

The Narrow Bridge

גשר צר מאוד

PARSHA PERSPECTIVES

Short Divrei Torah on Parshas Tetzaveh

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רפואה שלמה פעסל בת גאלדא / לזכות חילינו

TENDING TO THE NEEDY

Shelah HaKadosh

"And you will command the Children of Israel..." (27:20)

Tetzaveh is the acronym of tza'akas hadal takshiv v'toshe'ah, "The painful cry of the poor will be heard and they will be helped" (Prayer Book, Sefard text, Nishmat). Hashem said to Moshe, "Command the Children of Israel to listen to the cry of the needy and poor." For we are told, "All who have mercy on humanity, Heaven will have mercy on them."

THERE WILL BE LIGHT

Sassover Rebbe

"And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

Zach (clear) stands for Zore'ach kosis, "It will give light to the crushed." The Jews may be crushed while in the Diaspora, but eventually the burden will be lightened.

EVERLASTING LIGHT

Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman

"And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

The first and second Batei Mikdash illuminated the world with their light for a specific and limited period of time. The third Temple, however, which will be rebuilt when Mashiach comes, will be in fulfillment of the pasuk, להעלות נר תמיד - "A light to burn continually." Its light will never be extinguished!

OVERCOMING DESIRES

Sassover Rebbe

"And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

It is only after a person crushes his bad habits and desires that he will be able to shine.

LIGHT THROUGH THE DARKNESS

Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman

"And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

If the light of the Torah ("for a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light") is to burn continually, you must kindle it in such a manner that it will remain aglow forever, an eternal flame to brighten even the dark night of spiritual decline and the humiliation of exile.

IGNITING FLAMES

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

The priests were the ones who lit the Menorah. Allegorically, this means that it was their job to "light the fire" of Divine inspiration in the souls of the people. They were able to do this by virtue of Aharon's pure love for all Jews.

But what about people who seem disinterested in or incapable of being inspired? How can the priests "kindle" the flame of such people?

G-d therefore told the Jews to bring the oil for the Menorah's lamps to Moshe. When Moshe declared that he was willing to lay down his life even for those Jews who worshipped the Golden Calf, he demonstrated that all Jews possess an indestructible, intrinsic worth - specifically, the Divine essence of their souls. Therefore, Moshe could enable Aharon to set aflame the souls of even those Jews who seem not to be fit to be "lamps."

We are all called upon to set our own souls and the souls of others aflame with love and awe of G-d. In order to succeed, we must approach the task with the same motivation as Aharon - pure love of our fellow - and with the perspective of Moshe, in whose eyes all Jews are indeed capable of being ignited, of shining brightly, and of becoming a source of Divine illumination for the entire world. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 21, pp. 177-178) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

REMOVING OBSTRUCTIONS

Reb Noson of Breslov

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

Immediately following the dedication of the Tabernacle, the Torah records the commandment to light the lamps. What is the connection between the two?

Sin obscures the light of G-d and faith. The Jewish people built the Tabernacle to rectify the idolatrous sin of the golden calf, which obscured G-d's light. Once this was accomplished, they aroused Divine Will instead of anger by lighting the lamps, expressing the desire that the light of G-d should never be extinguished within them. (Likutey Halakhot I, p. 260)

GROWING THROUGH OBSTACLES

Sassover Rebbe

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

As long as a person does not lose himself and become confused when he is crushed, he can reach an even higher level.

PAINED BY PAIN

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

“And you will command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)

The Arizal points out that G-d sent Moshe to Pharaoh saying, “Go, and I will send you to Pharaoh...” (Shemos 3:10). The Arizal explains that G-d, Who is good and Who bestows good, does not link His Name with something harmful, as the verse says, “From the mouth of the Most High no evil shall emerge” (Eichah 3:38; see Bereishis Rabbah 3:6). Even bringing calamities to the nations of the world is difficult for G-d. For this reason, when He wanted to punish Pharaoh, G-d used the term “go” when instructing Moshe to go to Pharaoh. This implied that Moshe was going on his own, since it would be dishonorable for G-d to have His Name linked with Pharaoh.

From this we see that if something is negative or constitutes any form of punishment, even when administered to the nations of the world, it is not easy for G-d. How much more so is this true if the punishment is directed at the Jewish people.

For this reason, our Sages say that in the future, all the Jewish people will be worthy of performing the Divine service of the Kohen Gadol. But when the Mishkan was being constructed, G-d wanted the service to be performed only by the Kohanim. Consequently, G-d did not want to link this command with His Name, since it excluded the participation of the Children of Israel who were not Kohanim. That is why G-d told Moshe, “And you will command the Children of Israel.”

HUMILITY THAT SHINES

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

The opening pasuk of Parshas Tetzaveh commands Benei Yisrael to provide למאור - pure olive oil produced from crushed olives, to be used למאור, for the kindling of the menorah in the Mishkan.

The Rachmastrivka Rebbe, in Amaros Tehoros, cites a number of earlier sefarim that note the significance of the phrase כתיב למאור - literally, “crushed, for illumination.” The word כתיב, these books explain, alludes to humility, the “crushing” of the ego.

Many people mistakenly think that in order to “shine,” to have an influence, they need to proudly and aggressively assert themselves. In truth, however, the goal of למאור, of “illuminating” and impacting upon the world, can be best achieved through כתיב, by “crushing” the ego, by exercising humility.

When a person actively pursues fame and notoriety through self-promotion, a dark cloud hovers over his project. It is when he conducts himself in a manner of כתיב, with humility, that he shines the brightest. Humility enables us to be the best version of ourselves and have the greatest impact upon our surroundings and upon the world.

Rashi, commenting on the phrase כתיב למאור, writes: למאור ולא למנחות - extra pure oil is required specifically למאור, for kindling the lights of the menorah, and not for מנחות, the flour offerings which were mixed with oil. A number of writers suggested that underlying this halachic remark, which distinguishes between the oil used for the menorah and the oil used for מנחות, is a deeper lesson about humility.

The quality of כתיב, of crushing the ego, must be used only for the purpose of למאור, to help us shine and illuminate, but not for מנחות - to make us feel lowly and despondent.

It is important to confidently acknowledge our skills, our talents, our strength, and our potential, so that we can utilize them to the best of our ability and achieve to the very fullest. If our humility makes us feel depressed, we will lack the motivation and ambition we need to strive for excellence.

Humility must lead us למאור, to shine, and not למנחות - to lead us to a lack of ambition and a diminished sense of self-worth.

I often say that humility does not mean thinking less of ourselves, but rather thinking of ourselves less. We must not ever deny our talents or skills, or feel worthless. Humility is focusing on maximizing our potential, rather than on maximizing our fame and prestige.

When we do this, then we will truly live למאור, in a manner that brings an abundance of light to the world around us.

THE LIGHT OF UNITY

Reb Noson of Breslov

“And you will command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)

Tetzaveh (תצוה, you will command) shares the same root as tzevet (צות, join). By joining people in unity, you can cause the Menorah to shine G-d's glory to the entire world. (Likutey Halakhot 1, p. 500)

PROPER REBUKE

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

“And you will command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)

The holy Chasam Sofer, Rav Moshe Sofer zt'l, elucidates that these words which begin Parshas Tetzaveh deliver a message to a person who needs to rebuke his friend. When one feels it necessary to criticize or point out a flaw in another, he must think long and hard about what to say and how to say it, so that his words will be properly accepted. The Chasam Sofer points out that the next three pesukim in the Torah that begin with the word v'atah - “and you,” specifically teach us three important factors in giving successful mussar.

The first of the three is also in Parshas Tetzaveh: V'atah hakreiv eilecha es Aharon achicha - “And you shall bring Aharon, your brother, close to you” (28:1). This teaches that one must rebuke another person with love. One should speak to every Jew as though he is talking to his own brother, his flesh and blood, to ensure that the person feels that his friend is only criticizing him because he truly loves and cares about him.

The second pasuk is also in this parshah: V'atah tidaber el kol chachmei lev - “And you shall speak to all those who are wise in their hearts” (28:3). One must build up the other person and tell him how smart and intelligent he is. The person delivering the rebuke must point out that he feels it is not appropriate for someone as special as his friend to act in that manner.

The third pasuk is in Parshas Ki Sisa: V'atah kach lecha besamim rosh - “And you shall take for yourself spices” (30:23). This suggests that one should choose his words tastefully. He should think of a beautiful mashal or a nice story that will help the person understand and take the words to heart. Make it pleasant for the listener, so that he will not become defensive or even offensive!

These three pesukim allude to the correct manner in which one is “tetzaveh es Bnei Yisrael.” This is how one should issue commands, rebuke, and provide leadership for his fellow Jewish brothers.

The lesson of the Chasam Sofer is clear: If we rebuke others with harsh words or out of anger, most likely our criticism will fall on deaf ears, or worse, cause a rift in the relationship. Let us recognize that we have a responsibility to our fellow Jews: Kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh (Rashi, Vayikra 26:37), and for our words to take effect, we must give mussar with love. (Dargah Yeseirah)

STARTING THE FIRE

Letchener Rebbe

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

Rashi commented: “He would kindle until the flame would rise on its own.”

In every Jew there is a Divine spark that can never be extinguished. One need only light this spark and it will become a flame on its own. One need only become the one who lights the fire; the rest will follow.

BACKS AGAINST THE ROPES

Reb Noson of Breslov

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

Why are the Jews compared to olives? The olive sits upon its branch. It is plucked, squeezed, ground, and crushed, and only then does it give its oil. So too, when the Jews endure suffering, they show their mettle. (Shemos Rabbah 36:1)

Only after much self-sacrifice can a person merit to see his purity illumine his soul. (Likutey Halakhot II, p. 63a)

PUSHING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Rabbi Moshe Schochet

“And they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

The Torah commands Bnei Yisrael to press olives in order to produce pure olive oil, which would be used to light the Menorah.

Rav Moshe of Kobrin (Toras Avos) suggests another homiletic interpretation of the words kasis la'maor, l'aalos ner tamid - “pressed (olive oil) for illumination to light the lamp continually.”

He explains that in order to be constantly spiritually lit, we need to humble ourselves and frequently “press ourselves” into doing regular evaluations and assessments of our behavior.

We cannot rest on our laurels of past positive and productive behavior. Instead, we have to be prepared to look ourselves in the mirror and be willing to break and rebuild ourselves so that we can become better people. This will result in Hashem's Divine shining Presence residing amongst us.

Rav Moshe of Kobrin is teaching us a vital lesson as ovdei Hashem. If we want to grow and develop as people and Jews, we need to be willing to dig deep and identify our areas of weakness so that we can become better.

We must push ourselves to ensure that we are always on the improve so that we will be successful in living pure and holy lives filled with Hashem's Light.

FREE FROM DISTRACTIONS

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"And you will command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for lighting, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

The message from this verse, writes the Ibn Ezra, is that just like the olive oil needed to be totally pure with no mixtures of foreign substances in order to be a part of the service of the Mishkan, so too, the Kohanim were required to be totally pure with no mixtures of outside influences.

Too often, even when we start out with the right intentions, we become distracted along the way. The goals that we set ourselves at the beginning, and the integrity that we demanded of ourselves, often fall away over time. Human nature dictates that we become complacent unless there is some intervention (Mesillas Yesharim chap. 6, Zerizus).

Therefore, the Mesillas Yesharim notes that the only way to remain committed to our goals and to make sure that outside elements do not distract us is to constantly reflect whether our actions are in line with what Hashem expects of us. (It is especially important to adopt a fixed time of solitude - end of chap. 3, Zehirus.)

By way of example, if a traveler is constantly checking his map, then even if he strays off course, he will easily and quickly be able to correct himself. However, someone who barely checks his map can head in the wrong direction for a long time before realizing he has a problem. And when he finally realizes his error, it is much more complicated and time-consuming to correct.

Someone who never seemed to be distracted from his goals was Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel. He demonstrated this in an extraordinary way when offered a blank check by a non-religious multi-millionaire who was impressed with the Rosh Yeshivah's vision and wanted to contribute toward the continuation and extension of Yeshivas Mir.

"Rabbi, write any amount you want," the man said enthusiastically. Rav Nosson Tzvi picked up the pen and wrote out the check for just \$1,400 and gave it back to the man. Startled at the small amount, the donor stood there in shock.

"You said that I can fill this check out for whatever I want," said Rav Nosson Tzvi with a smile, "so I want you to take this check across the street to the sofer, buy yourself a pair of tefillin, and promise to put them on every day!"

Other people would not have been faulted for writing themselves out a large amount, happy to receive this once in a lifetime offer, but despite the opportunity to secure crucial funding for the yeshivah, Rav Nosson Tzvi did not forget that there was a Jew standing in front of him whose life he could change forever, and that was worth more to him than any amount this man could have afforded.

THE MAN FOR THE JOB

Dubno Maggid

"And bring Aharon your brother near to you..." (28:1)

Why is it written (Tehillim 119:92): "If Your teaching had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction"? Because when the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: "And bring Aharon your brother near to you," Moshe was displeased, but G-d said to him: "The Torah was Mine and I gave it to you. Had it not been for the Torah I would have destroyed My world." (Midrash)

G-d appointed Aharon, and not Moshe, to the office of Kohen Gadol because the work of bringing the people, including sinners, closer to G-d required a leader who would be closer to the people than Moshe. Due to the high moral level he had attained, Moshe was too distant from the people, and just as it is useless to engage a brilliant Talmudic scholar to teach a small child who has yet to learn the Hebrew alpha-bet, so too, Moshe would not have made a good Kohen Gadol for the Jews.

When G-d told Moshe the reason why he could not become Kohen Gadol, He gave him to understand that he was disqualified solely because of the high spiritual level he had attained. G-d said to Moshe: "When I gave My Torah to the Jewish people, I didn't instruct them in it Myself because at that time they were too remote from G-dly things to be able to receive the instruction from Me directly. For this reason I chose you, a mortal, to accept the Torah and teach it to the people. Likewise, when I want a Kohen Gadol to atone for the people's sins and bring them closer to Me, you cannot perform this task because you are too far above them. Hence, I have given the office to your brother Aharon, who is involved with the people and thus more suited for the task."

THE PRIEST WITHIN

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"And bring Aharon your brother near to you, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel, so that he shall be a Kohen to Me." (28:1)

It would seem that we should all want to be priests, consecrated to G-d and totally steeped in Divine consciousness. This is indeed a worthy ideal, but if it were put into practice, it would undermine the purpose of Creation. G-d created us not to be angels but human beings who live in the mundane world. Only this way can we elevate the world, refine it, and fill it with Divine consciousness.

On the other hand, in order to elevate the world, we need to preserve an image of the totally Divine way of living that we are striving to elevate it to. Hence, a select minority of the people had to live out this ideal in practice; they were the priests.

Similarly, we must all consecrate a portion of our personality to the sole purpose of serving G-d. By creating ("installing") this "inner priest," we can then relate to the world at large as we are meant to, guiding and leading it to its Divine fulfillment. This is how we fulfill G-d's promise to us when He gave us the Torah (Shemos 19:6): "You will be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Based on Sefer HaSichot 5752, vol. 2, pp. 410) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

DRAWING NEAR

Dinover Rebbe

"You shall draw your brother Aharon to you..." (28:1)

Hashem requested Moshe that he not isolate himself from the people, but bring himself closer to the people, as his brother Aharon, who is a "Pursuer of peace and a lover of Israel."

HONORING THE SCHOLARS

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"And you shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and for splendor." (28:2)

Our verse describes Hashem commanding Moshe to make clothing of "glory and splendor" for Aharon. The Sforno learns that the "glorious" aspect of Aharon's clothes was in order to award honor to Hashem, and the "splendorous" part was so that Aharon - as a teacher of the Jewish People - would be revered by those around him.

From here we can learn two fundamental reasons to honor a Torah scholar. The first is that when we honor a Torah scholar we are in fact honoring Hashem, for a person who devotes his life to learning and fulfilling Hashem's Torah, in essence, represents Hashem and His laws. Rav Hutner famously said that we are valued according to what we value. As such, when we accord honor to those who study Torah, we are demonstrating our value for those ideals, and even if we cannot always live up to them ourselves, at least we are showing Hashem what we would ideally like to be. And if we are sincere, Hashem indeed views us accordingly.

The second reason to honor a Torah scholar is so that he will be revered by those around him. For if we treat him with great respect, it will encourage others to do the same. And if these people subsequently gain from this scholar, it will be in our merit!

The following story was related many times by Rebbetzin Kanievsky about the honor of her husband Rav Chaim. Many years ago, Rav Chaim was writing a book, "Karnei Chagavim," about the kashrus status of different grasshoppers. At one point, however, Rav Chaim became perturbed, because his calculations from Torah sources of what a kosher grasshopper should look like was different from the pictures that he had seen of grasshoppers.

Unable to resolve the contradiction, Rav Chaim decided to set aside his work until he gained more clarity. A short time later, a grasshopper came in through the window and landed right in front of him (this was certainly not a common phenomenon in Bnei Brak). The grasshopper remained motionless as Rav Chaim studied it intensely until he was satisfied that his original calculations were indeed correct, and he decided to finish the book he had set aside a short while earlier. A few days later, Rav Chaim came across a new difficulty on the subject and again felt that he could not proceed. Once again a grasshopper appeared in front of him, allowing Rav Chaim to clarify everything that he needed to, and the book was sent to the printer a few days later.

Sometime after this took place, a Rabbi in Bnei Brak who was aware of the story was telling others of the greatness of Torah scholars and used this story to demonstrate their unique Divine assistance. The story had the desired effect on the crowd until someone publicly announced his disbelief, stating that no one is worthy of such things in our generation - even Rav Chaim!

When this man returned home, he found his home infested with grasshoppers! Unwilling to acknowledge the clear correlation between his public disregard for a talmid chacham's honor and his home's infestation, he called an exterminator to come immediately. Yet the exterminator was unsuccessful in ridding him of the problem. Neither were the two exterminators who came on subsequent days.

Eventually, the man acknowledged that his belittling of Rav Chaim's honor in public caused this phenomenon and realized that his only recourse was to ask Rav Chaim for forgiveness. Of course, Rav Chaim forgave the man for any wrongdoing, and with a parting brachah the man returned home... free of any grasshoppers.

(A postscript to this story heard directly from Rebbetzin Kanievsky is that every single week at the same time, a solitary grasshopper would sit on the windowsill of that man's home to serve as a reminder of his lack of honor for Rav Chaim. Moreover, the man's wife would take a picture of it every week and show it to the Rebbetzin who would revel in Hashem's clear appreciation of her husband's honor.)

SANCTIFIED BEAUTY

Rabbi Shimon Schreiber

"And you shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and for splendor. And you shall speak to all that are of wise heart... that they make Aharon's garments to sanctify him that he may minister to Me in the priestly office." (28:2-3)

Ordinary people tend to honor only those who are dressed in beautiful garments. For this reason, G-d commanded Moshe to tell the Jews that the priestly robes were to be made "for glory and for splendor"; namely, to enhance the dignity of the holders of priestly office.

But to those who were “of wise heart,” who would understand the deeper significance of the priestly robes, Moshe was to say that they were to make the garments “to sanctify him that He may minister to Me”; namely, not only to lend added dignity and splendor to the kohanim but to sanctify the kohanim the better to serve G-d.

CHOSEN PEOPLE

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

“They shall take the gold and the turquoise.” (28:5)

See the commentary of Rashi, who remarks, “The wise-hearted people, who will make the garments, will receive the gold and the turquoise wool from the donors from which to make the garments.” We need to understand why the bigdei Kehunah were made of materials donated by the public.

Even if the Kohen performed the service and brought offerings as prescribed, his service was not complete if he was not fully enveloped by a love for his fellow Jew. The service of any Kohen who does not love his nation is worthless (Zohar 3:147b). G-d, on account of His love for the Jewish people - as we say, “Who has chosen us from among (מכל) all nations” - detests our enemies, having chosen only us, the Jewish people, whom He loves. Nonetheless, regarding the Kohanim, who were chosen from among the Jewish people, the Torah employs the wording, “And you, approach your brother Aharon, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel” (Shemos 28:1), signifying that although the Kohen was chosen from all other Jewish people to serve in the Beis HaMikdash, nonetheless G-d still loves the rest of the Jewish people. (The word that the Torah uses for “from among” (מתוך) literally means just that, “from among,” implying that although the Kohanim were chosen from among the chosen people, this choosing does not exclude the rest of the Jewish people from the status of also having been chosen.)

The word for “from among” (מתוך) also means “out of.” Thus, it was out of His love for us that He chose the Kohen to serve Him in the Mishkan, in order to achieve atonement for the Jewish people. (The continuation of the text is missing.)

LESSON FOR THE AGES

Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman

“And the fourth row, a beryl and an onyx and a jasper...” (28:20)

According to the Baal HaTurim, the jasper was the stone of Binyamin's Tribe. An incident that took place in connection with this stone teaches us the importance of the commandment to honor one's father. The Gemara in Peah relates that the jasper once fell off the priestly breastplate. It was known that only one man, Doma ben Nethina, a non-Jew, had a stone fit to replace it.

However, when this man was asked for the stone, he explained that his father - who had the key to the chest in which the jasper was kept - was asleep and that he would not disturb his father's sleep for this purpose. Thus, he missed an opportunity to earn a lot of money. This incident is frequently cited as an example of how children should honor their parents.

Why was it ordained that of all the gems on the ephod the stone of Binyamin's tribe should be the one to help demonstrate a lesson in the honor due a father from his son? Because Yaakov's son, Binyamin, had been perfect in his observance of the law to honor his father, for he had not had any part in Yosef's sale and hence had no share in the blame for the grief this act caused his father.

HEARTFELT WORDS

Degel Machaneh Ephraim

“The Choshen must not come loose from the Ephod.” (28:28)

In commanding that the Choshen - Breastplate, symbolic of the heart, not be loosened from the Ephod, symbolic of the mouth, the Torah is teaching us that a person's heart and mouth should always be in sync with each other.

SUBLIME MUNDANITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

“The Choshen must not come loose from the Ephod.” (28:28)

The Ephod hung from the high priest's back down to his heels, while the Breastplate rested in front, opposite his heart.

The “back” represents that which is external and mundane - the aspects of life that may be necessary but are not the focus of our main interest. In contrast, the “front” signifies the internal and sublime - the real focus of our interest - just as our face, which expresses our inner thoughts and feelings, is on the front of our body.

The fact that the Breastplate must not become disconnected from the Ephod therefore means that the high priest was not allowed to have any gap between the sublime and the mundane, the essential and the external aspects of his life.

What is true in our idealistic and inspired hearts must express itself even in our “heels,” i.e., the mundane and routine aspects of our lives. (Sefer HaSichot 5748, vol. 1, p. 314) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

LOVE FOR ALL

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

“Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart.” (28:29)

We have to consider why the names of the tribes were inscribed on the Choshen, worn by Aharon, whereas in general we find that it is the merit of our Avos - Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov - that is always mentioned, rather than that of Yaakov's sons, the progenitors of the twelve tribes (see for example, Shemos 2:24, 32:13-14; Vayikra 26:42). Although our Sages deduce that the names of the Avos were also written on these stones (Yoma 73b), the Torah does not say this explicitly. The Torah only tells us that the names of the tribes were engraved on them.

This can be explained in light of the following: Regarding Aharon it says, "For G-d has chosen him from among the Children of Israel" (Shemos 28:1). Generally, when a person is chosen from among a group, we must say that the person was selected on account of a love for him, and the others are spurned. We might be inclined to think that the choice of Aharon from among the Jewish people was along the same lines. To forestall such a thought, the Torah tells us that the names of the tribes were engraved on the stones, to prove that this was not the case. The inscribed names demonstrate that G-d desires and loves the rest of the Jewish people as well.

BREASTPLATE OF JUDGEMENT

Rebbe Nachman

"Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart." (28:29)

The heart is the seat of judgment, for it is where a person makes decisions. In order to arouse a proper and legitimate judgment, one must meditate in his heart. (See Likutey Moharan I, 59:2)

The heart is the site of "fallen loves" - i.e., one's love for immoral or otherwise forbidden things. Because a person develops "fallen loves" through poor judgment, he rectifies them with proper judgment, as represented by the Breastplate. (Nowadays, this rectification is best accomplished through hisbodedus - secluded introspection and conversation with Hashem.) (See Likutey Moharan II, 5:13 and 5:16)

ILLUMINATING THE PATH

Reb Noson of Breslov

"Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart." (28:29)

The Gemara (Yoma 73b) states that whenever a Jew needed advice, he would approach the Kohen Gadol, who wore the Breastplate that contained the Urim v'Tumim. Upon the stones of the Breastplate were engraved all the letters of the alphabet in the form of the names of the tribes. When the person stated his request, the Urim v'Tumim would light up the letters spelling out the answer, and the person would see the advice illuminated before his eyes.

The Urim v'Tumim, along with the holy vessels of the Temple, was lost to us during the period of the destruction of the First Temple.

Today, the advice offered by the Urim v'Tumim can be found in the Torah. By looking into the Torah with sincerity and simplicity, the Torah's letters and light will direct us to the proper path. (Likutey Halakhot IV, p. 161a)

The Breastplate was worn upon the heart, indicating that a person's heart is his guide in life. He must purify his heart so that it can receive Divine inspiration and direct him to the proper path. (Likutey Halakhot I, p. 179a)

SPIRITUAL DUALITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall have them place the Urim and Tumim into the Breastplate of Judgment... and Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel upon his heart before Hashem continually." (28:30)

The double name of the single parchment inserted into the Breastplate indicates the dual nature of our relationship with G-d.

The word Urim ("fiery lights") denotes our soul's ardent yearning to return to its Divine source and dissolve in it.

The word Tumim ("sincere devotions") denotes our soul's humble submission to G-d's will and its commitment to fulfill His commandments. This devotion counterbalances the Urim-aspect of the soul, pulling it down from its ecstatic rapture in order to engage the mundane aspects of life and elevate them to Divinity.

Balancing these two complementary drives is both the challenge and the exhilaration of our spiritual life. (Ma'amarei Admur HaZakein, Et'haleich Liyozhna, p. 55) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

FEELING THEIR PAIN

Be'er Mayim Chaim

"...and Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel upon his heart before Hashem continually." (28:30)

Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, was to represent in his person the heart of the Jewish people. Thus, even as the heart is the first organ to feel any pain that strikes the body, so Aharon felt the sufferings of every Jew and would pray for any Jew in pain.

This is the interpretation of the pasuk quoted above:

"And Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel ("judgment" implying punishment; those decrees that entail suffering) upon his heart"; he shall wear the "breastplate of judgment" over his heart to show that whenever suffering befalls the Jews their pain will be close to his heart and he will pray to G-d to annul the evil decree.

SPEAK WITH CAUTION

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

“And you should make the robe of the Ephod completely out of techeiles... And on its hem you shall make... bells of gold between them, all around.” (28:31, 33)

Mashal: The Smiths and the Joneses got together at the Jones's home one evening.

Mrs. Jones wasn't particularly fond of the Smiths; in fact, she found more than a few minutes in their presence quite difficult to bear. But since her husband really liked Mr. Smith, she agreed to put up with them that evening for his sake.

After a while, though, her patience was wearing thin, and she wasn't sure how much longer she could handle them. So when they heard the baby crying upstairs, she asked her husband to come upstairs with her to help with the baby.

Upstairs, while she rocked the baby back to sleep, she let him have it.

In a strong whisper she told him in no uncertain terms what she thought of their guests, how she had put up with as much as she could handle, and that it was time for them to go. Sheepishly, he agreed.

They went back downstairs, but there was a strange silence hanging in the air. It was very, very quiet. In fact, all that could be heard was the crackle of the baby monitor...

Nimshal: One of the garments worn by the kohen gadol was a long tunic called the Me'il. Along the bottom edge of the Me'il were little bells that jingled when he walked. Chazal tell us that the Me'il atoned for the sins of lashon hara, slander, gossip, and malicious speech. The kol (sound) of the bells jingling made up for the kol (voice) of the people who spoke negatively and should have kept silent.

Today, we don't have the benefit of the Beis HaMikdash, the kohen gadol, or his garments. The holy tools that we had to restore our relationship with Hashem are gone. But we still have the obligation to guard our tongues, and refrain from saying things which should never be heard.

FENCING OUR LIPS

Lubliner Rebbe

“...the opening shall have a border around it, the work of a weaver.” (28:32)

The word Safa can be translated as “lips.” Based on this, the meaning of the pasuk is that one should put a fence around the lips.

Be careful not to malign anyone. Do not go as a talebearer. Do not tell lies. Do not let your lips utter deceit. Above all, do not say one thing and believe something else.

SPEECH OF SILENCE

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

“A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, on the [lower] hem of the robe all around.” (28:34)

One of the bigdei kehuna (priestly garments) described by the Torah in Parshas Tetzaveh is the מעיל (robe), which was made entirely of wool dyed in techeiles, and which featured along its bottom rim a series of פעמונים (bells) and רימונים (decorations appearing like pomegranates).

Rashi (28:33) explains that the bells and pomegranates were arranged in alternating fashion. Every פעמון was situated in between two רימונים, and every רימון was situated in between two פעמונים. The bells would ring as the kohen gadol walked, thus producing a sound. The Gemara (Zevachim 88b) teaches that the me'il, which produced a sound, served to atone for the sin of lashon hara, which is violated by producing sounds, through speech.

Rav Yisroel Meir Druck, in his Lahavos Eish, observes that although the me'il produced a sound as the kohen gadol walked, and it was made for this purpose, only half of the bottom part of the me'il featured bells. The other half of the bottom rim was filled with silent רימונים, which did not make any sound. Why would this be? If the me'il was intended to atone for the sinful “sound” of lashon hara, then why was it made with bells and silent רימונים, instead of with only bells?

Rav Druck answered this question by relating the story told of a student of the Brisker Rav who, after a shiur, observed that at one point during the shiur, the Brisker Rav sat silently, and the students “heard” the silence. This was a “thundering” silence, the student described, one which taught the talmidim a great deal.

This story shows that silence is a form of communication. Sometimes, we can say a lot by remaining silent, by not speaking. In order to correct the sin of lashon hara, we need both פעמונים and רימונים. First, we need to replace our improper speech with positive, productive speech. Instead of sharing gossip and spreading negative information about people, we should use our faculty of speech to compliment, to encourage, to praise, to uplift, to inspire, to help, and of course, to share words of Torah. We need to transform destructive speech into constructive speech. But another aspect of atoning for lashon hara is learning when to simply remain silent, when to restrain ourselves, when not to talk. This, too, is a very valuable means of communication, and a crucial component of the effort to correct the sin of lashon hara.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe observed that when a young toddler first begins speaking, the parents, grandparents, and everyone else are very excited. They try very hard to encourage the child to talk, and they receive great joy and satisfaction from hearing the child speak. Unfortunately, Rav Wolbe lamented, people often fail to teach the child when to stop speaking...

Knowing when not to talk is no less important a skill than knowing how to talk, because silence, too, is a means by which we communicate and interact with the people around us. We need to learn how to speak properly - and also how not to speak, and to keep quiet when necessary.

THE GREATEST RECTIFICATION

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

"A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, on the [lower] hem of the robe all around." (28:34)

The story is told of a young widow who entered the study of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l in an obviously distraught state of mind. In addition to the loneliness and pain she experienced since the passing of her husband, a sense of urgency seemed to have taken hold of her. She had recurring pangs of guilt; she wanted to do something spiritual to memorialize her dear husband. Perhaps, she suggested, 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. She continued on and on for some time, occasionally letting out small sighs and sobs as she continued to talk about her husband's untimely passing and the tikkun - rectification she felt she should do on his behalf.

R' Shlomo Zalman, in his unique and inimitable way, waited patiently until she finished and then instructed her to listen to his advice very carefully. "I understand your need to do something spiritual as a tikkun 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. This is a wonderful thing you can do for your late husband."

The woman, however, could not understand the meaning of the Rav's advice and once again, insisted that she would feel much better if there was something that she could do to memorialize her husband. R' Shlomo Zalman shook off her suggestion and began to explain.

"The Torah instructs the Kohen Gadol to wear a four-cornered, blue-wool garment adorned with an array of gold bells and small pomegranates whenever he enters the Mishkan. If, however, he dares enter the sanctuary without that bell-adorned garment, he is subject to a decree of untimely death. The bells teach us all a great lesson. Upon entering the Holy of Holies, the Kohen's thoughts may become so focused on attaining a high level of spirituality that he may forget simple courtesy. Our sages explain that the Torah is teaching a moral lesson: One should announce himself before entering any room. The search for spirituality can never supersede simple etiquette."

R' Shlomo Zalman continued after a moment. "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 ESTRANGED POMEGRANATE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"The sound [of the bells] must be heard as he [the high priest] enters the sanctuary." (28:35)

The pomegranate is the symbol of those Jews who seem to lack merits, yet upon closer examination are revealed to be as filled with merits as a pomegranate is filled with seeds (Berachos 57a).

The noise of the bells at the bottom of the high priest's robe reflects the clamor that characterizes such people's relationship with G-d. Acutely aware of their apparent spiritual shortcomings, they cry out from the depths of their heart to be shown how to return to full Jewish observance.

Hence the critical need for these bells. A high priest who fails to include these "pomegranate-Jews" as he approaches G-d's presence is unworthy of his title.

We see here firstly that no matter how estranged we may feel from G-d, He insists that the high priest take us with him inside the Sanctuary. On the other hand, no matter how close we may feel to G-d, we must always make the plight of our estranged fellows an essential part of our spiritual agenda. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 16, pp. 338-339) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

WRAPPED IN UNITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"[The Robe] must be worn by Aharon in order [for him] to serve [as high priest]." (28:35)

The unity of the Jewish people was reflected in the three primary garments of the high priest:

The names of the tribes that were engraved on the Breastplate, resting on the high priest's heart, signified the righteous among us. The names of the tribes that were engraved on the stones of the Ephod, which mainly covered the high priest's back, signified those Jews still struggling with their evil inclinations. The bells and pomegranates of the Robe signified those Jews who are still under the sway of their evil inclinations; despite their low spiritual state, these Jews are "as full of good deeds as a pomegranate is full of seeds" (Berachos 57a). All of these Jews must be represented when the high priest enters the Sanctuary, for he must invoke the merit that is common to all his people.

Similarly, when we see people in need of a spiritual boost, we must first make them aware of their inherent worth: that they possess a soul that is truly a part of G-d. By welcoming them back into Jewish observance, we help them reconnect with their true selves.

After this, we can help them shed whatever negativity remains in their lives and increase their performance of deeds of light and goodness. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 21, p. 184-189) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

TAKING EXTRA CARE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall burn the flesh of the bull." (29:14)

Normally, the meat of the sin-offerings was eaten by the priests. In the case of the installation sin-offering, however, the priests were commanded to burn the meat.

The reason for this is that it is human nature to take ongoing, regular practices more seriously. In contrast, we tend to take new or temporary practices that are instituted by the rabbinic authorities of our generation less seriously. After all - we tell ourselves - previous generations got along fine without these practices.

It is therefore necessary to turn the matter on its head by being extra careful regarding the new or temporary additions to Jewish practice. This is why the one-time-only installation sin-offering had to be treated exceptionally.

Nowadays, in the final moments of our exile, the call of the hour is to prepare ourselves and the world at large for the coming of Mashiach. Inasmuch as this directive was not emphasized in previous generations, it is easy to undervalue it. Therefore, we must be sure to take extra care to fulfill it, dedicating to it all our enthusiasm and all our latent potentials. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, pp. 71-73) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

FAITHFUL CONSECRATION

Rebbe Nachman

"This is what you will do for Aharon and his sons... You will inaugurate them for seven days." (29:35)

These seven days correspond to the Seven Shepherds (Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and Dovid) who revealed G-dliness in the world. All other tzaddikim derive their strength from these Seven Shepherds. With these "seven days" - these Seven Shepherds - it is possible to consecrate the people.

Temalei yadam (you will inaugurate them) literally means "you will fill their hands." This teaches that the principal manner of consecrating the people is by imbuing them with faith, for "hands" represent faith, as in the verse (Shemos 17:12), "His hands were faith."

DAY AND NIGHT

HaDerash V'Halyun

"The one I offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at dusk." (29:39)

People must endeavor to serve G-d during their youth - in the morning of life, as well as in old age - at the dusk of life. In youth our bodies are healthy and strong, and we are in full possession of our vigor and energy. However, our mental faculties are still not fully matured. In old age our mental faculties are mature, but our physical strength has declined.

Accordingly, the morning sacrifice should remind us to accept the sovereignty of the kingdom of Heaven at the time when the sun of our own life is on the rise and not to allow ourselves to be led astray by this world's follies. The sacrifice that we are required to offer at dusk, by the same token, should teach us that even when the sun of our life is about to set we shouldn't grow lax in our endeavors but must gather new strength by continuing to serve G-d.

GRAVITATIONAL PULL

Rebbe Nachman

"I will meet there with the Jewish people, and they will be sanctified by My glory." (29:43)

Mishkan (משכן, Tabernacle) is similar to Moshekh (מושך, draw or attract). The tzaddik is compared to the Tabernacle. The tzaddik draws people to himself so that he may teach them how to serve G-d. Just as the Tabernacle revealed G-d's glory, so does the tzaddik.

As an attracting force, the tzaddik is comparable to the earth's gravitational pull. The earth is associated with humility. This teaches that a person who strives to attain humility can feel the attracting power of the tzaddik, who is also humble, and be drawn to serve G-d. (See Likutey Moharan I, 70)

TRUE G-DLINESS

Rebbe of Aleksander

"I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and I will be their G-d." (29:45)

False G-ds are beautiful and enchanting from afar. However, as one gets closer, he notices that there is nothing to them. With the Almighty, the closer one gets, the more he recognizes His Greatness.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE

Kotzker Rebbe

"I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and I will be their G-d." (29:45)

Where can Hashem be found? Wherever we let Him in.

PROTECTIVE LOVE

Maggid of Mezritch

"I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and I will be their G-d." (29:45)

The use of the word Elokim (G-d) in this verse connotes the attribute of mercy. When a father loves his child, he will not only protect him but also wish to punish those who do him harm. Therefore, the Almighty said, "I shall be your Elokim and show you My love and dwell among you, with a sense of mercy to protect you and punish those who wish to harm My children."

OUR INNER ESSENCE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"I will dwell among the Children of Israel..." (29:45)

We might think that only righteous and holy people can create a physical sanctuary for the Divine presence. Yet the Torah makes it clear that the Tabernacle was built by every man, woman, and child, regardless of their spiritual status (Avos d'Reb Nosson 11:1).

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

Thus, even a Jew who appears to be self-oriented is capable of building a dwelling for G-d. Every one of us has the capacity to transform the world into a place about which G-d can say: "I will dwell there, among you." (Sefer HaSichot 5752, vol. 2, p. 384) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

SUPERNATURAL REWARDS

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"They will know that I am Hashem, their G-d, who brought them out of Egypt in order to abide among them." (29:46)

There are those who complain, "The way of Torah puts us at a disadvantage. We have to observe Shabbat and the holidays, but we have to compete in business with people who don't. Before going to work in the morning, we have to pray and study the Torah. Right in the middle of our workday, we have to stop and pray again. When we finally get home in the evening, there's still one more prayer to be recited. At work, we have to be careful to stay away from dishonesty or illegal business practices. We are not even allowed to compete with someone else's business under many circumstances. How can we survive under these circumstances?"

G-d replies, "I took you out of Egypt. Until then, not a single slave had ever managed to escape from Egypt. Yet, I took several million of you out, and showered you with great wealth. So you see, I am not bound by the restrictions of nature. If you fulfill My directives, I will reward you supernaturally and ensure that you have an abundance of everything that you need." (Likutei Sichot, vol. 2, p. 325) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

SECLUDED HOLINESS

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall make an Altar for burning incense." (30:1)

One reason why the passage about the Inner Altar is placed at the very end of all of the discussions pertaining

to the Tabernacle and all that was in it, is in order to indicate that the Inner Altar has a unique status, above and beyond all of the other furnishings of the Tabernacle.

What was different about the Inner Altar was that every other ritual that was performed in the Tabernacle had spectators. When the incense was burned on the Inner Altar, however, there was no one present - only the priest burning it and G-d Himself. Furthermore, we are taught that it was specifically this private service that caused the Divine Presence to be most felt in the Tabernacle.

This lesson of the incense is very relevant in our modern - and loud - world. The ultimate in holy living, and especially in areas of kindness and charity, is when no one is present - when we exhibit generosity without publicity, purely because it is the right thing to do. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 171-172) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

FIRE RESISTANT

Avnei Nezer

"You shall make an Altar for burning incense... You shall cover it with pure gold." (30:1,3)

The Talmud states: "The fire of Gehinnom gains no ascendancy over the sinners among Israel... If the golden altar, which was covered by no more than a dinar's thickness of gold, remained intact for many years and the fire that was burnt on it daily had no ascendancy over it to erode it, then the sinners among Israel, who are as full of mitzvos as a pomegranate is full of seeds, how much more so are they, the sinners of Israel, immune to fire." (Chagigah 27a)

Just as the incense placed on the altar of gold by an average person was consumed by fire from above, so too, the sinners of Israel - though they may have sinned and deserved the fire of Gehinnom - because of their mitzvos, the supernal fire voids the fire of Gehinnom, making it impossible for it to gain ascendancy.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Rabbi Moshe Schochet

"And Aharon shall bring the aromatic incense on it, each morning, when he cleans the lamps." (30:7)

The Torah introduces us to the mitzvah of the kohen to bring the ketores - "the incense," on the Mizbeach HaZahav - "the Golden Altar" in the Heichal of the Beis HaMikdash.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe) comments that the ketores teaches us an important lesson about how to conduct ourselves. Rav Moshe explains that although the service of the ketores was performed in the Heichal, without a large audience to observe the avodah performed, nevertheless, the scent of the ketores could be smelled throughout all of Yerushalayim (Yoma 39b). The same is true with a person who conducts him or herself in a manner which reflects the values of the Torah.

HAFTORAH

A person doesn't need to give lectures or speak publicly about how to act in order to inspire others. Simply observing how a person carries themselves can provide a model for how one is to behave.

This insight of Rav Moshe highlights the level of responsibility each one of us carries in our day-to-day lives. We never know who may be watching how we speak or act. Our actions serve as a powerful leadership tool in helping guide others as to how they should behave. We must be aware that while we may not all serve as professional educators, our children and community are watching what we do and how we do it in order to determine how to act. We should internalize the message of the ketores and help inspire others to become even greater than they already are!

WITHOUT THE FLASHING LIGHTS

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

“And he [Aharon] shall bring the spice incense up in smoke, each morning, when he cleans the lamps; he shall bring it up in smoke.” (30:7)

In the American Presidential campaign, over one billion dollars was spent on television advertising alone. Projecting a positive image is essential for those who wish to influence the world, and publicity is the key. Exposure to the public is essential and the candidate's every move is professionally orchestrated to portray him in the best light. After all, without the world being told who this person is and what he stands for, he cannot possibly have any effect on others.

Whereas this might be true for the President of America, as Jews, we know that it is possible for someone to affect the lives of millions of people even though he does not actively “push his image” in the public forum and even if he has never been interviewed on television or watched one in his life. Our great Torah leaders are able to sit in their modest apartments in Jerusalem or Bnei Barak and direct the Jewish People by the decisions that they make. As Rav Moshe Feinstein writes, “when a person acts according to Torah with all of his might and with knowledge that only this [Torah] is the fundamental life source of the world, then even if he has never given speeches or drashos in his life, we learn from him, even at a great distance.”

This, explains Rav Moshe Feinstein, is the lesson that we learn from the incense of the Beis Hamikdash, which, despite being lit in privacy, its aroma travelled as far as Jericho and its scent was so strong that the women there did not need to put on perfume (Yoma 39b).

For this reason, adds Rav Moshe, the lighting of the incense accompanied that of the Menorah; for just as the light of the Menorah shone a great distance even though it was lit in privacy, and just as the scent of the incense covered a vast distance - so too, a talmid chacham who devotes his life to Torah, can literally change the entire world from the privacy of his own humble dwelling.

PREPARED AND READY

Imrei Emes

“And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, the form of the House and its design... make known to them and write it down before their eyes so that they may keep the whole form and all the decrees thereof, and do them.” (Yechezkel 43:11)

We read in Eichah (2:8) that “G-d has purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion; He has stretched out the line; He has not withdrawn His hand from destroying.” This is interpreted to mean that the Third Beis HaMikdash - which will rise in the Land of Israel in days to come - was ready in Heaven even before the Second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed.

The reasoning that leads to this interpretation proceeds as follows: What does the text mean by stating that G-d planned to destroy the wall of Zion and did not withdraw His hand, and at the same time saying that “He has stretched out the line,” an act associated with building rather than with the razing of a house?

According to Jewish law, it is forbidden to destroy a synagogue before another has been built to take its place. The Midrashim relate that even G-d fulfills the Torah's laws. It is obvious then that G-d could have permitted the Beis HaMikdash's destruction only if a new Beis HaMikdash was ready in Heaven to replace it at the appointed time.

Hence, the idea of the pasuk cited from Eichah is as follows: “G-d has purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion,” but He could not carry out this plan until He had first “stretched out the line” to plan the future Beis HaMikdash. Only then, did He “not withdraw His hand from destroying” the old Beis HaMikdash.

PREPARED FOR HIS ARRIVAL

Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller

“The form of the House and its design... make known to them and write it down before their eyes so that they may keep the whole form and all the decrees thereof and do them.” (Yechezkel 43:11)

The Jewish people must be so firm in their faith in the coming of Mashiach that they must make themselves thoroughly familiar with the plans and the “whole form” of the Beis HaMikdash, so that even if Mashiach appears on the very next day they will be able to begin building the Beis HaMikdash at once.

If they will be firm in their faith in the coming of Mashiach, if they will “keep the whole form” (of the Beis HaMikdash) “and all the decrees thereof,” they will be found worthy of “doing them,” of carrying out all the decrees in practice in the building of the new Beis HaMikdash.