefully comparing these two dates, we again find an amazing reminder of Yirmiyahu's prophecy of the seventy years. Between the 13th of Nisan until the 23rd of Sivan - 70 days elapsed (17+30+23). During these seventy days, all of the Jews throughout the Persian empire were under the tremendous peril of impending destruction, thinking that their doom was inevitable. Could this be an ironic reminder to the Jewish people that they had not heeded Yirmiyahu's prophecy of what he expected from Bnei Yisrael once the seventy years had expired (see 29:10-14!)?

A similar concept of suffering for a sin, a day for a year (and vice versa), is found twice in Tanach in related circumstances. After the sin of the 'meraglim', the forty days are replaced by the punishment of forty years of wandering. Here, too, the nation opted not to fulfill their divine destiny, preferring a return to Egypt to the conquest of Eretz Yisrael. Yechezkel, too, is required to suffer 'a day for each year.'

> [For 390 days followed by an additional 40 days, he must lie on his side and repent for the sins of Israel and Yehuda that led to the destruction of Yerushalayim (Yechezkel 4:1-14!)].

A similar claim is made by the Midrash which suggests that Achashverosh threw his 180 day party in celebration of the fact that Yirmiyahu's seventy years were over and the bet ha-mikdash was not rebuilt. In pshat, this explanation is unreasonable. Why should the most powerful king of civilization worry about the prophecies of Yirmiyahu, while the Jews themselves do not listen to him? However, on the level of drash, this explanation is enlightening. Chazal, in the spirit of the Megilla - 've-nahafoch hu' - put into Achashverosh's mind what should have been in the mind of Am Yisrael, i.e. the fulfillment of Yirmiyahu's prophecy of seventy years and the desire to return.

PESACH AND PURIM

Based on our understanding thus far, it is also understandable why Israel's salvation from Haman's decree comes only after Am Yisrael collectively accept a three day fast. This fast takes place on the 15,16, & 17th of Nisan. Interestingly enough, the events that led to the repeal of Haman's decree take place 'davka' during the holiday of Pesach - the holiday on which we celebrate our freedom from subjugation to a foreign nation and the beginning of our journey to the Promised Land.

PART IV - WHY SATIRE?

We have shown that the Megilla is laced with allusions to the fact that Am Yisrael does not answer its divine call during the Persian time period. But the question remains, why is this message only hinted at but not explicitly stated by Chazal? Most probably for the same reason that it is not explicit in the Megilla.

This is the power of satire. In order to strengthen the message, a powerful point is not explicitly stated, but only alluded to. The direct approach used by the other 48 nevi'im of Tanach had not been very successful.

[See Masechet Megilla 14a (top) - "gedola hasarat ha-taba'at shel Haman yoter mi-48 nevi'im..."!]

One could suggest that Anshei Knesset Ha-gdola, in their decision to write (see Bava Batra 15a] (and later canonize) Megillat Esther, had hoped that a satirical message would be more powerful than a direct one. Hence, Midrashim of Chazal that comment on the Megilla may follow a similar approach.
[Note how the prophet Natan's message to David ha-melech in regard to his sin with Bat-sheva was much more powerful because he used the 'mashal' of kivsat ha-rash" (see II Shmuel 12:1-7!).]

PART V - THE MINHAGIM OF PURIM

Up until this point we have explained how the satire in the Megilla may reflect a prophetic censure of Am Yisrael in Bavel for not returning to Yerushalayim when the opportunity arose during the time of Koresh. However, if our assumptions are indeed correct, then we would expect the outcome of the Megilla, or at least the celebration of Purim for future generations to reflect this theme.

Instead, we don't find any 'mass aliya' movement after our salvation. Nor does the celebration of Purim (with 'mishteh' and sending 'mishloach manot') appear to reflect this theme in any manner.

However, with a 'little help' from the prophecies of Zecharya, we can suggest an answer for these questions as well. To do so, we must first identify who the specific Persian King Achashverosh was.

SOME MORE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The topic of the history of the Persian time period is very complicated and the subject of a major controversy between most Midrashei Chazal and the historians (& a minority opinion in Chazal). To explain this controversy is beyond the scope of this shiur, instead we will simply present the two conflicting opinions concerning when Achashverosh reigned.

According to Seder Olam (and hence the majority opinion in Chazal), Achashverosh was the Persian King immediately after Koresh, but before Daryavesh, and thus the story of the Megilla takes place after 'shivat tzion' (the return to Zion during the time of Koresh) but before the second bet ha-mikdash is actually built.

According to this opinion, the events of the Megilla had a tremendous affect on the situation in Yerushalayim. Only two years after the story of Megilla, King Darius, son of Esther gives the Jews permission to return and build the Second Temple. Construction began during the second year of Darius (= Daryavesh).

The events of the Megilla also appear to have catalyzed a major aliya movement. According to Chazal, Ezra's aliya from Bavel took place only a few years afterward, during the seventh year of his reign of Daryavesh (who Chazal identify with Artachshasta / see Ezra 7:1-9).

Thus, according to Seder Olam's opinion, the events of the Megilla indeed had a major effect on the rebuilding of the Temple and shivat tzion - the return to Zion.

According to most historians (and a minority opinion in Chazal / see Tirgum ha-shiv'im & Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer chapter 49), Achashverosh was the Persian king who succeeded Darius (486 - 465 BCE), and thus the story of the Megilla takes place some forty years after the second Temple was built, and thus after Chagai & Zecharya's plea to return and fulfill the potential of Bayit Sheni. [Its construction began in 521 BCE / in the second year of Darius the Great; hence the story in the Megilla takes place in 474 BCE.]

According to this opinion, no major event takes place immediately after the events in the Megilla. In fact, over two decades pass before a new wave of olim come with Ezra and Nechemya to help strengthen the city of Yerushalayim. [The historians identify Artachshasta with Artexerxes, not the same king as Darius.]

If our assumption concerning the satire of the Megilla is correct, why don't we find a mass aliya movement immediately after the miracle of Purim. [Jews of the twentieth century could ask themselves a similar question!]

Furthermore, according to either opinion, shouldn't the manner by which we celebrate Purim relate to this theme and satire?

Finally, why is it necessary to celebrate Purim for all generations? Purim is not the only time in our history when Bnei Yisrael are saved from terrible enemies. Chazal go even one step further. They claim that Purim will be the only holiday kept at the time of the final redemption! (See Rambam Hilchot Megilla, Esther 9:28 and commentaries).

THE MEGILLA AND SEFER ZECHARYA

If we follow the opinion of the 'historians' in regard to the time period of Megillat Esther, then the prophecies of Zecharya concerning the potential of Bayit Sheni precede the story in the Megilla. If so, then we posit that numerous textual parallels between the Megilla and Sefer Zecharya are intentional. In other words, when 'anshei knesset ha-gedola' wrote Megillat Esther (most likely during the time period of Ezra / see Bava Batra 15a), they assumed that anyone reading the Megilla was familiar with Sefer Zecharya, and hence would understand the implicit meaning of these parallels.

We will now show how the Megilla may suggest that Am Yisrael's predicament during the time period of Achashverosh was caused because of Zecharya's prophecies (a generation earlier) were not taken seriously! To appreciate this message, we must study Zecharya chapters 7->8.

For a background, review the first six chapters of Sefer Zecharya, noting how they focus on one primary theme - the return of the Shchina to Yerushalayim. However, Zecharya warns numerous times that the Shchina's return will be a function of Am Yisrael's covenantal commitment (see 6:15). Redemption is indeed possible; however, Zecharya insists that the 'spiritual' return of Am Yisrael was no less important than their physical return:

"Shuvu eilai.. ve-ashuva aleichem" (1:3, see also 8:7-8).

[It is highly suggested that you read at least the first two chapters of Zecharya (note 'hadassim' and 'ish rochev al sus' in chapter 1, and 'prazot teshev Yerushalayim' in chapter 2) and then chapters 7-8 before continuing.]

SHOULD WE FAST ON TISHA BE-AV?

According to Chagai 2:18, construction of the Temple began on this same year, i.e. during the second year of Daryavesh. Zecharya chapter seven opens two years later when an official delegation from Bavel arrives in Jerusalem to ask Zecharya a very fundamental question:

"Ha-evkeh be-chodesh ha-chamishi?" Should we continue to fast in the 5th month (i.e. the fast of Tisha Be-av)? (see 7:3)

The question appears to be quite legitimate. After all, now that the Temple is rebuilt, there no longer appears to be a need to fast. However, Zecharya's lengthy and official reply (7:4-8:23) to this question contains an eternal message that relates to the very nature of the ideal redemption process.

In Zecharya 7:4-7, God appears to be quite disturbed by the people's question regarding the need to fast. Instead of showing their interest in the greater picture of the redemption process, the people seem only to be interested in whether or not they have to fast. In the eyes of the prophet, their question reflected a general attitude problem in regard to the entire redemption process.

God's answer implies that the fast of Tisha Be-av is not a divine commandment - rather it was a 'minhag' instituted by Chazal to remember not only the Temple's destruction, but also the reason why the churban took place (see 7:5-6). Thus, God explains, feasting or fasting is man's decision, while God is interested in

something much more basic - that Bnei Yisrael keep the mitzvot which they had neglected during the first Temple period (see 7:5-14).

Zecharya continues his answer with two chapters of 'musar' (rebuke) in which he emphasizes the most basic mitzvot that Bnei Yisrael must keep in order for the Shchina to return:

"EMET u-mishpat shalom shiftu be-sha'areichem, ve-chesed ve-rachamim asu ish et achiv. Almana, ve-yatom ve-ani al ta'ashoku..." (7:8-10).

- Truth, social justice, helping the poor and needy, and thinking kindly of one's neighbor, etc.

God is anxious for His Shchina to return, but in order for that to happen, Yerushalayim must first become a city characterized by truth (8:1-3). God foresees the return the exiles from lands in the east and west. With their return, God and His nation will become once again covenantal partners, through "emet & tzedaka" (see 8:7-8).

Finally, after many words of encouragement and repeated 'musar' (see 8:11-17), God finally answers the original question concerning the fast days. Should Am Yisrael return to Israel and keep "emet ve-shalom, the four fast days commemorating the destruction of Yerushalayim will become holidays:

"tzom ha-rvii, v'tzom ha'chamishi... [The four fast days] will be instead for Yehuda days of celebration... [on the condition that] they will love **emet & shalom**" (see 8:18-19 / note parallel to Megilla 9:30-31!)

After two chapters of rebuke, Zecharya finally answers the people's original question. Should Bnei Yisrael indeed show their devotion to God, i.e. if they practice 'emet u-mishpat shalom', then the fast days, the days of crying for Jerusalem, will become holidays instead.

Should Bnei Yisrael indeed love keeping emet & shalom (these two words simply summarize the primary points raised by Zecharya in this perek), then the redemption process will be complete.

ISH YEHUDI

Zecharya concludes this prophecy with his vision of numerous people from many great nations will one day come to Yerushalayim in search of God. They will gather around the ish yehudi, asking for his guidance, for they will have heard that God is with His people (8:20-23).

Had Am Yisrael heeded this prophetic call in the time of Koresh and Daryavesh, then they would not have been scattered among 127 provinces during the time of Achashverosh. One could suggest that instead of celebrating with the Persians at the party in Shushan, the Jews could (& should) have been celebrating with God at His bet ha-mikdash in Yerushalayim.

The ish yehudi would have been in the bira in Yerushalayim, making God's Name known to other nations; instead, the Megilla opens as an ish yehudi is found in the bira of Achashverosh in Shushan, ironically carrying the name of foreign god.

[One could also suggest that Mordechai's institution of the yearly celebration of Purim relates specifically to this prophecy. First of all, note how this day is described as one that turns around from 'yagon' to 'simcha', from 'mourning to holiday' (see Esther 9:22). Purim may symbolize the manner in which the fast days for Jerusalem will one day become holidays.]

This parallel to Zecharya could explain the reason for the special mitzvot that Mordechai instituted for Purim in his first letter (see 9:20-22). They reflect Zecharya's repeated message of helping the needy (matanot le-evyonim/ note 7:10) and thinking nicely of one's neighbors (mishloach manot ish le-re'eihu / note 8:16-17!). Once a year we must remind ourselves of the most basic mitzvot that we must keep in order that we become worthy of returning to Yerushalayim and rebuilding the Bet ha'mikdash.

Certain halachot instituted by Chazal may reflect this message. Interestingly, Shushan Purim is replaced with Yerushalayim Purim for the walled cities from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun replace the walled city of Shushan! [See Yehoshua 21:42 and its context, compare to Esther 9:2.]

SHALOM VE-EMET

Although this explanation for certain minhagim of Purim may seem a bit 'stretched', textual proof is found in the closing psukim of the Megilla (9:29-32 / read it carefully!).

Mordechai and Esther need to send out a second 'igeret' (letter) explaining and giving authority ('tokef') to the minhagim of Purim explained in the first igeret. What was the content of this special second letter? To our surprise, one short phrase:

"Divrei shalom ve-emet"! [See 9:30, read carefully.]

These two key words point us directly back to Zecharya's prophecy about the fast days becoming holidays (read Zecharya 8:18-19 again)! They explain not only when, but also why the fast days will become holidays - i.e. if Bnei Yisrael keep shalom and emet! The second igeret may simply be an explanation of the purpose of the minhagim of Purim - Mordechai and Esther use this letter to explain to Am Yisrael why Purim has been established - a yearly reminder of the prophecies of Zecharya which remain unfulfilled.

The continuation of this igeret strengthens this interpretation. Under what authority (tokef) does Mordechai institute these halachot?

"Ka'asher kiymu al nafsham divrei ha-tzomot ve-za'akatam" (9:31) [Compare these psukim carefully to Zecharya 8:18-19.]

Recall, God had told Zecharya that fast days and feast days are up to man to decide. Now, according to the second igeret, just like ('ka'asher') the prophets instituted four fast days in order that we remember Yerushalayim, Mordechai institutes a 'feast day' to remember Yerushalayim.

[Note that this pasuk cannot be referring to our Ta'anit Esther, for if it refers to the three day fast, that fast was a one time event and was not "al nafsham ve-al zar'am". Likewise, it cannot be the fast of the 13th of Adar, as that custom only began during the time period of the Ge'onim. Therefore, it must refer to the four fast days on Jerusalem.]

So why didn't everyone return immediately afterward to Israel?

Most probably, after the events of the Megilla, a mass return to Yerushalayim was not realistic. Nonetheless, Mordechai wanted to institute a holiday that would remind Am Yisrael that should such an opportunity arise (once again), that they will know how to relate to it properly. Sefer Zecharya and its theme of shalom ve-emet serve as the spiritual guide.

[This interpretation may help explain why the celebration of Purim will remain even after our final redemption.]

Purim, therefore, has deep meaning for all generations. Its message may have been 'hiding' behind the costumes, the drinking ("ad de-lo yada"), the 'purim Torah', and 'shalach mannos'. It may have been lost within our ignorance of Tanach. Its message, however, remains eternal, just as our aspirations for Yerushalayim and the establishment therein of a just society - remain eternal.

purim sameiach,
menachem

Parshat Tetzaveh: Kohenization

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

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

PARASHAT TETZAVEH:

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) "Depersonalization"
b) "Repersonalization"

THE FUNCTION OF THE KOHEN:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

d) Decisions of national importance: the Urim ve-Tummim (Shemot 28:30), the divine oracle, is operated by the Kohen.
5) REPRESENTING BNEI YISRAEL before God. Some examples from our parasha:
a) Efod: 28:6-13 -- the Kohen Gadol wears the Efod (a sort of apron) as part of his uniform; significantly, the Efod bears two special stones, one on each shoulderpiece, each of which has the names of six of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael carved into it. The Torah stresses that Aharon is to wear the Efod and thereby bring these names before God "as a remembrance": Aharon appears before God as the representative of the people whose names are carved into the stones he bears.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORIENTATION OF KOHEN:

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

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

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

II: The "Kohanim" material of Parashat Tetzaveh

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

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

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

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

DEPERSONALIZING THE KOHANIM:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"REPERSONALIZATION":

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shabbat Shalom