

## Parshas Tetzaveh

### ELEVATION OF THE NATION

Moshe's name does not appear as part of the narrative of the Kehuna – Parshas Tetzaveh – when he probably ought to have been; what with his overseeing the entire construction and dedication of the Mishkan. Why does his name not appear?

On seeing the fallout from the Golden Calf and the ensuing plague, Moshe pleaded for mercy for the dying nation:

וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מְחַנֵּי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ (32: 32). ... forgive their sin; otherwise, erase me from Your book!

The Ba'al HaTurim explains that although this succeeded in ending the plague, a righteous man's word is always fulfilled.

But of all the sections in the Torah, why is this specific section the one his name is redacted from?

Tetzaveh largely deals with the Kehuna, which was given to Ahron and his descendants. R' Yakov Minkus explains Moshe and Ahron had very different personalities. Moshe brought the Torah down from Heaven, to mankind's level. Ahron embodied humanity attaining greater status through their own cultivation, as the ultimate "people's person". He was a lover and pursuer of peace. This is what the entire Kehuna was given for – bridging relationships; between people, and between people and God – elevating them.

Similarly, the Gemara in Sanhedrin concludes that there are two equally valid ways to settle litigation; judgement, or compromise. The fact that each are valid settlements shows that both are independently potent at achieving their goal. Moshe represented strict justice, and issued rulings for disputes, whereas Ahron represented compromise.

The role of the kohen is to play the arbiter, the middle man and mediator. As a man of the people, he is meant to feel their emotions, guide them through the services in the Beis HaMikdash.

If the two ways are equally valid, it is fair to say that they should not impinge each other, and when introducing the validity and importance of Ahron's method, the inclusion of Moshe and his methods would actually devalue it somewhat.

Various times where Ahron and Moshe are involved, the Torah alternates who is mentioned first – illustrating their

equality. Granted that Moshe was the greatest man to walk this earth – but their approaches in resolving problems people had with each other and with God was equally important.

## GOOD LIGHTING

There were four utensils that were kept inside the Mishkan – the Shulchan, the Aron, the Mizbeach, and the Menora – the Table, the Ark, the Altar, and the Menora.

Regarding the Aron:

וְצַפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ תִּצְפְּנֶנּוּ וְעָשִׂיתָ עָלָיו זָרְזָהָב סָבִיב – And you shall overlay it with pure gold; from inside and from outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make upon it a golden crown all around. (25: 11)

Regarding the Shulchan:

וְצַפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ זָרְזָהָב סָבִיב – And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and you shall make for it a golden crown all around. (25: 24)

Regarding the Mizbeach:

וְצַפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר אֶת גָּגוֹ וְאֶת קִירָתָיו סָבִיב וְאֶת קַרְנֹתָיו וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ זָרְזָהָב סָבִיב – You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top, its walls all around, and its horns; and you shall make for it a golden crown all around. (30: 3)

The Aron, Shulchan, and Mizbeach all had “crowns”, a gold design that bordered their edges, whereas the Menora is the odd one out, it had no crown. What is the cause of this discrepancy?

The Mishna in Avos 4: 17 says רבי שמעון אומר, שלושה כתרים הן – כתר תורה, כתר כהונה, וכתר מלכות; וכתר שם טוב, – R’ Shimon said, “There are three crowns – the crown of Torah, the crown of Kehuna (priesthood), and the crown of royalty – but the crown of a good name is better than all.”

The Aron represents the crown of Torah, as that was where the actual physical Torah was kept. The Mizbeach represents the crown of Kehuna, as the Avoda was the Kohanim’s job. The Shulchan represents the crown of royalty, as a table represents prestige and prosperity. But what is the crown of a good name, the כתר שם טוב, and why is it better than the other three?

And if it were an actual crown (to the degree the others are), why didn’t R’ Shimon say “There are four crowns” instead of three?

Koheles 7: 1 teaches that מִשְׁמֵן טוֹב, טוֹב שֵׁם – A good name is more precious than good oil. The Shem Mi’Shmuel notes that the comparison indicates their similar operations; the nature of oil is to diffuse and spread out, which is exactly what a good name does.

The Menora’s function was lights fuelled by oil – by its very nature it must diffuse. The Menora could not have a crown, as a crown’s power and sphere of influence are confined to within the crown’s empire, and if it were to have a crown, it would limit the function the Menora served – to show the “light” of Torah and Judaism.

This is what R’ Shimon actually said too – the כתר שם טוב is not an actual crown – it diffuses, and spreads further

than the three crowns. Like the Menora, a crown would inhibit it.

## CHAMETZ AND MATZA

In the Hagada, one of the four questions asked is that הלילה הזה כולו מצה, שכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, – Why on other nights do we eat chametz and matza, whereas tonight we only eat matza?

The Abarbanel explains that this question has an additional subtle nuance to it. The Korban Pesach is essentially a Korban Toda, a thanksgiving offering, for having been saved. With an ordinary thanksgiving offering, the sacrifice is brought with chametz loaves and matza crackers as part of the offering. The question therefore becomes; why is the thanksgiving offering on Pesach only supplemented with matza?

The Chasam Sofer explains that chametz is a metaphor for negativity. It is symbolic of the inflation of the ego, among other things. Matza is synonymous with the positive and pure – it is representative of things the way they ought to be, in their simple, distilled, natural state.

When we offer a regular thanksgiving sacrifice, we are thanking Hashem for the good He has done, but equally, the bad from which we learn to appreciate the good.

But on Pesach there is no such thing as bad; even being enslaved served a “good” purpose – it certainly wasn’t a punishment for anything the slaves had done! If the Jews could achieve perfection without going through Egypt, they wouldn’t have had to – therefore it served a constructive purpose. The purpose was so that when they were offered the Torah the Jews would be able to understand and accept the concept of service – they had been pushed to the limit and beyond in Egypt; they could do the same for Hashem. We answer how Pesach is a night where כולו מצה – there is no such thing as bad, there is only good.

The Chafetz Chaim wonders why Moshe was unable to build the Menorah, a problem he had not had when building everything else, and had to ask many times for the instructions to be repeated. The answer parallels the above. The Menorah is compared to the Torah – hence the phrase “the light” of Torah – and it’s eternity. Moshe’s problem was that he did not understand how he could make something that was meant to reflect the infinite and eternal. Homiletically, how could the Jews keep the Torah forever? Wouldn’t there be evil? Exiles, wars, Holocausts, Inquisitions, expulsions and pogroms?

Hashem’s answer to Moshe illustrates this concept perfectly. “Put it in the fire, and see what comes out”. In reality, there is no negativity, and challenges are not bad. It is only a trial from which there is potential to grow. Adversity builds character.

## INHERENT SIMILARITIES

Part of the laws intrinsic to the service include the uniforms, and regulations around them. The Kohen Gadol had extra clothing, with their own laws:

וַיִּרְכְּסוּ אֶת הַחֹשֶׁן מִטְּבַעְתָּיו אֶל טְבַעַת הָאֶפֶד בְּפִתִּיל תְּכֵלֶת לְהִיּוֹת עַל חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד וְלֹא יִזַּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֶפֶד – They shall fasten the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the apron with a blue cord, so that it will be on the band of the apron; and the breastplate will not move off the apron. (28: 28)

Although separate, the breastplate and rear-facing apron were fastened together at all times. Simply because the

breastplate did not have a neck chain, and the apron had no shoulder straps – they would balance and offset each other. But the Torah is not giving logistical or fashion advice – if this is how they are worn, it need not be specified at all. Why emphasise that they are inseparable then?

The Gemara in Erchin explains how each of the garments the Kohen Gadol wore would atone for a different national deficiency. The apron atoned for idolatry, while the breastplate atoned for financial dishonesty, with regard to both business and judicial matters.

R' Moshe Feinstein notes that this could very well be the reason that the breastplate and apron were inseparable – they share a common facet. Someone who worships idols does not believe that God controls all things. Someone who cheats, steals, distorts, or embezzles in their finances is guilty of the same crime!

Dishonesty, and all forms of financial impropriety demonstrate that the guilty party believes that both no-one is watching, and that they can get more than what ought to be coming their way. This is entirely heretical, antithetical to Judaism, and quite similar to idolatry.

R' Moshe Feinstein explains that the root of both is the same – a belief that Hashem lacks control over the world. Therefore, since they are inherently similar, the Torah specifies that these two parts of clothing are inseparable – they are almost the same.

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