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The Value of a Leader

Parshas Tetzaveh begins when Hashem tells Moshe, "Veatah tetzaveh es bnei yisroel vayikchu aleicha shemen zayis zach katit lemaor lehaalos ner tamid." "And you shall command the Children of Israel, and they shall bring to you olive oil, crushed for the luminary, to raise a constant flame." This embellishment is odd as Hashem usually simply tells Moshe to "Command the Children of Israel." This anomalous introduction is further peculiar because the words "you shall command" implies that Moshe is the source of the command, while it is known that Moshe is simply Hashem's messenger. In a further analysis of the Pasuk, why would Bnei Yisroel need to bring the oil to Moshe when it was Aharon who lit the menorah? Finally, why is the flame of the "luminary" referred to as a constant flame when it was relit each day?

In his seminal discourse entitled "Vekibel Hayehudim," RaYaTZ explains that on a homiletic level, the word "Tetzaveh" implies an act of binding and unity. Thus the Pasuk in question can be expounded to mean that Moshe was actively binding the Jewish people to Hashem in sacred unity. On a mystical level, when Moshe enhanced Bnei Yisrael he enhanced his own spiritual essence. To put this in terms of an extended metaphor, Moshe and Bnei Yisroel are compared to a body, with Moshe being the head and Bnei Yisroel being the feet. Just as an individual's feet bring their head to a place the head itself couldn't reach, Bnei Yisrael elevated Moshe to lofty supernatural state.

**Aryeh
Shemelzman**
Sophomore

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Menora Torah

When Bnei Yisrael were commanded to light the menorah, it signified their relationship with the Torah. Rabbi Moshe Laib from Sasov explained the pasuk as follows:

Viyikchu eilecha shemen zayis - [Lit: You shall take for yourself pure olive oil] A man who wants to learn Torah...

Kasis [Lit: crushed]- first has to destroy his Yetzer Hara and then...

Lamaor- [Lit: for the luminary] and only then can he learn the Torah- the great light!

We must make sure to keep the Menora's light lit just as we must always keep the light of Torah lit. Just as the light of the Menorah would never be put out, the Torah will always exist.

The Vilna Gaon once saw his sister for the first time in fifty years. The Gaon went out and said the Bracha of mechayeh meisim, as is customary when seeing somebody for the first time after a very long period of time. He said to her, "I am very sorry, but when I go to Olam Habah, I will be asked why I did not use every available moment to learn Torah.

**Binyamin
Wallin**
Freshman

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The Value of a Leader *continued*

This metaphor helps us understand why Bnei Yisrael had to bring the oil to Moshe and not to Aharon. Moshe helped facilitate Bnei Yisrael's connection with Hashem. Thus, they would bring the oil to him causing an increase in Moshe's potential spiritual advocacy for Bnei Yisroel.

To explain Moshe's connection to Bnei Yisrael the RaYaTZ describes Moshe as "Raaya Mehemna," a faithful shepherd. In Sefer Torah Or's discussion of Parshas Ki Sisa the term faithful shepherd is said to have a dual meaning. One is that Moshe was a temporal shepherd of the Bnei Yisrael. The other is that Moshe was a "shepherd of faith" in that he fed and sustained Bnei Yisrael in their faith through relaying the word of Hashem and Torah.

Every Jew possesses natural faith in Hashem and Torah as a function of their G-dly spirit. However, this faith can remain detached from their conscious being. Consider the following scenario described in Gemara Brachos: Before committing a heinous act of larceny, a thief prayed to Hashem in the hope that he would have divine assistance in his theft. Such faith is detached from the world of action. This detached faith is present inside all of us, albeit more subtly. An example of this is a businessman who prays to Hashem for a successful business deal but doesn't make sure his business is run in the way the Torah describes. Moshe's contribution was helping Bnei Yisrael actualize their faith in Hashem by teaching them how to be faithful in action. The faith that Moshe helped us achieve is internal, a faith that affects one's very consciousness and by extension their actions.

Why would the Pasuk say "for the luminary" instead of "to illuminate"? During exile, everyone is broken and crushed, and therefore we are brought to the luminary from which light is derived. Moshe was our luminary on the painful path out of exile into Geulah, casting off physical and spiritual slavery, while he led us on the path of perfection.

Finally, we can see why the Pasuk describes the Menora's flame as constant. When Moshe helped bind Bnei Yisroel with Hashem by teaching them His statutes and His ways, he was also strengthening their unity as a nation. Every nation has its leader. What has made Bnei Yisroel a constant flame is the fact that we have offshoots of Moshe in every generation, uniting us all, not only in the present but to all our ancestors and Hashem by means of the Torah and its precepts. May it be Hashem's will that the ultimate reflection of Moshe soon be revealed to us as he leads us in the true way of Hashem.

Menora Torah

continued

I can't stay around and chat; I must go back to my room and learn." Even after seeing his sister for the first time in fifty years the Gaon would not let anything put out the light of Torah. While some may have criticized this approach, the Gaon's response was a tremendous source of inspiration to Lithuanian Jews whose august philosophy dictates that the study of Torah takes precedence over all else.

During times of war it was very difficult to keep the light of Torah lit in Europe. During World War I, the Russian army did not allow anybody to light a fire in order to keep complete darkness, so that the enemy would not see them. One time, while they were by the Shtetl of Tavrig, they saw one light in a house. When the Russian army saw this they thought he was a spy and barged in only to find a Rabbi engrossed in Torah study. They told him, "You are a spy, and will be killed." He said: "You may want to kill me, but I am currently having difficulty understanding a certain part of the Rambam's teachings. May I just finish and understand this? After that, you may do with me what you want." They granted him this wish and he continued reading his Sefer not even noticing the soldiers surrounding him. Suddenly, explosions were heard from outside. The Germans were attacking. The general screamed out, "Leave the man and go fight the Germans" thus keeping the light of Torah lit saved the Rabbi.

In the Modern Era, though we are no longer able to light the physical Menora, we may still light the spiritual Menora through the study of the eternal Torah.

Where Did the Sleeves Go? An Analysis of the Me'il

Yechiel Schwab
Senior

Parshas Tetzaveh devotes a great deal of time to describing the Bigdei Kehuna. The Kohen Gadol wore eight garments including a shirt worn directly on his body, the Kesones Tashbetz, and a robe-like garment worn on top of this shirt, the Me'il. Rashi explains that the Me'il did not have sleeves and the Rambam concurs with this view (Hilchos Klei Hamikdash ViHaovadim Bo, 9:3). The Rayvad, however, believes the aforementioned view is without merit as he could not find a valid source for it. Kesef Mishna explains that the Ramban also agreed with Rambam and Rashi. However, the Kesef Mishna is unsure of the source of this position. Surely, if Rashi, the Ramban, and the Rambam all offer the same explanation for the form of a garment and it is an explanation that is not clearly implied by the Pasuk, they must have had some source.

I would like to offer two possible sources for the possibility that the Me'il was a sleeveless garment.

The Ohr Sameach explains that the Rambam and the Rishonim who agree with him all derived the fact that the Me'il was sleeveless from a specification in the Pasuk. The Pasuk states that the Me'il should be "Ma'aseh oreg," "the work of a weaver." He explains that the Me'il was made completely through a weaving process with no sewing involved. When weaving a garment it is impossible to weave sleeves onto a single, contiguous cloth. Sleeves must be attached to a shirt through sewing. Thus, since the Pasuk specifies that the Me'il was made through weaving to the exclusion of sewing, it would therefore have been impossible to attach sleeves since they could not have been woven on. This is one possible source as to how these Rishonim knew that the Me'il did not have sleeves.

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The Heart of Aharon

Aaron Kattan
Senior

Parashas Tetzaveh describes the "Bigdeh kehuna," the special garments worn by the Kohanim as they served in the Beis Hamikdash. One of the special garments was the Choshen, the breastplate, that the Kohen Gadol (high priest) wore on his chest. The Choshen was no ordinary piece of clothing. It contained the "Urim Vetumim," a script containing the seventy-two-letter Name of G-d. When a matter of pressing national importance arose, such as whether to wage war and the like, the Kohen Gadol would pose the question to the Urim Vetumim and certain letters of the script would shine. The Kohen Gadol would then rearrange the letters to determine G-d's response. The Choshen was thus a very sacred article through which Aharon actually wore the divine Name on his chest.

The Sages teach that Aharon had undoubtedly earned some special merit for which he was rewarded with this great privilege to wear the Choshen upon his heart. Earlier in the Book of Shemos we read that when Moshe returned to Egypt from Midyan to lead Bnei Yisrael to freedom Aharon greeted Moshe with sincere joy. As G-d told Moshe before his return to Egypt, "He [Aharon] will see you and will rejoice in his heart" (Shemos 4:14). Moshe had expected Aharon to feel slighted over Moshe's designation as the leader of Bnei Yisrael. Throughout the years of Moshe's stay in Midyan, Aharon served as the people's spiritual leader, working tirelessly to infuse them with encouragement and hope amid the misery of slavery. Now, his younger brother, who had been away from it all, suddenly arrives and assumes the mantle of leadership. Ordinary people would have felt at least some degree of jealousy or resentment. But not Aharon. He celebrated his brother's good fortune rather than envying or resenting it. He felt in his heart nothing but joy upon learning of his brother's appointment as leader.

Very often, it is easier to feel empathy for somebody's misfortune than to celebrate his good fortune. When we see somebody suffering we naturally feel sympathetic. But upon hearing of his success and good fortune we cannot help but feel a degree of envy. Aharon, however, overcame this tendency and felt such genuine love for other people that he felt in his heart nothing but joy for Moshe's success.

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Where Did the Sleeves Go? An Analysis of the Me'il *continued*

The second answer is based on a Gemara in Erachin. The Gemara quotes a Mishna which says that Kohanim, Leviyim and Yisraelim must wear Tefillin. Is this not obvious, the Gemara asks? Rather, this Mishna is coming to teach us that Kohanim must wear Tefillin because we would have thought that since Kohanim are not required to wear Tefillin Shel Yad during Avodas HaMikdash, they would be exempt from Tefillin Shel Rosh during Avodas HaMikdash as well. This Mishna comes to teach us that nevertheless, they are required to wear Tefillin Shel Rosh. Why is the Kohen not required to wear Tefillin Shel Yad? The Gemara explains that regarding the Kesones, the garment of the Kohen, the Pasuk says “yilbash al bisaro” that it must be worn on his flesh, with no separation between the flesh and the garment; hence, we see that he cannot wear Tefillin. Rashi explains this derivation saying that Tefillin must be worn under a garment since the Pasuk says “vhayah licha li'os” it will be for you a sign, implying that it will be sign for you and not for others. Rashi implies that the reason a Kohen cannot wear Tefillin while wearing Bigdei Kehuna is because there will be no covering on top of his Tefillin since it cannot go under the Kesones. However, we know that the Kohen has a second shirt, the Me'il, which he wears on top of the Kesones! Wouldn't this cover the Tefillin? This Gemara is clearly a second source that the Me'il did not have sleeves and that is why the Me'il would be unable to cover the Tefillin worn on the Kohen's arm.

We can learn an important lesson not just about Tefillin but about our general Judaic practice as a whole, from the exegesis Rashi gives for the pasuk of “Vhayah licha lios.” All too often we do Mitzvos as a sign for others to show them that we are good Jews. As Rashi explains though, religion and Mitzvos are not a show that we perform to impress others or integrate into our community, but are things that should be done to improve ourselves, and our relationship with Hashem. We must strive to do all of the Mitzvos, not to impress others, but for the pure sake of Hashem and the Torah.

Adapted from a Shiur given by Rabbi Shlomo Kovitz Shlita: Bekius Rebbe and Calculus BC Professor

The Heart of Aharon *continued*

Such a heart was worthy of having G-d's name upon it. A heart that could love other people to such an extent is the heart with which the Almighty chooses to associate His Name.

Today, all observant Jews fill the role of the “Kohanim,” of representing Torah to the rest of the nation. We, like the Kohen Gadol, carry G-d's Name upon our hearts, so-to-speak, serving as His representatives. To be worthy of this distinction, we must follow Aharon's inspiring example of Ahavas Haberiyos – love for all people. And, as in the case of Aharon, it must begin in the home within the family unit. It is easy to speak in politically correct terms of the love and respect we must feel for other groups and other nations. It is undoubtedly true, that we must love and respect people who are different from us, but this is not where the difficult challenge lies. While it does not take much to like people from afar (people with whom we have little contact), it is far more difficult to feel love for those with whom we come in contact every day, especially close family members. Aharon was deemed worthy of his position because of the love he showed to his brother, an immediate family member, and this is the example that we, as his loyal students, are to follow at all times.

Dedicated B'Birchas Mazal Tov to Rambam Alumnus

Jonathan Ziring on his engagement to Ora Shore

If you would like to dedicate an edition of Hamasmid, please email hamasmideditor@gmail.com or call the Mesivta at 516-371-5824, Ext. 116