

Weekly Parsha TETZAVEH
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

Leadership Means Making Space
TETZAVEH

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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

There are many conjectures as to why this went to Aaron as opposed to Moses himself, the most obvious being that this was Moses' punishment for refusing one time too many God's request that he lead the Israelites.

And Moses said, "Pardon Your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

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

Ex. 4:13-16

There is, though, a deeper message, the principle of the separation of powers, which opposes the concentration of leadership into one person or institution. All human authority needs checks and balances if it is to remain uncorrupted. In particular, political and religious leadership, keter malchut and keter kehunah, should never be combined. Moses wore the crowns of political and prophetic leadership, Aaron that of priesthood. The division allowed each to be a check on the other.

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

Consider, first of all, the passage we've just seen from near the beginning of the book of Exodus, when God tells Moses that Aaron is "already on his way to meet you, and

he will be glad to see you.” These sound like simple words, but in reality they are far from common.

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

Yet God says, “He will be glad to see you.”

Aaron’s ability to rejoice in his brother’s rise to greatness is particularly striking when set against the entire biblical history of the relationship between brothers thus far. It has been a set of variations on the theme of sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. The Psalm says:

“How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together.”

Ps. 133:1

And in response, reading Bereishit, we are likely to add, “and how rare.”

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

Note how the Torah emphasises God’s insistence that it be Moses who bestows this honour on Aaron.

Three times the word ve-atah, “And you,” is used early on in the parsha:

“And you shall command the Israelites to bring you pure oil” (for the Menorah that Aaron and his sons would keep alight).

Ex. 27:20

“And you shall draw your brother Aaron and his sons close to you to serve Me as priests – Aaron and his sons Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar. Make sacred vestments for your brother Aaron, for glory and for splendour.

Ex. 28:1-2

“And you shall speak to all the skilled craftsmen whom I have endowed with a spirit of wisdom, and ask them to make Aaron’s vestments; these will consecrate him to serve Me as priest.

Ex. 28:3

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

It’s rare for a leader to be able to share the spotlight so generously. In 2005 the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin published an influential book about Abraham Lincoln entitled *Team of Rivals*. In it she tells the story of how Lincoln appointed to his cabinet the three men who had opposed him as candidate for the Republican party leadership. William Henry Seward, who had been expected to win, eventually said of him, “His magnanimity is almost superhuman . . . the President is the best of us.”

It takes a special kind of character to make space for those whom one is entitled to see as rivals. Early on, Aaron showed that character in relation to Moses, and now Moses is called on to show it to Aaron.

True leadership involves humility and magnanimity. The smaller the ego, the greater the leader. That’s what Moses showed in the parsha that does not mention his name.

Head Covering and Fear of Heaven Revivim

Why are unmarried women not obligated to cover their heads, and what is the halakha regarding head covering for women during prayer? * The controversy over wigs brought from India, and the doubts about whether this involves the prohibition of deriving benefit from idolatry * What should one do when arriving at the synagogue, and finding someone else sitting in their regular seat? * Praying next to a baby who dirtied their diaper

What to do When a Guest Sits in one’s Regular Seat in the Synagogue

Q: My regular prayer seat is near the entrance of the synagogue, and as a result, guests often sit in my spot. Is it proper to ask them to get up, or since I don’t want to embarrass them, should I forfeit sitting in my regular seat for those prayers?

A: It is a mitzvah (positive commandment) for a person to establish a set place for their prayer (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 90:19), because one who establishes a set place for prayer thereby expresses the constant connection they have with God, and since their connection to the Source of Life is stable, their life is enhanced, as our Sages said: “Whoever establishes a set place for their prayer, the God of Abraham aids them,” and “their enemies fall before them” (Berachot 6b, 7b).

However, there is an even greater mitzvah to avoid paining another person, which is a branch of the commandment “And you shall love your neighbor as yourself” which Rabbi Akiva said is a great principle of the Torah. Therefore, if there is no respectable place to redirect the guest, one should avoid asking them to get up from the seat. When the prayer service is already underway, such as near ‘Barchu’, it appears that even if your name is on the seat and it is possible to direct the guest elsewhere, one should not ask them to switch places.

Of course there are different situations, such as if one of them is elderly or very young, and in all situations, one must act sensitively as appropriate.

In order to avoid the problem from the start, it is preferable to arrive at the synagogue early, and if possible, even merit being among the first ten, so that guests will not sit in your seat.

Additionally, it is proper for every community to appoint a pleasant Gabai (sexton), who will kindly welcome the guests, and avoid unpleasantness by directing them to appropriate seats.

Prayer Next to a Soiled Baby

Q: I prayed next to a baby who turned out to have soiled their diaper. After I cleaned him up, do I need to repeat my prayer?

A: If the baby is older and can already eat a kezayit (olive size) portion of grain in the time it takes to eat half a loaf of bread (approx. 7 minutes), around a year old, and a foul odor emits from his excrement, it is forbidden from the Torah to pray next to him, and if you already prayed – the prayer is invalid, and you must repeat the prayer. If no foul odor emitted, the prayer is valid.

Regarding blessings recited next to a baby whose excrement emits a foul odor, the poskim (Jewish law arbiters) disagree whether they are also invalidated like the Amidah prayer and Keriat Shema, and due to the safek (doubt), one does not repeat them (Peninei Halakha: Prayer 3:9-10).

Is it Really Preferable to Die, Rather than Publicly Embarrass One's Friend?

Q: Our Sages said: "It is better for a person to throw themselves into a fiery furnace, rather than publicly embarrass their friend" (Sotah 10b). Is this literally true, and is it really preferable for a person to die, rather than publicly embarrass their friend?

A: These words of our Sages were said hyperbolically, in order to warn about the tremendous severity of the prohibition of embarrassing others, but it is not an actual halachic obligation to sacrifice one's life for this (Meiri Berachot 43b, Chinuch #240, Ayin Yaakov, and so wrote Rabbi Moshe Kalefon HaCohen, Brit Avot on Avot 3:15. And so implies from Rambam Deot 6:8, Teshuva 3:14).

However, some poskim imply that one must literally sacrifice their life in order not to publicly embarrass their friend (Tosafot Sotah 10b "noach", Shaarei Teshuva 3:137, Binyan Tzion #172). However, it appears basically that their intention is for a case of extremely severe insult that would alter a person's status to the point that they may commit suicide, or become ill and die from agony.

Why are Women Not Obligated to Wear a Kippah?

Q: Why have unmarried women not had the custom to cover their heads with a kippah like men?

A: Wearing a kippah for men is intended to inspire fear of Heaven. It is related in the Talmud (Shabbat 156b) that after it became known to the mother of Rav Nachman bar

Yitzchak based on his astrological sign that he was liable to become a thief, she was very strict with him to always cover his head, and this way, he grew up in Torah and mitzvot. Once, when his head covering fell off, his evil inclination overcame him, and he greatly desired to steal dates from the top of a palm tree. At that moment, Rav Nachman understood his mother's insistence. Over time, the minhag hassidut (pious custom) was accepted among all Israel to cover one's head all day, to the point where it became an obligatory custom (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 2:6). It appears that the custom of wearing a kippah, somewhat replaced tefillin. Ideally, one should wear tefillin all day, and since people became more meticulous about the honor of tefillin, to only wear them with complete bodily and mental purity, they are only worn during prayer, and instead, people became meticulous about wearing a kippah all day.

However, for women, head covering is for modesty and not in order to inspire fear of Heaven. Therefore, married women cover their heads, while unmarried women, who do not need to be as strict as married women, do not need to cover their heads.

It is possible to interpret that women's observance of the laws of modesty in their clothing expresses fear of Heaven more, and therefore, there is no need for a head covering as well, in order to express fear of Heaven.

Unmarried Women are Not Obligated to Wear a Kippah in Prayer, or Blessings

Some poskim say that when mentioning God's name and reciting blessings, even unmarried women should cover their heads, since in this matter, there is no difference between men and women, but rather, it is an independent obligation to cover one's head when mentioning God's name (Ish Matzliach, Yaskil Avdi). Others say that, at the very least, during the Amidah, women should cover their heads (Yabia Omer 6:15).

However, in practice, unmarried women are not meticulous about this, and even during prayer, do not have the custom to cover their heads. Only men have an obligatory, minhag hassidut to cover their heads all day, in order to inspire them to fear of Heaven, and therefore, they have a complete obligation to cover their heads when mentioning God's name. But for unmarried women who do not practice this pious custom, it does not express fear of Heaven for them, and therefore, they are not obligated in it when praying and reciting blessings (see Peninei Halakha: Women's Prayer 10:6).

Are Married Women Obligated to Cover Their Heads During Prayer and Blessings?

Married women must cover their heads during prayer, since without a head covering, they would be dressed contrary to halakha. Even one who is not accustomed to being meticulous about head covering, should at least be careful about this during prayer even when alone in her home,

since it is inappropriate to pray while dressed in a manner not respectable according to halakha.

Regarding reciting blessings and verses that contain God's name, some say that even when a woman is alone, if she is married, she must be careful to cover her head (Yabia Omer 6:15). And some say that since unmarried women are not obligated in this, married women are also not obligated, since the obligation for married women to cover their heads is only due to modesty, and since when reciting blessings there is no obligation to dress respectably, their law follows that of unmarried women, and it is permitted for them to recite blessings and the bedtime Shema without a head covering. And this is the prevalent custom and the halakha (Peninei Halakha: Women's Prayer 10:6).

Wigs Whose Hair is from India

About twenty years ago, in 2004, a controversy arose regarding wigs whose hair is imported from India. It became clear that some of the hair is brought from the area of the city of Tirupati in southern India, where there is a place of worship visited by tens of millions of people each year, many of whom shave their head hair before coming before the idol. The hair belonging to the place of worship is then sold to the wig industry.

Those poskim prohibiting, argued that shaving the hair is an act of worship, and is therefore considered a quasi-sacrificial slaughtering (shechita), rendering the hair forbidden for benefit.

In contrast, those poskim permitting, clarified with people familiar with the religion, and it became clear that shaving the hair is not an act of worship, but merely preparation before coming submissively before the idol, and is therefore not forbidden for benefit.

Halakha to Permit

Even if we accept the claim of the stringent poskim that there is concern that shaving the hair is considered worship, wigs made from hair brought from India may be permitted, since this involves a *sfeik sfeika* (a double doubt), and the halakha is that even regarding the prohibition of deriving benefit from idolatry – in a *sfeik sfeika*, the law follows the lenient opinion, as explained in the Mishnah: “One who finds idolatry fragments, they are permitted” (Avodah Zarah 41a). Rashi, Rambam and others explained, based on the Gemara (ibid. 41b), that this is a *sfeik sfeika* – doubtful whether they worshipped these idols, and if they were worshipped – perhaps the non-Jews nullified them. And so is codified in halakha (Shach YD 141:7).

Therefore, even when certain the wig hair came from Tirupati, the wig is permitted for benefit, and therefore, it is permitted to purchase it, and wear it. All the more so when it is unknown if it came from there, and then, there would be three doubts.

The Three Doubts in Brief

The first doubt: Whether shaving the hair is an act of worship that can forbid the hair from benefit, or if it is not

an act of worship but merely preparation before coming to the idol. From clarifying the matter, it appears the lenient opinion is correct, since the priests of the religion itself said that shaving is not worship, and the hair is considered impure for them, and unfit for an offering. However, the stringent argued that the masses think it is worship, and therefore, it is considered a way of worshipping that idol, thus forbidding the hair.

The second doubt: Even if we accept the stringent view that shaving the hair is worship, the Rishonim (early authorities) disputed whether a worship that resembles the Temple service only partially, such as shaving hair which partially resembles animal slaughter, forbids the offering from benefit. According to Ramban, Rashba and Ritva it does not forbid, while according to Tosafot, Tur and Shulchan Aruch YD 139:3, it forbids.

The third doubt relates to laws of *taravot* (mixtures), meaning, that even if we say shaving the hair is worship, and even if we say this worship forbids the hair, according to the lenient opinion, the Tirupati hair is *batel* (nullified) among the rest of the hair brought from India for the wig industry, and the hair leaving India is *batel* among hair from the rest of the world, while according to the stringent opinion, it is not *batel* (since the reasoning of the sides is complex, we will not mention them).

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Parshat Tetzaveh: When Absence Proves Love

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founder and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone

“And you shall command the children of Israel... And you shall bring forth your brother Aaron and his sons together with him... And you shall speak to all of the wise-hearted.” (Exodus 27:20–28:3)

Often what you really have is that which you give away, what you most profoundly say is what you leave unsaid when you wisely decide not to respond, and the most commanding presence is felt most keenly when that presence is not around. An example of the third phenomenon is to be found in the Torah reading of Tetzaveh, the only portion since the opening of the book of Exodus wherein Moses' name does not appear even once! Why not?

The Midrashic answer suggests that Moses initiated his own absence. When the Israelites sinned by worshipping the golden calf less than six weeks after the divine revelation at Sinai, God's anger reaches the breaking point (as it were) and he makes Moses the following offer:

“And now leave Me alone as my anger shall burn and I will destroy them, and I shall make of you a great nation.” (Exodus 32:10)

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

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

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

God responds to Moses' pleas. But Moses' expression of identification with the people, Moses' selfless willingness for himself to be obliterated as long as his nation prevails, is eternalized by the fact that in one portion of the Torah, Tetzaveh, the master prophet's name is "missing in action." But on an even deeper level, is there a further significance to the fact that the "blotting out" of Moses' name occurs specifically in Tetzaveh?

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

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

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

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

Enter the kohen. If there is one person who disagrees with Mr. Vidal, it would have to be a member of the priestly class who served in the Temple, received no portion of land to till or business to develop, and who made his living by tithes given him by the Israelites: 1/40, 1/50, 1/60 of their produce depending upon the generosity of the individual donor. And since the tithe was a percentage of the crop, the better the farmer makes out, the happier the kohen would be. To modify the Vidal quote, a kohen would declare: "Whenever a farmer succeeds a little [and certainly whenever he succeeds a lot], something in me lives." Hence by the very nature of the economic structure set up by the Bible, the kohen-priest could truly give the blessing of prosperity and well-being to the congregation of Israel "with love."

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

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

Now we can understand why Moses' name is absent particularly from this portion of Tetzaveh. If the kohanim are to symbolize selfless commitment to God and to the nation, they cannot possibly have a better example than Moses, who was willing to have his name removed from the Torah for the sake of the future of his people! If any act in the Torah can be singled out for demonstrating pure love, with no strings attached, it is when Moses refuses God's offer to start a new nation from his loins; Moses

would rather that he remain anonymous but let the people of Israel live. Indeed, the essence of Moses' greatness emerges most clearly from the portion of his absence and anonymity.
Shabbat Shalom

Are You a Sun or a Moon?

The Jewish Leap Year Challenges Us to Integrate Creativity and Consistency

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

Two Roads

Two roads diverged in the long voyage of our people. There were "Solar Jews" and "Lunar Jews."

There were always the people whose primary focus has been on holding on tenaciously to the past, with little or no change. Just because Voltaire gave us Enlightenment, Nietzsche taught us about the Will for Power, Tocqueville explained to us democracy, Freud discovered the subconscious, and America is changing by the day, this group argues, our core values—what makes us human and Jewish—still do not undergo change. Learn from the sun, they say. It has been doing the same thing for millennia and still casts its light and warmth effectively.

In contrast, the lunar Jews focus on the constant changes in history: The fluctuating trends, the cultural developments, the novel inventions, the technological revolutions, and the newly discovered wisdom. These Jews allow their ears to absorb the sounds of progression and the alterations in the climate. They aspire to define a Judaism—or a philosophy of life—that would be relevant to the contemporary conversation of humanity in its journey toward progress. "Learn from the moon," they exclaim. Every day it is different. It waxes, it wanes; it even disappears once in a while. It forever assumes diverse shapes.

Often, they mocked their elders who were unchangeable. Their lunar anthem was this:

Rooted in the tombs of yesterday

Growing, thriving toward the sky.

Not satisfied with answers carved in clay

Give us new life or we will die.

In some ways, it was this perspective that gave birth to the contemporary Jewish world. As the winds of modernity swept Europe, as Enlightenment and Emancipation cast their glow on a downtrodden nation, millions of Jews felt that clinging to the lifestyle and traditions of their ancestors would impede their bright journey to a new world order. In the process, they bid farewell to the old to embrace the new; they said goodbye to the yore to embrace the "your."

Then came the Holocaust and changed everything. A shattered people observed in unfathomable horror how the most enlightened European nation with the most PhDs, the crown jewel of the sciences and arts, was capable of sending one-and-a-half million children into gas chambers, with no qualms. As our nation struggled to regain its bearings and rebuild, confusion emerged.

The solar Jews focused on the fact that if you are not anchored in absolute values, traditions, and faith, you may forfeit continuity. In your passion to remain relevant today, you may forfeit the wisdom of yesteryear. In your ambition to grow tall, you can't detach from the roots that keep you alive.

"By the time a man realizes that maybe his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong," Charles Wadsworth once said.

The lunar Jews accuse solar Jews of monotony and dogma, stifling the new energy of today. In their hope to continue the chain of history by adding their identically matching link, they fail to leave room for creativity and self-expression.

Two Approaches to Business

Often, the conflict between the lunar and solar personalities emerges in a company, a business, or an organization.

The CEO, David, is adventurous, creative, courageous, and fearless of risks. He feels that the company has to embrace a new model to bring it over the top, though it has not done things this way since its inception. Yet the senior Vice President, Henry, adheres to a different code: Conservative approaches and investments, calculated growth strategies, continuing the models of yesterday which proved successful.

At a board meeting trying to reconcile between the two, strong words are hurled: The VP accuses the CEO, thirty years younger than him, of being volatile and impetuous. "This young know-it-all arrogant leader will take a successful company, earning its fixed annual revenue, and run it into the ground because of his irresponsible and youthful decisions." The CEO does not remain silent. "Henry is an old man. He moves with the speed of a turtle. His consistency and regularity have led us to paralysis, stagnation, and deadness. With him at the helm, we will become irrelevant."

Two Spouses

Often the dichotomy flares up in a marriage:

She is spontaneous, fun-loving, bursting with ever-changing moods and emotions. Occasionally, her luminous personality shines like the full moon; equally frequent, however, are periods of sadness and inner struggle. She waxes and wanes. And sometimes she wants to disappear from the world for two days, just like the moon.

He is solid, dependable, consistent, as regular as tomorrow's sunrise. When he has a flight, he packs two days before and shows up at the airport 3 and-a-half hours before his flight. He has been leaving the house at the same minute—8:19 AM—for the past 36 years to catch the 8:30 train. At work, he's efficient, productive, and a stalwart upholder of company policy. He has not been late to an appointment since the Cuban Missile Crisis. Even the Landing on the Moon did not excite him enough to stay up later than usual. After all, he is a sun... He goes to bed, with one book on his night table, because he never picks up

a second book before he finishes reading the first. That, in his mind, is frivolous and irresponsible... (His wife, on the other hand, goes to bed with six books, so that when she gets bored of the first book—usually after three pages—she can pick up the second book.)

Or sometimes (maybe more often) it is the other way around. She is made of steel. She is solid, reliable, and dependable. He is moody and unstable. He may be an “artist,” but he’s out for lunch. And lunch never ends with him. Either way, as can be expected, theirs is not an easy marriage.

Who Prevails?

Each of us tends to deal with this conflict differently. But the common denominator for most is that we try to overemphasize one of the two approaches so that we can form some sense of identity. Sometimes as a society we give one approach exclusive power when the other has dominated our attention for a long time. It becomes a pendulum swing from one extreme to another: Embracing art and creativity until we’ve totally lost all sense of moral truth, and then giving total control to discipline and dogma until there is no distinguishable personality left in us.

Judaism, in its profound understanding of human nature and the process of history, challenges us to embark on the road less traveled.

Two Calendars

There are two types of calendars used by most civilizations today: the Western calendar and the Muslim calendar. The Western calendar follows the solar cycle, while the Muslim calendar follows the lunar cycle. The primary features of both calendars are the month and the year. Yet their duration can be calculated through either the sun or the moon.

Let us go on a little journey through these two calendars.[1] The solar orbit (the orbit of the sun around the earth, or of the earth around the sun) is completed every 365 days[2]. That makes for a year. If you divide these 365 days into 12 sections, you get approximately 30 days in each. This makes up the months.

This is how the Western calendar works. The months are not defined by the completion of any particular orbit; they are an artificial creation, a product of the mind dividing the solar orbit into 12 sections.[3]

The lunar orbit (the apparent orbit of the moon around the earth, or the earth around the moon) is completed every 29 1/2 days, 12 times as fast as the sun. That makes for a month. Now, when you multiply the lunar month—29 or 30 days[4]—12 times, you have a year.

Such a year, comprised of 12 lunar months, adds up to 354 days,[5] 11 days shorter than a solar year of 365 days. When a new lunar year begins (the beginning of the 13th month), the solar year has not yet finished its previous year and orbit.

This is how the Muslim calendar works. As with the months in the Western calendar, the years in the Muslim

calendar are not defined by an objective astronomical reality but are a creation of the human mind multiplying the moon's orbit 12 times.[6]

This is why Ramadan—the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which is the Islamic month of fasting, in which participating Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, and intimate relations for the entire month from dawn until sunset—can fall out either in winter or summer, or any other season. Sometimes Ramadan is in hot August, and sometimes in cold February (in 2022 it will begin on April 2 through May 2). Why? Because the Muslim calendar, unlike the Western calendar, has nothing to do with the sun and its seasons. It completely revolves around the moon.

The Problem

As long as you don't mix the two calendars, you're fine. But this is where the Jews came in and generated confusion. The Jewish calendar is unique in that it integrates these two very different cycles of time—the solar and the lunar—into a harmonious system.

The very first mitzvah given to the Jewish people—even before their Exodus from Egypt—specified the formula by which to set the cycles of Jewish time, and it gave birth to the most complex calendar ever employed.[7]

The Torah specifies that Jewish months need to be established by the lunar orbit. Simple enough. Yet the Torah also instructs the Jewish people to celebrate their holidays (observed on certain days of the lunar month) during specific solar seasons. For example, the holiday of Passover, beginning on the 15th day of the lunar month of Nissan, must also be the spring season (a product of the solar cycle).[8]

Now, if the lunar and solar year had enjoyed an identical number of days, this system would work perfectly: The lunar and solar months would travel together side by side. But since the lunar year is 354 days, and the solar year is 365 days, each passing year creates a discrepancy of 11 days between the two cycles. In the course of 10 years, the lunar year falls behind the solar year some 110 days. The result of this would be that Passover, celebrated in the lunar month of Nissan, would eventually end up in the winter.

The Solution

To confront this problem, the Jewish calendar introduced the “leap year.” Every few years, a 13th month consisting of 30 days is added to the lunar year. This way the “lunar year” catches up to the “solar year.” This is done approximately every three years when the discrepancy between the lunar and solar year reaches 33 days. The added month synchronizes them, more or less.[9]

Now, this year in the Jewish calendar, 5784, is one of those leap years. And the Hebrew month in which we presently find ourselves, Adar 1, is exactly such a type of month—an additional 13th month added to our lunar year. The additional month is always added to the month of Adar, ensuring that the following month, Nissan, the month of

Passover, is in spring, since the lunar year has now “caught” up to the solar year.

So in summation, the Jewish people calculate their time according to both the moon and the sun. Our months are the moons; our years are the suns. To ensure that our lunar months keep pace with the solar year, we are constantly attempting to have the moon overcome its 11-day void and catch up to the sun's year.

Why the Headache?

But why the need for such headaches? If the Torah wants us to synchronize our months and years with the solar seasons, let it establish a solar calendar to begin with! Why the need to follow a lunar system and then try to make up for its flaws, shortcomings, and mishaps?

The answer to this enigma is that in Judaism we measure and calculate our days the same way in which we measure and calculate our inner lives. We define time in the same way that we define our mission in life. And our mission in life is not to become either lunar or solar, but to integrate them. Sure, the synthesis of two celestial beings which possess differing patterns is never easy; it always requires tuning, fine-tuning, checks and balances, adjustments, vigilance, humility, and the readiness to challenge ourselves. But any other way would be neglecting a vital component of our design and of our objective in life.

To run from your spouse because they are so different is short-sided. Sure, to synchronize two personalities is not always a smooth journey, especially when one is a sun and the other—a moon. Yet it is in this attempt to bring together two orbits in which we can fully realize our inner potential and become the people we were meant to become. Truth can never be captured via the moon or the sun on their own. We ought to utilize our innovative ability to its fullest, and yet, for our creativity to be productive and life-affirming, we must have a structure in which to operate. If I forfeit that structure in the name of liberty and self-expression, it would be akin to water escaping the “boundaries” of the pot in order to come into direct contact with the fire beneath the pot. The results? No fire left.

To lose touch with time-tested values of the past in the name of creativity is akin to playing a football game on a massive roof of a tall building, lacking a firm fence. Instead of enjoying a thrilling game, we become too timid to play, because we know how dangerous it is, or conversely, we become reckless. The best thing we can do is to construct a fence, and then we can enjoy an awesome game.

Let's take the marital structure. Some may argue for completer lunar passion and romance, without the limitations imposed by the “solar” stable commitment to one person with no red lines crossed. The marriage-without boundaries may sound exciting, but the results are well known: It undermines rather than enhances the love and trust between a husband and wife, and the person often ends up with nothing.

We love the moon. We must be fresh, creative, passionate, and explore and actualize all of our individual resources. We ought to celebrate the new and the creative. But the leap year teaches us, that our inner moon—our inner lunacy—must, once every few years, be synchronized with our inner sun. We need to anchor our spiritedness in time-tested values to define what is right and what is wrong. Our creativity blossoms best on the soil of commitment and tradition. The structures of morality and the laws of the Torah are similar to the laws of biology. If in my attempt for creativity I ignore the intricate “laws” that govern my organism, I will end up damaging myself.

You can't ignore the rhythm of the soul. Only in the struggle to synthesize the sun and the moon, can the full capacity and majesty of the human being be expressed.[10] Now, as Jews are once again facing such adversity and hatred, it is time to reclaim our tradition, our Torah, Mitzvos, and faith -- the spiritual weapons of our eternity, coupled with its creative fearless vigor, empowering us to heal ourselves and the world.

[1] For a full understanding of the subject below, see “Understanding the Jewish Calendar” (Feldheim Press).

[2] To be exact, the solar orbit is slightly less than 365.25 days.

[3] Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra puts it thus (Exodus 12:2): “The sun has no month.”

[4] Since the moon completes its orbit, as mentioned, every 29.5 days, and we don't want to have a new month beginning in the middle of a day, six lunar months out of a year consist of 29 days, while six other lunar months are comprised of 30 days.

[5] The exact figure is 353, 354, or 365 days.

[6] Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra puts it thus (Exodus 12:2): “The moon has no year.”

[7] See Rambam Hilchos Kiddush Hachodesh and references noted in commentaries.

[8] The start of spring, also known as the vernal equinox, is the point when the sun's center crosses the equator from South to North, March 21 on the Gregorian calendar.

[9] Specifically, this is how it works. The Jewish calendar follows a 19-year cycle. Seven out of these 19 years—years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19—consist of 13, instead of 12, months.

Let us take a journey through this 19-year cycle: During the first two years of the cycle, the lunar year falls behind the solar year 22 days. Therefore, by the third year of the cycle, when 36 lunar months (three lunar years) would have set it back almost 34 days in relation to the annual seasonal solar cycle, we add a 13th month to the lunar year. Now, we are only four days behind.

Three years later, now some 38 days behind (almost 34 from three lunar years plus four days behind from before), we repeat the process. Now we are eight days behind.

Two years later, the lunar year accumulates a deficit of 29 days, so we add once again a month of 30 days to the lunar

year. This actually places the lunar year ahead of the solar year, and now the solar year needs to do the catching up.

And so it goes: every two to three years, an extra month is added to the Jewish lunar year. At the conclusion of each 19-year cycle, the solar and lunar years will be perfectly aligned with each other. This is why once in 19 years your English and Hebrew birthdays will finally be on the same day. Then we once again resume the cycle.

[10] This essay is based on a series of talks I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe during the month of Tishrei of 5744 (1983), which was a leap year. See: The public letter of the Rebbe dated 6 Tishrei 5744; Sichas 6 and 13 Tishrei 5744. The Rebbe then gave many more examples and illustrations of these two “orbits” in human life and in Jewish life.

A Shabbos B'Yachad

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Office of the Chief Rabbi

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Purim Katan: Did you know about the minor festivals taking place this weekend?

22 February 2024

Did you know that this Friday and Shabbat there are some minor festivals on the Jewish calendar?

Friday will be called Purim Katan, minor Purim and Shabbat will be called Shushan Purim Katan, minor Shushan Purim.

What's this all about?

Well you probably know that this is a leap year on our calendar, which means that we have two months of Adar.

So, the question posed in the Gemara, Masechet Megillah Daf Vav is, during which month should the festival of Purim be?

First Adar or second Adar?

And as you might expect there is a Machloket, there is a difference of view.

According to one school of thought, Purim should be in first Adar and that's because of the principle 'Ain Maavirin Al Hamitzvot', you do not delay a mitzvah.

We're passionate, we're enthusiastic about the opportunity, the privilege to perform Hashem's mitzvot and that is why a mitzvah should not be put off.

Purim should be held as soon as possible.

Then there's a second view, and that is 'Mismach Geula L'Geula' and this is the preferred school of thought.

We need to guarantee that the redemption of Purim is as close as possible to the redemption of Pesach.

To stage Purim just one month before the festival of Pesach, to guarantee that we go from joy to joy, from redemption.

And that's what we do in Halacha.

Therefore, during the first month of Adar, you have got a minor Purim and a minor Shushan Purim.

Second month, it is the real one, to be as close to Pesach as possible.

And for us right now, such a powerful, relevant message emerges.

We want to ensure that we do not just have one solitary event of joy, marking one occasion of redemption.

No, we want to be on a roll, we want to go from happiness to happiness, from redemption to redemption.

And that is our prayer during these exceptionally challenging times, may Hashem bless the State of Israel and the Jewish people, that we will indeed achieve a state of joy, and may that take us again and again to many more experiences of joy.

I wish you all Purim Katan Sameach.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland

Drasha Parshas Tetzaveh

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Bell Bottoms

This week the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) is commanded in sartorial law. The Torah instructs the creation of eight intricate garments that must be worn at all times by Ahron. Each vestment functions on a specific spiritual level. One, however, seems to also have a mundane raison d'être.

The Torah instructs the Kohen Gadol to wear a Me'il, a four cornered blue-wool garment worn like a sandwich-sign. The hem of this majestic robe was adorned with an alternating array of 72 functioning gold bells and small pomegranates. Unlike most of the vestments, where the Torah just commands what to sew, the Torah explains the purpose of the Me'il. Exodus 28:34 "Its sound (i.e., the bells) shall be heard upon entering the Sanctuary before Hashem." The Torah continues to tell us that if the Kohen Gadol dares enter the sanctuary without that bell adorned garment, he is subject to a decree of untimely death.

It is nearly impossible to fathom divine reasoning for each vestment. The written Torah does not give an explicit explanation as to why the Kohen must wear the belts, tunics, and turbans. Yet when it tells us about the bells at the bottom of the Me'il it justifies their existence with a very mundane reason. "Its sound shall be heard upon entering the Sanctuary before Hashem." Our sages explain that the Torah is teaching a moral lesson: one should announce himself before entering any room.

I am amazed. Does Hashem, who knows every mortal's move, have a "knock before entering" sign on the doorway of His sanctuary? Why, of all places, is this the place to teach etiquette? Couldn't the Torah have found more mundane whereabouts to direct the people about proper behavior upon entering a room?

The young widow who entered Reb Shlomo Zalman's study was obviously distraught. In addition to the loneliness and pain she experienced, a sense of urgency*

was about her. She had recurring pangs of guilt. She wanted to do something spiritual to memorialize her dear husband. Perhaps she should establish a free loan fund or contribute books to the Yeshiva library. Or perhaps there was an act of spiritual self-improvement that she should perform.

Reb Shlomo Zalman waited till she finished and then instructed her to listen to his advice very carefully. "I understand your need to do something spiritual as a tikkun (uplift) for your husband's soul. This is my advice to you. Go out and buy some toys for your children, take them to the park and enjoy life with them. Forget the quest for the great spiritual tikkun and help your children rejoice in life. That will bring the greatest tikkun for your husband."

The Kohen's bells teach us all a great lesson. Upon entering the Holy of Holies, the Kohen's thoughts may become so focused on attaining the high level of spirituality that he may forget simple courtesy. He may forget to knock before entering. The Torah tells us that the search for spirituality can never supersede simple etiquette. We often have dreams and lofty spiritual goals. How many toes do we step upon to achieve them? How many doors do we burst through to prescribe our morals to inattentive ears?

This week the Torah tells us that even the High Priest — the holiest of mortals — as he converges on the Kodosh HaKodoshim — the holiest of places — in the quest to perform the most spiritual of Judaic rites — must remember one simple thing. It is the same thing that the poor farmer must remember before trudging into his home: basic courtesy. Don't forget to knock. And the foremost place to teach us that lesson is the Holy of Holies.

** Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1910-1995) was one of the foremost Torah Scholars of our generation. Dean of Yeshiva Kol Torah, his Halachic rulings guided thousands world over. This story is adapted from And From Jerusalem his Word c 1995 Hanoch Teller, N.Y.C. Pub Co. This issue is dedicated in loving memory Nochum Moshe ben Yosef - by Sam & Ingrid Davies and Family*

Good Shabbos!

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Rabbi M. Kamenetzky is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

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Rav Frand - Parshas Tetzaveh

The Funds for Building the Mishkan Were Easier To Collect Than the Oil for The Menorah

Last week's parsha also contains a solicitation, but does not use the word tzav. Rather, Parshas Terumah begins with the pasuk "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion." (Shemos 25:2) Everyone was asked to donate to the Mishkan building campaign.

They donated all sorts of items, precious metals – gold, silver, and copper – as well as animal skins, wood, spices and the like. It was a very successful campaign, during which they collected everything they needed for the Mishkan.

The sefer Abir Yaakov asks why the Torah does not use the command (Tzav es Bnei Yisrael) in Parshas Terumah like it does here in Parshas Tetzaveh, rather than the more casual statement "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me an offering..." Anytime someone solicits money – gold, silver, or other valuable items, people don't like to part with their money. They certainly don't like to part with their precious metals. It is a request which may very well cause hesitation and resistance. Therefore, we would expect the Torah to use a forceful word such as "tzav" there. It seems incongruous that when asking for olive oil, the Torah uses a "command" (v'ata tetzaveh) and when asking for gold and silver, the Torah uses a mere request. Which is the easier ask?

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

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

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

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

That needs a lashon of tzav – “Command the Children of Israel...”

*Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem
DavidATwersky@gmail.com*

*Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD
dhoffman@torah.org*

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TorahWeb

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

Looking at the World Through the Eyes of the Tzitz

The imagery of the Kohen Gadol wearing the bigdei kehuna is the model of a holy, exalted individual. Adorning his head is the tzitz which describes the essence of the role of the Kohen Gadol, as carved into this golden ornament are the words 'קדוש לה' - Holy for Hashem. Although the actual tzitz is only worn by the Kohen Gadol, what the tzitz symbolizes is significant for everyone.

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

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

What is the underlying message which the mitzvos of the tzitz, tzitzis, and tefillin are coming to teach us? There is one theme that permeates all three of these mitzvos. There

is a question whether the tzitz was worn in exactly the same place as the tefillin or slightly below. According to both opinions it was situated either directly between the eyes or slightly below above. Although the Halacha is clear that tefillin are worn higher than eye level, the Torah describes tefillin as being situated "בין עיניך" - "between your eyes." Clearly, the tzitz and the tefillin are connected to the sense of sight. The very names for these mitzvos emphasize the significance of seeing. The word tzitz is related to tzitzis not only concerning the common blue thread but also the word tzitzis is related to the word "להציץ" - "to see." Rashi (Bamidbar 15:38) quotes two meanings of the word tzitzis - a thread and seeing. Tefillin shel rosh are referred to in the Torah as "טוטפות". Rashi (Shemos 13:16) interprets טוטפות as similar to a word describing speech. Rashi observes that when one sees the tefillin shel rosh being worn one speaks about the miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim described in its parshiyos. Chazal interpret the passuk (Devarim 28:10), "וראו כל-עמי הארץ כי", "שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך" - "the nations of the world will see the name of Hashem upon you and fear you" - as referring to tefillin shel rosh which is visible to all. The mitzva of tzitzis is linked to sight as the purpose of tzitzis is "וראתם אותו וזכרתם את כל מצות ה'" - "You should see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem" (Bamidbar 15:39).

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

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

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Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Parashat Tetzaveh 5784

To Rule or To Serve?

The Torah portion of Tetzaveh is a direct continuation of the previous parasha, Terumah. These two portions deal with the preparations necessary for the work in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle – the temporary sanctuary that accompanied the children of Israel during their wanderings

in the desert until the construction of the permanent Temple in Jerusalem. However, while Parashat Terumah deals with the structure of the Tabernacle itself and the vessels placed within it, outlining a precise plan for the Tabernacle and its vessels, Parashat Tetzaveh primarily deals with the preparation of the individuals intended to work in the Tabernacle and operate it – Aaron the Priest and his sons.

This preparation focused on two areas: one is related to the special garments of the priests. These garments are required to be made from specific fabrics, particularly the garments of the High Priest, which were made “for honor and for beauty.” The second area in which the preparation of the priests is expressed is during the seven days of “milu’im,” seven days in which Aaron and his sons practiced the work in the Tabernacle.

Among the details of the garments of the High Priest, there are several precious stones set in them. On his chest, the High Priest wears the ‘Choshen,’ a kind of ornament adorned with precious stones on which the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are engraved: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin. Each stone bears the name of one of the tribes of Israel, making a total of twelve stones. In addition, on his shoulders, the High Priest wears two additional stones, on each of which are engraved the names of six tribes.

Why were the names of the tribes of Israel engraved on the garments of the High Priest? The Torah addresses this question. Regarding the stones that Aaron wears on his chest, it is said:

Thus shall Aaron carry the names of the sons of Israel in the choshen of judgment over his heart when he enters the Holy, as a remembrance before the Lord at all times. (Exodus 28:29)

And concerning the two stones on his shoulders, a similar justification is given:

...and Aaron shall carry their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders as a remembrance. (Exodus 28:12)

The High Priest bears the memory of the children of Israel before the Lord in two places on his body: on his heart and on his shoulders, so that the children of Israel will be “as a remembrance.”

Interpretations regarding the meaning of this “remembrance” vary among commentators. Many understood that the purpose is for the priest to remember the children of Israel before the Lord. However, other commentators, such as the Rambam (Provence, 1188-1199) and Don Isaac Abarbanel (Portugal and Spain, 1487-1508), explained that the purpose of engraving the names on the stones is for the priest himself, so that the High Priest will always remember that he is acting in the Temple on behalf of the people.

The role of priesthood is a delicate one. On one hand, the priest is responsible for the rituals in the Temple as a

representative and delegate of the entire nation. On the other hand, this role can lead the priest to arrogance, domination, and even corruption. In later generations, we find priests who exploited their status and role dishonestly for personal gains. This is recounted in the Book of Samuel about the sons of Eli the Priest, Hophni and Phineas, who behaved dishonestly with the men and women who came to the Tabernacle in Shiloh.

The High Priest who always bears the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart is required to remember at all times that he does not serve in the Temple because of extra privileges granted to him. The priest serves the people by working before the Lord.

Not only the priest is required not to dominate over the people. Every leader and public figure is required to remember that he is not above others but, on the contrary, serves them.

This is illustrated in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Horayot, page 10) about two sages, Rabbi Elazar Chisma and Rabbi Yochanan ben Gudgada, who were poor, and Rabban Gamliel appointed them a position in his study house so that they could support themselves from it. But the two continued to sit in the back rows of the study house. When Rabban Gamliel saw this, he reprimanded them: “Are you assuming that I am giving you authority? I am giving you servitude!”

The more we remember that the role of a teacher, educator, or public figure is not to rule but rather to serve – the better we will fulfill our roles faithfully and successfully.

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Tetzaveh

פרשת תצוה תשפ"ד

ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל

Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael. (27:20)

A name is important, but, for some people, it is sadly all they have. They feel that lineage of any sort will pave the way for their future. While in some instances it might be true, the lineage will not preserve their legacy. This is not meant to demean the value of a name. It can carry cultural, historical or familial significance, which is meaningful, not only to the person, but also to those who revere his lineage and what it represents. Legacy is established, however, by the impact one makes on his surroundings, his friends and his students.

One's identity should be defined by achievement, rather than by name. The contribution one makes to those around him and future generations is more significant than an inherited name or title. Having said this, I suggest a homiletic explanation for the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu's name is noticeably missing from this *parshah*. In fact, from the time that Moshe first emerges in *Parashas Shemos* until the end of the Torah, Moshe's name is always present – except for *Parashas Tetzaveh*.

The reason for this anomaly, as explained by the *Baal HaTurim*, is that, when the Jews committed the *cheit ha'eigal*, sin of the golden calf, Hashem wanted to destroy them. Moshe said to Hashem, "Hashem, if You forgive *Klal Yisrael*, good! But, if not, *mecheini na m'Sifrecha*, remove any mention of me from the Torah. I cannot be a leader who failed to gain mercy for his people." This unparalleled devotion to the nation turned the tide, and Hashem rescinded His anger. The nation was spared, but Moshe's utterance, *mecheini na m'Sifrecha*, had to be fulfilled. His name had to be erased from the Torah. His word had to be upheld. One *parshah* was selected to be the one in which our quintessential leader's name is not mentioned. *Parashas Tetzaveh* invariably occurs around *Adar 7*, which is the *Yahrzeit* of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Thus, it was chosen for the "honor."

Perhaps the *parshah's* message is that one's name is not what serves as a platform for legacy. Moshe *Rabbeinu's* name is his impact as *Rabbeinu* – not Moshe. Indeed, this message is expressed in the *parshah* dedicated to Aharon *HaKohen*, when Moshe transfers the institution of priesthood to his brother. Two names: Moshe and Aharon, but what really matters, what really lives on, are their roles, *Rabbeinu* and *Kohen Gadol*. It is their function, service and impact on the nation that plays a pivotal role for all generations – not their names.

This might shed light on the alternating sequence of Aharon and Moshe in the Torah. The Torah teaches us that they were equal in significance. But one was Aharon, and the other was Moshe. They are not the same. Perhaps it is because the name does not take precedence. It is the position which is of greatest consequence. Moshe was the *Rabban shel kol Yisrael*. Aharon was the *Kohen Gadol*. Each left his individual mark on the nation.

ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך כתיב

And they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil. (27:20)

Chazal (*Midrash Rabbah*, *Shemos* 36:1) quote the *pasuk* in *Yirmiyahu* (11:16), *Zayis raanan yefei pri to'ar kara Hashem shemecha*, "Hashem named you verdant olive tree, fair, with choice fruit" to indicate the comparison of *Klal Yisrael* to olive oil. *Chazal* state three characteristics of the Jewish People which mimic the characteristics of olive oil. First, the olive does not give forth its oil until it has been smashed and pressed. Likewise, (some of) the Jewish People return to Hashem through *teshuvah*, repentance, once they have suffered at the hands of anti-Semites of all creeds, who have persecuted them with all forms of afflictions. Second, oil and other liquids do not mingle with one another. Oil's viscosity is such that it cannot mix with any other liquids. Likewise, the Jew, regardless of how hard he may try to be accepted, at the end of the day, the acceptance is only superficial. They put on a good show of caring for and seeking our friendship, but beneath the façade lays the

same feelings of insecurity – catalyzed by animus, as always. Third, even when one is able to combine oil and water, the oil will rise to the top. Likewise, when *Klal Yisrael* performs the will of Hashem, all recognize them as being special in human decency, ethical/moral character.

If I may add that, by nature of his biological affinity with the *Avos HaKedoshim*, holy Patriarchs, every Jew manifests the special characteristics that identify the Jew and his likeness with olive oil. This identification is stronger and more pronounced due to his affiliation with and devotion to the Torah. Perhaps this is why Hashem instructed Moshe *Rabbeinu* to "take the olive oil to you," a requirement for the oil to be brought to Moshe to certify its purity. Our quintessential leader is the symbol of Torah. As such, the olive oil must be the essence of purity, because it exemplifies the Torah which is Divinely authored, its pristine nature preserved through the generations via the agency of "Moshes" of each generation. The Torah refines and enhances one who studies and adheres to its *mitzvos*. A Jew is a Jew, regardless of his level of commitment. A Torah Jew exemplifies Hashem's ideal for His chosen people.

Horav Zev Weinberger, zl, suggests that *Chazal's* three *peshatim*, expositions, on how the Jew is equated with olive oil reflects three types of Jews (or Jewish practices). The first is the non-practicing, totally assimilated Jew, who, if it were to be his choice, would revoke his "membership" in this august group. He has little to no background, or he is so turned off that he wants to run as far away as he can. He requires the anti-Semite to remind him he has no exit strategy from Judaism. The hatred of the anti-Semite is filled with such vitriol that he will seek out any drop of Jewish blood that a person possesses – regardless of how many generations have passed since a member of his family has affiliated with *Yiddishkeit*. How sad it is when one needs the *goy* to remind him that he is Jewish. Anti-Semitism has a long history of affecting Jewish identity. Individuals have responded to religious animus by turning inward, reflecting on their heritage, culture and faith. It is not easy for someone who has never known or suddenly has realized – that running away is to no avail, that he has an identity – one that is characterized by strength, resilience, pride and determination.

Second, are those Jews who, despite their alienation from Torah and *mitzvos*, draw the line at intermarriage. They, like oil which does not mix well with other liquids, will neither destroy their own bloodlines, nor permit their offspring to do so. Ultimately, they understand that the Jewish nation is as different from the gentile world as oil is different from water. The spiritual "viscosity" of each one of the two does not mesh well with the other.

Last, is the Jew whose deep-rooted sense of commitment and devotion to his religious observance motivate him to take pride in celebrating his heritage. The

pride he has in his religious identity leads to a sense of belonging, understanding that he is part of something much larger than himself. He is part of the *am Hashem*, the chosen nation of Hashem. He seeks peaceful coexistence with the outside world as long as such engagement will not adversely affect his religious priorities. We want the world to recognize and respect Hashem. This cannot succeed if we are extremist or separatist. People will respect Judaism when they admire the Jewish People. This does not mean compromising our religious devotion. On the contrary, people respect honesty and applaud individuals who remain true to their commitments. When we make religious concessions, we sell ourselves and the religion we represent short.

ונשא אהרן את שמות בני ישראל בחשן המשפט על לבו

Aharon shall bear the names of Bnei Yisrael on the Choshen Hamishpat (Breastplate of judgment) on his heart. (28:29)

Aharon *HaKohen* merited to wear the breastplate on his heart due to the manner in which he accepted Moshe *Rabbeinu's* appointment as the leader of the Jewish People. Prior to Moshe's entrance on the scene, Aharon had been the *Navi* and leader of the Jewish people. Suddenly, his position transformed from leader to assistant. Not only did Aharon not complain, but the Torah says *V'roacha v'somach b'libo*, "He will see you and he will rejoice in his heart" (*Shemos* 4:4). Aharon's humility was such that he manifested no ego whatsoever when he lost his position to his younger brother. This is an incredible level of brotherly love. I think it goes further and deeper. Aharon truly rejoiced when he saw how happy Moshe was. "He will see you" – When Aharon will look at your face, he will be filled with joy over your good fortune. When he sees your joy – he, too, will be happy.

Some people live for themselves, and some very special people live to provide for others. Someone who lives for others does not view his "contribution" or "deferment" to them as a sacrifice, but rather, as something he enjoys doing. *Horav Yisrael Meir Lau, Shlita*, underscores this idea (cited by Rabbi Binyamin Pruzansky, *Living Higher*) by relating a poignant story.

Bar mitzvah boys wait and look forward to that august moment in which they pass through this momentous rite of passage. Sadly, when the Covid epidemic was raging, many *bar mitzvah* boys had to settle with little to no fanfare. During the initial stages, the *shuls* were closed and receiving an *aliyah*, being called up to the Torah, was, for the most part, impossible. Former Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*, Rabbi Lau, was asked to address a group of *bar mitzvah* boys via Zoom. One must appreciate the mindset of these boys. This was the moment for which they had planned, strived and prepared for quite some time. At this young age, it was supposed to be their greatest moment. Alas, now it was but a dream.

The Chief Rabbi began by telling the group about his past. He was a young Holocaust survivor, who was, at an early age orphaned of his father and mother. The Nazis had murdered his parents in Treblinka. The young Yisrael Meir was spared certain death when his older brother placed him into a sack and smuggled him into Buchenwald. Following the liberation, he and his older brother, two children alone in the world, emigrated to *Eretz Yisrael*, where they hoped to make their home. Like all boys, Yisrael Meir's *bar mitzvah* was coming up; he prepared his *parashah* well. He was not *laining*, reading the Torah, just for himself, but also for his parents and all the family members who the Nazis had murdered. Word went out that one of the youngest survivors of the Holocaust was reading the Torah in honor of his *bar mitzvah*, and the *shul* quickly filled to capacity, the excitement palpable.

The time came, and the young boy ascended to the *bimah*, draped in his *tallis*, prepared to demonstrate how well he had prepared. When he reached the *bimah*, he became aware of a developing issue. Apparently, an elderly man who served as the *shul's* regular *baal korei*, Torah reader, was miffed that this young man was replacing him at the *bimah*. The man was lonely and, other than *laining* in *shul*, he had very little in life. The reading of the Torah was very important to him, and he was not prepared to give it up – especially on a *Shabbos* when the *shul* was packed with visitors from all over.

The *gabbai*, sexton, who was in charge of the Torah reading, as well as the leading of the *tefillos*, asked the man, "Did you forget that this week is a *bar mitzvah*, and the boy will read the Torah?" "You should have informed me earlier," the *baal korei* countered. "I spent an entire week preparing to *lain*!" "You are absolutely right," the *gabbai* said, "but the boy has spent months preparing for this moment." The *baal korei* would not budge, "You cannot do this to me. I read the Torah every week to a small crowd. Finally, I have a week when I can show off my talents to a large crowd, you take it from me!" "You do not seem to understand," said the *gabbai*. "The crowd is here today to listen to the *bar mitzvah* boy read the Torah – not you. The young boy is an orphan. He has nothing – no parents – no family. It is his first big day! Let it be."

Rav Lau said, "I saw the pain in the elderly man's eyes. He, too, had nothing. He was in his twilight years and all alone. I had my entire life ahead of me. I went over to him and said, 'I am still young, and I pray that I will have many more opportunities in life to read from the Torah. You should *lain*, and I will receive an *aliyah*.' The *gabbai* looked at me and nodded. It was okay to let the man read the Torah. When I saw the look on the *baal korei's* face, I immediately knew that I had done the right thing."

Rav Lau looked at the boys and said, "You must ask yourselves as you enter into the yoke of *mitzvos*: 'What will be my first *mitzvah*?' I know that my first *mitzvah* was giving up my spot to an elderly Jew to whom it meant so

much. Indeed, I have had many forums for speaking publicly. Remember: When you give up a little to help a fellow *Yid*, you never lose out.”

Aharon *HaKohen* taught us well to always think of the other fellow. After all, what else are we here for?

שבעת ימים ילבשם הכהן תחתיו מבניו אשר יבוא אל אהל מועד לשרת בקודש

For a seven-day period, the *Kohen* who succeeds him from his sons, who shall enter the *Ohel Moed* to serve in the Sanctuary shall wear them. (29:30)

The son of the *Kohen Gadol* (if he is worthy) takes precedence over any other *Kohen* to succeed his father. Two *Kohanim* actually served in the positions of *Kohen Gadol* – the regular High Priest – and *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah* – a *Kohen Gadol* ordained specifically prior to the nation’s entrance into a war. This latter one was a specially designated *Kohen Gadol* whose purpose it was to address the nation and give his charge before the battle, encouraging them that Hashem will protect them. The *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah* is forbidden to marry a widow and may pose questions to the *Urim v’Tumim*. The function of the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah* was just that: to address the nation prior to war. Such a *Kohen* could go through life with the august title and never do anything but speak publicly one time. One distinction between the *Kohen Gadol* and *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah* is inheritance. The *Kohen Gadol*’s son succeeds his father; the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah*’s son does not.

Returning to our opening *pasuk*, Chazal (*Yoma* 73a) teach that the rule that the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah*’s son does not inherit his father’s portion is derived from the *pasuk* that adds: “Who shall enter the *Ohel Moed* to serve in the Sanctuary?” – only the son of a *Kohen Gadol* who enters the Holy of Holies may inherit his father’s position. The son of a *Kohen* who only performs the duty of addressing the nation prior to war does not inherit his father’s position.

Having said this, we cite a well-known *teshuvah*, responsa, from the *Techeiles Mordechai*, *Horav Mordechai Yohlin*, *zl* (served as *Rav* in a suburb of Kiev, Ukraine, then emigrated to America, where he was *Rav* in Philadelphia. *Niftar Erev Yom Kippur* 1942). He was asked about the laws of *chazakah*, whereby a *chazzan* had a long-standing position leading the *Shacharis* service during the *Yamim*

Noraim. After a number of years, an assistant *chazzan* was appointed, who, due to the fact that the primary *chazzan* was still active, would instead lead the services on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Since he did not work during the *Yamim Noraim*, he took a position elsewhere during these days.

The question was: The first *chazzan* left this world for his eternal rest. His son claimed *chazakah* (the *halachic* status of permanence that is established when an event repeats itself three times), since his father had held the position of *chazzan* for many years. The assistant *chazzan* claimed that, by right, it belonged to him as the next in line. The only reason he was not present for the *Yamim Noraim* was that he had no work. Furthermore, the rule of *chazakah* should not apply if it is not consecutive, 365 days a year, for three years. The late *chazzan* had only worked three days a year!

He quotes *Horav Moshe Nosson HaLevi Rubinstein, zl*, who cites Chazal in *Meseches Yoma* who apply our opening *pasuk* as support to disallow the son of the *Mashuach Milchamah* from inheriting his father’s position. He suggests that if, in fact, a *chazakah* of three incomplete times was invalid, why would Chazal require a *pasuk* to teach that the *Mashuach Milchamah*’s position does not go to his son? The *Kohen Mashuach* did his service from time to time. Thus, the *chazakah* was faulty. Apparently, the idea that Chazal found it necessary to employ a lesson from the *pasuk* to invalidate the son of the *Mashuach Milchamah* is an indication that otherwise he would have succeeded his father, based on the rule of *chazakah*.

I suggest that the *chazzan*, who led service three times a year, and the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah*, who performed his function sparingly, are both entitled to the benefits of the rule of *chazakah*. How often a person carries out his function has no bearing on his title or position. At the end of the day, he is the *shul*’s *chazzan*, and he is the *Kohen Gadol Mashuach Milchamah*. This title is ongoing; thus, it provides him with a *chazakah*.

Sponsored anonymously

לזכות ולרפואה שלמה

בעד חולי עמו ישראל

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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה
אנא מלכה בת ישראל ע"ה