

Candle Lighting

5:49

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:48

Sunset

6:09

Motzei

Shabbat

6:44



Parshat HaShavuah

תצוה

TETZAVEH

ח' אדר-א תשע"ד

FEBRUARY 8,

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חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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Sponsored in memory of Lana (Leah) D. Goldberg

YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

Human nature prescribes that we look for the purpose and reason for the things that we do. It is a lot easier to take care of our obligations when we understand why it is we have to do them. If my parents ask me to perform a certain chore or task, I will be much more likely to do it if I understand the reason behind it.

In this week's parsha, when discussing the *bigdei kehuna*, the clothing that the kohen had to wear in order to perform the *avodah* in the Mishkan (and subsequently in the Beit Hamikdash), we are given two seemingly very different reasons for the purpose of these clothes.

Hashem initially tells Moshe that the purpose of the clothes is: "*l'chavod u'litifaret*"—"for glory and for splendor" (Shmot 28:2). However, in the very next pasuk (28:3), when Moshe is told how to instruct the *chachmei lev*, the designers of the special garments, the Torah says that the purpose of the clothing is "*le'kadsho, le'chahano li*"—"to sanctify and serve Hashem."

Well, which one is it? What is the reason for these special clothes? Furthermore, why does the Torah emphasize the appearance of the clothing when speaking to Moshe, but stresses their functionality when giving instructions to the designers?

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JUST ONE OF THE GUYS DAVID CUTLER ('14)

Reading this week's parsha, we find that Moshe's name is not included in it even once. This is because Hashem has fulfilled Moshe's request after Bnei Yisrael sin with the golden calf. G-d threatens to wipe out all the Jews except Moshe and start the nation over with just him. Yet Moshe, being the great leader that he is, intervenes and says to Hashem, "If You will forgive their sin, well and good. But if not, erase me from Your book that You wrote" (Shmot 32:32). G-d agrees to forgive the Jewish people and to protect the existent nation, but for some reason, G-d still follows through on Moshe's ultimatum and erases Moshe's name from this one parsha.

Moshe is still very much the subject of this week's parsha. The whole parsha revolves around G-d's communication with Moshe regarding the role of the kohanim. The only thing missing is his name. Instead, he is called by a pronoun: "v'ata"—"and you".

Names represent individuality, what is unique and distinct about a person. Pronouns, on the other hand, are indistinct and universal. Calling Moshe by name is a way of proclaiming that he is special, a leader, different than everyone else. Calling him "you" lowers him to being just like everybody else. And that is why Moshe's name is missing. This week's parsha is about the kohanim, not about Moshe. This is not the time for Moshe to stand out, to be special. In this parsha, Moshe is momentarily stepping back, fading into the crowd, to make room for the kohanim to show what makes them special. The true greatness of Moshe is his ability to step back and make room for others to shine.

SIDING WITH JUSTICE YAAKOV SIEV ('15)

The Torah states in reference to the *urim v'tumim*, one of the vestments worn by the Kohen Gadol, that: "Aharon shall carry the judgment of the Children of Israel on his heart" (Shmot 28:30).

What is the meaning and implication of the phrase "on his heart"?

Rabbi Ahron Levine, author of *Hadrash Vehaiyun*, elucidates: When a judge has to render a decision in a quarrel between two people, he cannot rely on the feelings of his heart. Following one's feelings can lead to a distortion of justice.

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Siev continued

For example, when a wealthy person and a poor person are involved in a financial quarrel, one's feelings might be in favor of the poor person out of pity. However, it is possible that the wealthy person is right and justice should be on his side. Therefore, the Torah states, "on his heart" to teach us to be "above his heart." One cannot decide based on feelings, but rather the law and justice must be the key deciding factors.

While compassion and mercy are important, they are not always appropriate. One cannot pervert justice by "following" his heart. If you want to help a person, you are free to do so at your own expense, but not at the expense of someone else and not at the expense of justice.

WHERE DID MOSHE GO? JACOB WELLS ('15)

This week's parsha is very interesting because Moshe's name is mentioned in every parsha that takes place during his lifetime except for this one. The reason this happens is because when the Jewish people sin with the *egel hazahav*, Moshe threatens G-d. He states that if G-d follows through with His plan to wipe out the entire Jewish nation except for Moshe, then Moshe wants his own name erased from the Torah.

Even though G-d backs down and decides to spare Bnei Yisrael, Moshe's wish for deletion does indeed come true in this week's parsha. But why specifically Parshat Tetzaveh? It happens here because Moshe is born on the 7th day of Adar and dies on the 7th day of Adar. Parshat Tetzaveh is almost always read on the week of Moshe's birth/death. Usually important people are commemorated on their birthdays, but Moshe is purposefully not mentioned on his. Even though we think of Moshe as the most important leader in our history, leaving his name out proves to us that great leaders still sin and make petty mistakes.

We can further ask, why does Moshe threaten to have his name taken out of the Torah in the first place? Having one's name deleted is similar to removing that person's essence entirely. As such, Moshe asks G-d to remove himself, his essence, so that the Jews would not have to be held to such a high standard in comparison to Moshe.

From Moshe, we learn the valuable lesson of humility. Every action that Moshe takes, he takes with extreme care and concern for others. By not having his name in the parsha that we read at the time of his death, it proves to us how humble he truly is.



THE URIM V'TUMIM SAUL LEN ('16)

This week's parsha, Parshat Tetzaveh, continues to talk about the Mishkan itself, the vessels inside the Mishkan, and the unique clothing of the Kohen Gadol.

In addition to the multitude of layers the Kohen Gadol must wear, he must also wear the *urim v'tumim*, which holds G-d's name on it. Every garment that the Kohen Gadol and even the regular kohanim have to wear possesses meaning and contains a powerful lesson to learn.

The Ramban explains why the breastplate is called the *urim v'tumim*. *Urim* means "lights". This is significant because whenever the Kohen Gadol is perplexed by an issue and needs to know the answer, the twelve stones of the *urim v'tumim* light up and convey G-d's message. This demonstrates that G-d is always going to be there helping us whenever we are perplexed and need His help.

Rabbi Hochman continued

Rav Elya Meir Bloch explains that the clothes served two roles. On the one hand, they were to bring holiness into the world. To achieve this purpose the clothes needed to be made exactly according to Hashem's specifications: "*le'kadsho, le'chahano li.*"

On the other hand, Hashem understood that the clothes had to be beautiful and dignified. While the style wouldn't make a difference for Hashem, it would make a difference to the kohanim who had to work in those clothes. Human nature, explains Rav Bloch, is that we take more seriously those things which are associated with special and beautiful clothing. To ensure that the kohanim would constantly recognize the significance of their work, it was necessary for them to wear elegant and dignified clothing.

What is true of Kohen's clothes is similarly true regarding the clothing that each of us wear. The way we dress—both men and women—projects an image to others and, at the same time, impacts our own self-image.

The more modestly and dignified we dress, the more respect from others we will earn and the more self-respect we will have. And the opposite is, unfortunately, true as well. We should take note from the *bigdei kehuna* and always remember when we start our day that our clothes should reflect our sense of dignity, "*l'chavod u'litifaret,*" and that will help us live noble lives, "*le'kadsho, le'chahano li.*"

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