

The Narrow Bridge

גשר צר מאוד

PARSHA PERSPECTIVES

Short Divrei Torah on Parshas Tetzaveh

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לע'נ פּעסל בת ישראל מנחם / לזכות חילינו

SOUL ON FIRE

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 Wisnefsky

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 is to burn continually ("for a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light"), 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.

HEARING THE CRY

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.

HUMILITY THAT SHINES

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

“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 opening *pasuk* of Parshas Tetzaveh commands *Bnei Yisrael* to provide למאור - שמן זית זך כתיב 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 למאור - כתיב - 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 the 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 the 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.

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.

UNITE AND IGNITE

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.

EXTRACTING OUR BEST

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.

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 and shine even brighter.

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.”

RISING BACK UP

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

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

The Midrash explains that the Jewish nation is compared to olive oil. Oil hints at a Yid’s ability to do *teshuvah*.

If you have a cup of water and you pour in some oil, the oil will drop to the bottom for a moment, but will immediately rise up above the water.

Even if a Yid falls to very low levels, he can always do *teshuvah* and go up again. Even if he is בתיית, crushed by his many sins, he can become למאור - shine brightly again when he does *teshuvah*.

FREE FROM 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)

THE NEED TO ACHIEVE

Rabbi Jeremy Finn

“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)

Rashi comments that כתיית means that the olives were crushed in a mortar so that there was no sediment in the oil that they produced.

The requirement to use pure crushed oil only applied to the oil for lighting the *Menorah*; however, it was not necessary for the oil used for the *menachos* - the meal offerings.

The sefer Chashavah L’tovah writes that a person needs to have the attitude of כתיית - having a crushed ego and displaying humility, the opposite of being proud and arrogant.

However, the obligation to see ourselves as כתיית must not lead us to feel so broken that we do not want to do anything because we think that we have nothing to offer and just want to be left alone.

On the contrary, if we feel that we have not yet accomplished what we think we can, this should spur us on to make an extra effort to find an area in which we can excel.

Therefore, the Torah tell us that the oil must be כתיית למאור - we must use כתיית, the crushing of our negative ego, to enlighten the world, but not כתיית למנוחה, to use it as an excuse למנוחה - to rest and not attempt to change the world.

There is a fine line between humility and low self-esteem. While it is honorable to be humble, we should not hide behind humility to screen our low self-esteem.

We all have something to contribute.

We all have unique skills and talents.

We all must use them to make the world a better place. (Ma’ayanah Shel Torah, p. 128)

THE OIL WITHIN

Rabbi Aryeh Dachs

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

My rebbi, Rabbi Shaya Cohen, has a painting in his office that was drawn by a student of his. In this painting, Rabbi Cohen is wearing a *tallis* low over his forehead so that it covers his eyes. His eyes are not visible, but his gigantic smile is unavoidable. In his hands is an oversized olive from which Rabbi Cohen is squeezing a giant drop of oil. The painting represents a discourse Rabbi Cohen once gave, but more importantly it represents his life’s mission. For decades, Rabbi Cohen has invested his time and energy into connecting young people to Torah. Many of his students were at one point disenfranchised and given up on by others. He is a master squeezer, committed to extracting the spiritual “oil” which can sometimes lie latent in some of the toughest “olives.”

The Midrash at the beginning of Parashas Tetzaveh seems peculiar. It quotes the verse (Yirmiyahu 11:16), “A leafy olive-tree fair with goodly fruit, has the Lord called your name.” The Midrash explores why the Jewish People are specifically likened to the olive. The Midrash describes that extracting oil from an olive is an exhaustive process. First, while on the tree, the olives are selected. They are then harvested, beaten, put into a press, then into the grinding machinery where they are smashed and ground, beaten with heavy ropes and finally pounded with stones. So it is with the Jewish People: They are beaten and made to suffer immeasurably by the nations of the world. Finally, the pure oil is extracted, as the Jewish People do *teshuvah* and return to G-d.

The second Rebbe of the Sochatchov Chassidic dynasty, Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein, known by his work *Shem MiShmuel* (published posthumously by his son), points out the peculiarity here. The Jewish People’s likeness to an olive is not a casual reference. Rather, “The Lord called [their] name olive,” which connotes that being likened to an olive is special and endearing. Moreover, the olive represents our core identity, meaning the essence of the Jew is similar to that of an olive. With this in mind, the Midrash seems odd. Is our essence defined by our reluctance to do *teshuvah*? Will we only return to G-d when we experience unbearable suffering? How is this a term of endearment? Why is this our essence?

The *Shem MiShmuel* explains that we need to take a deeper look at the Midrash. An olive is unique; its juice, the oil, is embedded deep in its rough exterior. After we pound the flesh of the olive, we are able to extract the oils. Those oils, however, have really been in the olive all along; they were just inaccessible. Similarly, explains the *Shem MiShmuel*, the character of a Jew is different. All Jews “*b’etzem heim tovim*,” are at their core essentially good. When the Jew returns to G-d, he does not develop a new essence; there is no rebirth. Rather, we know his connection was always there, entrenched in the chaff, hidden by a roughened exterior.

The beauty of the Jew is that no matter how far he may stray, how hidden he may be, his sweet goodness is present. He may need help extracting the goodness, but, like the olive, the oil is ever present. As Rabbi Cohen is fond of saying, sometimes we can be thrown off by the exterior, so we therefore need to cover our eyes with a *tallis*, but we must never disregard the latent spiritual forces hidden in the depths of another Jew.

DRAWING NEAR

Dinover 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)

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.”

THE MAN FOR THE JOB

Dubno Maggid

“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)

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 wanted 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

EMBRACING OUR MISSION

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

“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)

Hashem commands Moshe in Parshas Tetzaveh to designate Aharon and his sons as the kohanim who would perform the service in the Mishkan. He instructs Moshe: *“ואתה הקרב אליך את אהרון אחיך ואת בניו אתו... לכהנו לי”* - “And you shall draw close Aharon, your brother, with his sons...to minister before Me” (28:1).

The Ohr HaChaim takes note of the unusual wording of this pasuk, which begins by emphasizing *ואתה* - that “you,” Moshe Rabbeinu, was to appoint Aharon and his sons to the position of the *kehuna*. Furthermore, Hashem instructs Moshe to bring Aharon and his sons *אליך* - “to you,” even though they were being brought before Hashem, to serve Him.

The Ohr HaChaim explains this *pasuk* based on the Midrash’s comment (Shemos Rabba 3) that the role of the *kehuna* was originally supposed to be given to Moshe and his sons. Moshe forfeited this privilege, however, due to his reluctance to accept the mission assigned to him at the burning bush. When Hashem first appeared to him and commanded him to return to Egypt and confront Pharaoh, demanding that he allow *Bnei Yisrael* to leave, Moshe repeatedly refused, until he finally relented.

The Midrash teaches that because Moshe resisted and rejected the special mission to which Hashem had assigned him, the great privilege of the *kehuna* was taken from him and given instead to his brother, Aharon.

For this reason, the Ohr HaChaim writes, Hashem turns to Moshe in our parsha and commands, *ואתה הקרב אליך*. He was telling Moshe that he needed to go through this process, to appoint Aharon and his sons in place of himself and his own children, for himself, in order to atone for his refusal to accept the mission assigned to him. The words *ואתה הקרב אליך*, the Ohr HaChaim writes, means that Moshe’s assigning the role of *kehuna* to Aharon and his son functioned as his sacrifice (*קרבן*) to atone for rejecting the position of leader back at the burning bush.

We can never run away from our life’s mission. This is demonstrated most clearly by the story of Yona, who literally tried to escape from the role assigned to him - to deliver Hashem’s warning to the city of Nineveh - and ended up being thrown into the sea and swallowed by a whale...

Every one of us was brought into this world for a purpose, and we have no right to demur, to excuse ourselves, to decline the mission assigned to us.

As Mark Twain famously remarked, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

Once we recognize our purpose, we are duty-bound to fulfill it. If Hashem blessed somebody with wealth, he has an obligation to give charity. If Hashem blessed somebody with skills and talents, he has an obligation to use them for the right purpose. If a person is in a position to serve his community, in whichever capacity - to be a *chazan*, to be a *baal korei*, to chair a committee, to organize an event - he cannot run away from it.

It’s much easier to decline, but we were not placed here to sit back comfortably without working. We are each here for a mission, and we must do whatever is needed to fulfill that mission to the best of our ability.

HONORABLE GLORIFICATION

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

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

Parashas Tetzaveh describes the clothes the *Kohen* would wear while performing the service. Moshe was instructed to make the garments for “honor and glory” (28:2).

The very next *pasuk* says that the wise-hearted people should make the garments to “sanctify him” so that the *Kohen* can serve G-d (28:3).

What then is the actual purpose of the priestly clothing? Is it for honor, glory, or sanctification? Additionally, what would honor, an internal characteristic, have to do with glory, an external characteristic?

Rabbi Eliyahu Safran explains that the *Kohen's* clothes themselves were modest and simple, which sets the stage for all *Kohanim* to behave humbly and appropriately, thus glorifying the role and sanctifying G-d's name in the process. We all have a responsibility to act honorably, which will lead to celebrating G-d's greatness, which will lead to greater sanctity, spirituality, and purpose. When our actions are honorable, it reflects well on ourselves, our family, our community, and G-d.

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.)

BEAUTIFIED SANCTITY

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 the wise hearted people, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, and they shall make Aharon's garments, to sanctify him, so that he shall be a Kohen onto me." (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.

RESERVOIR OF TALENT

Rabbi Aryeh Dachs

“And you shall speak to all the wise hearted people, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, and they shall make Aharon’s garments, to sanctify him, so that he shall be a Kohen onto me.” (28:3)

Parashas Tetzaveh begins with the directive to craft the *bigdei kehunah*, the vestments for the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest. It begins with the following instruction: “And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom.” However, it is not entirely clear what the specific instruction is to the “wise-hearted” in the verse.

To understand the nature of wisdom, the sefer Chovos HaLevavos, Duties of the Heart, explains that there is a reservoir of latent wisdom buried in the heart of men. He likens this wisdom to the power of a seedling in the ground. With the proper care it will flourish and blossom. But if left alone, it will ultimately spoil and disintegrate. So too, explains the Chovos HaLevavos, the talent and wisdom buried in the heart of men needs to be coaxed and nurtured as well.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer-Schreiber, known to many as the Chasam Sofer, utilizes this idea from the Chovos HaLevavos to explain the specific instruction to the “wise-hearted.” The Chasam Sofer explains that “whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom” is the instruction! Moshe was commanded to tell the wise-hearted that they were filled with the spirit of wisdom. Letting the Jewish craftsmen know that they held within them a great reservoir of talent gave them the confidence and ability to fashion the vestments for the High Priest.

There are two lessons to be gleaned here.

One, of course, is that we are all talented. Sometimes our talents are dormant and need to be *schlepped* out to the fore. The fact remains that there are reservoirs of untapped talent in everyone.

The second point is that sometimes the *schlepping* is not such a *schlep*. According to the Chasam Sofer, a mere reassurance or reminder can be sufficient to germinate the latent potential that lies within each of us.

CHOSEN PEOPLE

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

“They shall take the gold, and the turquoise wool, and the purple wool, and the scarlet wool, and the linen.” (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.

NOT ABOUT TOLERANCE

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

“Six of their names shall be on one stone, and the names of the six that remain shall be on the second stone.” (28:10)

One of the special garments worn by the *kohen gadol* was the אפוד, the apron. The Torah instructs that two precious stones were to be placed on the shoulder straps of the אפוד, one on each strap, and the names of the twelve tribes were to be engraved on these two stones.

The *pasuk* states: ששה משמותם על האבן האחת ואת שמות ששה הנותרים על האבן השנית - “Six of their names shall be on one stone, and the names of the six that remain shall be on the second stone” (28:10).

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum, in Tiferes Shmuel, takes note of the seemingly superfluous word הנותרים (“that remain”) in this *pasuk*.

We would have expected the Torah to simply say that six names were to be engraved on one stone, and six names on the other. But the Torah found it necessary to emphasize that after six names were engraved on the first stone, the other six were נותרים - “remaining.” What might be the implication of this word?

Rav Berenbaum explains that ideally, all the tribes’ names should be together on a single stone, because we all need to be united.

The *pasuk* says in Sefer Devarim (33:5), יהי בישראל מלך - "There was a king in Yeshurun (Yisrael), when the leaders of the nation assembled, [when] the tribes of Yisrael were together." G-d's kingship reaches its peak glory when all the different tribes of Am Yisrael join together in unity.

We are not meant to form just a single "tribe," to all be the same. We are meant to be different, to have diversity, to have different approaches, different styles, different customs, to form different "tribes" - but all the different groups are to come together on a single "stone."

As a practical matter, Rav Berenbaum writes, the names of the tribes needed to be divided, because the *kohen gadol* had two shoulders, but fundamentally, they were all meant to be together. And so, the Torah emphasizes that after the first six names were engraved on one stone, the other six were נותרים, left out, as they ideally should have been included with the first six on the same stone. When the *kohen gadol* comes to serve Hashem in the Mishkan, to bring honor and glory to the Almighty, we must be all together, on the same "stone," not in uniformity, but in unity, with all the "tribes" joined together in mutual love and respect.

Many people speak of the importance of "tolerating" other groups of Jews, that we must be "tolerant" of the Jews who are different from us. I vehemently object to this notion. Are we supposed to "tolerate" our siblings, or are we to love them and embrace them? Imagine that someone invites his parents to join him for Shabbos or Yom Tov, and the parents express their wish that his sibling, their other child, join them. How would they feel if he responds, "Well, I guess I'll tolerate that." Tolerate?! They would not be very happy with that response. Hashem, too, is not happy with "tolerance," with begrudgingly refraining from fighting with our fellow Jews. He wants us to love and respect one another, not just tolerate one another.

There is no greater joy and *nachas* that a parent can experience than seeing his or her children enjoying time together. I know how happy I feel when my kids send me pictures of them being together. The same is true of our Father in heaven. He receives the greatest *nachas* from us when we are unified, when His children join together in love and *achdus*.

REVEALING REALITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall make the Breastplate of Judgment the work of an artist, like the work of the Ephod shall you make it, of gold, turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool, and twisted linen shall you make it." (28:15)

The *urim* and *tumim* lost their ability to make the Breastplate function as an oracle after the destruction of the First Temple (Yoma 21b). This is a metaphor for the condition of exile, alluded to by the word for "Breastplate" (חֹשֶׁן), whose numerical value (358) is the

same as those of the words for "snake" (נחש) and "*Mashiach*" (משיח). The primordial snake, which brought sin to the world, and *Mashiach*, who will bring clarity of purpose, are, of course, diametric opposites. Yet that is the paradox of exile: The Messianic reality is implicit within exile; our job is just to reveal it.

Allegorically, then, our present mission is to restore the *urim* and *tumim* to the cosmic Breastplate - to "decode" the implicit Messianic perception, goodness, and perfection within the snakeskin of reality - so that it can assume its proper, revealed role, with the advent of the full and final Redemption. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 11, pp. 137-138) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

WISDOM OF SILENCE

Rabbi Ari Ciment

"And the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings." (28:20)

Rabbi Akiva says: A fence for wisdom is silence. (Avos 3:13)

Is wisdom really achieved by being a quiet person? If so, the *chacham* and the *she'eino yodei'a lishol* from the Pesach Haggadah should be equally wise!

Also, is "a fence for wisdom is silence" supposed to imply that quietness is a limitation to wisdom or that it actually contributes to wisdom?

The verse (Shemos 28:20) states, "And the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings." The Midrash Aggadah tries to explain why the jasper stone (called the יִשְׁפָּה) was the stone allotted for Binyamin to be placed in the fourth row of the *Choshen*, the breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol*. Since Binyamin knew that his brothers sold Yosef but did not reveal this information to Yaakov so as not to hurt him, he was awarded the jasper stone, which sounds like יש פה - "has mouth." This stone was chosen to represent Binyamin because its name reflects this praiseworthy trait of his. Rabbi Zweig asked that if Binyamin was indeed being lauded for his silence, why was the gem called ישפה - יש פה? Should the more appropriate name not be אין פה - "has no mouth"? What trait did Binyamin exhibit through his silence?

An answer that I heard from both Rabbi Zweig and Rabbi Neuhaus is that the great attribute of Binyamin was that he did not speak, even though he could speak. It's one thing to not speak because you have nothing to say (שאיניו יודע לשאול), but it's a real attribute to be able to refrain from speaking when you have much to say and yet choose silence when it is appropriate. Perhaps, then, a יש פה that is silent is more praiseworthy than a אין פה!

And so perhaps wisdom is not really achieved by being silent per se as much as it is about knowing when to be silent! In that sense, being wise is learning from others by giving pause and opening your ears, instead of your mouth.

LESSON FOR THE AGES

Rabbi Alexander Zusia Friedman

“And the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings.” (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.

DISPLAY OF SENSITIVITY

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

“The stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names...” (28:21)

The breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) contained twelve precious stones, each engraved with the name of a different tribe (28:21). Why were the stones engraved with names of the tribes rather than the names of the three *Avos* (Patriarchs) or four *Imahos* (Matriarchs)? Would they not have provided even more merit?

The *Kedushas Levi* suggests that because *Kohanim* were chosen to represent the nation, other tribes may have felt diminished or secondary. To protect against any potential feelings of diminished significance, all the tribes were represented equally on the *Kohen’s* breastplate. This action emphasizes the sensitivity G-d has for the possibility of feeling slighted, and we, too, should always look to avoid misunderstandings.

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

“And they shall bind the Choshen from its rings to the rings of the Ephod... and the Choshen shall not be detached from upon 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, when he enters the Sanctuary, as an eternal remembrance before G-d.” (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.

ILLUMINATING THE PATH

Reb Noson of Breslov

“Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart, when he enters the Sanctuary, as an eternal remembrance before G-d.” (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)

BREASTPLATE OF JUDGEMENT

Rebbe Nachman

“Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart, when he enters the Sanctuary, as an eternal remembrance before G-d.” (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)

REMAINING HUMBLE

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

“Aharon shall bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Choshen Mishpat on his heart, when he enters the Sanctuary, as an eternal remembrance before G-d.” (28:29)

The *kohen gadol’s* breastplate contained twelve stones, upon which the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved.

The Torah writes: “Aharon shall carry the names of *Bnei Yisrael* on the breastplate of justice, upon his heart, when he enters the Sanctuary, as an eternal remembrance before G-d” (28:29).

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, in *Kedushas Levi*, raises the question of why the Torah commanded the *kohen gadol* to wear specifically the names of the twelve tribes when serving in the *Mishkan*. Seemingly, if the *kohen gadol* wished to arouse Hashem’s compassion, and earn His favor, he should wear the names of our righteous ancestors, the *avos* and *imahos*. Instead of having the names of Reuven, Shimon and the other tribes engraved on his breastplate, why doesn’t he have the names of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sara, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, to invoke their great merit on behalf of their descendants? (In truth, as Rav Levi Yitzchak notes, the Gemara in *Maseches Yoma* (73) teaches that the names of the *avos* were actually included on the breastplate, together with the names of the tribes. However, Rav Levi Yitzchak points out that this is not mentioned in the text of the Chumash, implying that the names of the tribes were the primary feature of the breastplate.)

Rav Levi Yitzchak explains that when a person is set apart from the rest, and given a position of distinction, this might give the mistaken impression that he is more important than the rest of the group. In Aharon’s case, too, people might have erroneously concluded that his designation as *kohen gadol* meant that he was more important than the rest of *Am Yisrael*. It was therefore imperative for him to carry at all times the names of the tribes, so he would be reminded that he served on their behalf, as their representative. All members of the nation are equally important before Hashem, notwithstanding the fact that the *kohen gadol* is appointed to a special position. This position is given so that he could serve the people, not to show that he is in any way more important than them.

For this reason, Hashem tells Moshe earlier in the parsha (28:1) to designate Aharon and his sons מתוך בני ישראל - לכהנו לי - “from amidst *Bnei Yisrael* to minister before Me.” He emphasizes that the kohanim were selected מתוך בני ישראל - from within the people. They were not to see themselves as above the people, but rather as part of the nation, working on their behalf.

This teaching of Rav Levi Yitzchak reminds us that positions of leadership, authority and prestige must never get to a person’s head and must never lead him to think of himself as more important than anybody else. The purpose of such positions is to serve, to represent, and to help the people, not to give the holder of such a position a feeling of superiority or entitlement. A leader is meant to give, not to receive; to work on behalf of others, not to make demands of others. And so, the *kohen gadol* came before Hashem wearing the names of the tribes, reminding him that he was a servant of the people, and was not one iota more important or entitled than any of them.

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 Wisniewsky

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

"And the opening of its head shall be folded over within it, its opening shall have a border all around, the work of a weaver - it shall be for it like the opening of a suit of armor - it may not be torn." (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.

SILENT SPEECH

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.

CAREFUL CONTEMPLATION

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

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

In its description of the priestly garments, the *pasuk* describes the robe’s bottom hem as having alternating pomegranates and bells (28:34). When introducing the design, the *pasuk* begins with the pomegranates’ placement on the hem and continues with the golden bells’ placement in between them (28:33). Why are the bells specifically described as being placed in the pomegranates’ midst?

The Alshich suggests that the pomegranates represent introspection and internal growth (as the shell shelters its many seeds), while the bells represent speech and outward interactions. He explains that the specific wording is meant to give us perspective on the physical actions that these items represent. Not every thought or personal development should be surrounded by actions or speech, while every utterance should be framed by introspection and contemplation. Carefully considering and analyzing our words will facilitate the answering of our prayers and catapult internal growth.

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!"

WRAPPED IN UNITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"[The Robe] must be worn by Aharon in order [for him] to serve [as Kohen Gadol]." (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

THE ESTRANGED POMEGRANATE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"The sound [of the bells] must be heard as he [the Kohen Godel] 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

CHANNELING OUR TRAITS

Rabbi Jeremy Finn

"And you shall make a Tzitz of pure gold... it shall be upon Aharon's forehead." (28:36,38)

The Talmud (Zevachim 88b) tells us that the *Tzitz* was placed on the *metzach* - the forehead of the *Kohen Gadol*, to atone for the sin of *azus metzach* - haughtiness.

The Chasam Sofer points out that this is the reason why the *Tzitz* was the only one of the *bigdei kehunah* that had the words "*Kodesh La'Hashem*" on it. Why?

The Chasam Sofer explains that sin is only possible due to haughtiness. The sinner thinks, consciously or subconsciously, "Hashem tells me not to do something, but I know better, and therefore, I can override what Hashem has told me." There can be no greater expression of arrogance than this, and consequently, *azus metzach* is clearly something very negative.

However, we would not be able to perform any *mitzvah* without possessing some degree of *azus metzach*. The *yetzer hara* tells us not to perform *mitzvos*, and the wider world tells us not to perform *mitzvos*, sometimes our own family tells us not to perform *mitzvos*, and yet we manage to ignore all of them and fulfill the commandments! This can only be because we know better than them. It can only be because we have some arrogance.

Since *azus metzach* is sometimes negative and sometimes positive, the words "*Kodesh La'Hashem*" are written on the *Tzitz*.

We don't deny it, we don't totally negate it, but instead, we channel *azus metzach* to further our *avodas Hashem* and our relationship with Hashem. Our *azus metzach* needs to be *Kodesh La'Hashem*.

Hashem does not want us to negate, destroy, or remove the very characteristics that make us who we are. If, however, we tend toward certain negative features, we need to channel these to further our service to Him. Every characteristic that we have, and every action we take, should be *Kodesh La'Hashem*. (Nesivos Daas, p. 576)

GREETING G-D

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall make the Tunic of checkered texture, of linen; you shall make a Turban of linen, and you shall make a Sash the work of an embroiderer." (28:39)

The basic three garments worn by all priests - the tunic, the hat, and the trousers - served the primary function of clothing in general: to cover the body. The four special garments of the high priest - the Breastplate, the *Ephod*, the Robe, and the Forehead-plate - each served specific functions (as evidenced by the appurtenances affixed to them or embossed on them).

In contrast, the sash served neither to cover the body nor any specific function. Rather, as the final garment that the regular priest donned before proceeding to perform the Temple rites, it served the general function of signaling that the priest was ready for his service.

Along these lines, the sages of the Talmud (Shabbos 10a) explain the verse (Amos 4:12), "Prepare to greet your G-d, Israel," to mean that we should prepare ourselves before beginning our own Divine service - prayer. Physically, this means dressing respectfully, culminating in donning a belt (just as the priest's final preparation was donning the sash).

Spiritually, this preparation consists of focusing our mind and hearts on our essential connection to G-d and our desire to become one with Him. This intention is alluded to by the fact that the length of the Sash was 32 cubits, 32 being the numerical value of the word for "heart" (לב). (Likutei Sichot, vol. 36, pp. 154-159) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

HIDE AND SEE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"You shall take the garments and dress Aharon with the Tunic, and the Me'il of the Ephod, and the Ephod, and the Choshen, and you shall beautify him with the belt of the Ephod." (29:5)

The task of the priests in the Tabernacle (and its successor, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem) was to facilitate the people's approach to G-d and elicit Divine beneficence on their behalf.

This is essentially what we do in prayer: we approach G-d mentally and emotionally, and attempt to elicit His beneficence for ourselves and for others.

G-d's infinite energy must be reduced in order to be useful in our physical world, somewhat like electric current must be "stepped down" to power households. This was accomplished in the Tabernacle by means of the priests' clothing. On the one hand, clothing hides us; on the other hand, it garbs us in a specific image that we wish to project to the world. So too, the priests' clothing expressed this dynamic of concealment on the one hand and revelation on the other.

Similarly, by choosing the proper physical clothes and our spiritual "garments" - our thoughts, words, and deeds - we are able to approach G-d in prayer and channel His infinite energy into modes that are beneficial to ourselves and to the world in general. (Sefer HaMa'amarim 5711-5712-5713, pp. 404-409) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

SHARED PURPOSE

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

"You shall girdle them with an Avneit - Aharon and his sons - and you shall wrap the Migbaos on them; and the kahuna shall be for them an everlasting statute..." (29:9)

The Torah describes the garments worn by Aharon, the *Kohen Gadol*, and his sons, the *Kohanim*, as girded with sashes (belts) and hats and shares that "the priesthood shall be a statute for them forever..." (29:9). Why does the Torah use the discussion of the *Kohanim's* belts and hats as the opportunity to convey the permanence of the priesthood?

Rav Hirsch points out that the belts and hats of the *Kohanim* and *Kohen Gadol* were purposely identical. Although the roles of priests and the high priest are different, the goal is to consolidate everyone's energies toward a common goal. Rather than focusing on our individual roles, strengths, and situations, we should focus on our common goals and objectives. Focusing on what unites us, rather than what divides us, will ensure that we reach our goals together.

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 Wisniefsky

KEEPING IT GENUINE

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

"You shall take them from their hands and cause it to go up in smoke on the Mizbeach, after the olah-offering, for a pleasing fragrance before Hashem; it is a fire-offering for Hashem." (29:25)

The Torah describes the *Shelamim* offering, brought as an expression of joy and gratitude. The procedure includes waving and raising the offering in all directions, recognizing its source, and signifying that happiness should be shared with others. The *Kohen* then takes the offering from the donor and places it to be burned on the altar "as an ascent offering before G-d" (29:25). While many of these instructions are repeated for other sacrifices, the word "before" is unique to the *Shelamim* offering and is not used anywhere else. What is the significance of including the word "before" here?

Rav Hirsch suggests a difference between serving G-d and serving "before" G-d. While bringing voluntary offerings fulfills the purpose of thanking G-d directly, there is an added notion of serving G-d even before you get in front of Him. How we act when no one is looking is often more telling than what we do in front of others. We are our most authentic selves when the way we act alone matches how we present ourselves to others.

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."

SATURATED IN SANCTITY

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"For seven days you shall cleanse the Altar and consecrate it, the Altar shall be holy of holies; whatever touches the Altar will become consecrated." (29:37)

Allegorically, we all, collectively and individually, constitute the world's "Altar" (Likutei Torah 4:94b). The Altar was the means by which material reality ascended to Divinity; similarly, each of us possesses the ability to elevate the material world by using it for holy purposes.

Anything that was fit to be offered up on the Altar became "holy" as soon as it touched the Altar, meaning that it had to be offered up; it could not be "de-sanctified" and used for mundane purposes.

Likewise, we should strive to imitate the Altar in this regard. We should aspire to be so saturated with Divine consciousness that anything that we "touch" (i.e., come in contact with) - provided that it is "fit" (i.e., permitted to us by the Torah) - will become irrevocably influenced by our holiness.

We will thereby progressively transform the world into G-d's ultimate home. (Sefer HaSichot 5748, vol. 1, pp. 287-289) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

"This is what you shall offer upon the Altar; sheep within their first year, two each day, continually... at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, before Hashem; where I will arrange audience for you to speak to you there." (29:38, 42)

The Torah describes the *Tamid* offering, brought twice a day. Haamek Davar notes that this is one of two places where the Torah describes the *Tamid* offering. However, in our parashah, G-d emphasizes that He will rest His Presence within the tent. Why does our parashah mention the tent that housed G-d's Presence, while the recap later does not?

Haamek Davar suggests that the first mention of the *Tamid* offering had the unique function of establishing the relationship between G-d and His people. The focus on consistent offerings serves as a baseline for our relationship with G-d and creating a "home" within us. Consistency builds a baseline of trust and is the framework for lasting relationships.

DAY AND NIGHT

HaDerash V'Halyun

"You shall offer the one sheep in the morning, and the second sheep you shall offer in the afternoon." (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 through My honor." (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.

CONVERSING WITH G-D

Lubavitcher Rebbe

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

Without discounting the value and importance of personal, private prayer, the Torah places great emphasis as well on communal prayer. The sages (Berachot 7b-8a) teach us that "the Holy One, blessed be He, never spurns the prayers offered communally." Thus, the Tabernacle served as the venue for both directions of communication between G-d and the Jewish people: G-d conveyed His messages to the people there (through Moshe), and the people gathered there to offer up their prayers to G-d.

This dual function has continued in the synagogue: We gather there both for communal prayer and for communal study of the Torah (which is how we can hear G-d's messages to us nowadays). Indeed, both in English and Hebrew, the words "synagogue" and *beit keneseh* mean "house of assembly."

Continuing this theme at home, as well, it is appropriate to designate a fixed place for both prayer and Torah study, in order to help us keep in mind that communication with G-d is a two-way street: He speaks to us through the Torah just as surely as we pour out our hearts to Him in prayer.
- Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

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 Wisnefsky

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. 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 Aharon shall bring the aromatic incense on it, each morning, when he cleans the lamps..." (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.

YOM KIPPUR ANYTIME

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"Aharon will cleanse its horns once a year, from the blood of the sin-offering of the atonements, once a year shall he cleanse it for your generations; it is holy of holies to Hashem." (30:10)

The words "once a year" refer to Yom Kippur. This law is stated here, rather than in the section of the Torah that discusses the rites of Yom Kippur (Vayikra 16), to indicate that the daily incense offering (which took place in the outer chamber of the Tabernacle and could be performed by any priest) was a minor version of the incense offering of Yom Kippur (which took place in the inner chamber - the Holy of Holies - and could be performed only by the high priest).

The incense offering on Yom Kippur was the climax of the service of that day, expressing the highest level of unity between G-d and humanity. It therefore took place at the conjunction of the most sublime levels of time (Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year), space (the Holy of Holies), and person (the high priest).

The fact that the daily incense rites are compared to those of Yom Kippur teaches us that we need not wait until Yom Kippur to experience the elevated sense of communion with G-d that characterizes that day. Whenever and wherever we open our hearts to G-d, He is available to us. (Sefer HaSichot 5752, vol. 2, p. 414) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

HAFTORAH

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*.

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