

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"L**

### Covenant & Conversation

**T**here is an important principle in Judaism, a source of hope and also one of the structuring principles of the Torah. It is the principle that God creates the cure before the disease (Megillah 13b). Bad things may happen but God has already given us the remedy if we know where to look for it.

So for instance in Chukat we read of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron and how Moses was told that he would die in the desert without entering the Promised Land. This is a terrifying encounter with mortality. Yet before any of this, we first hear the law of the red heifer, the rite of purification after contact with death. The Torah has placed it here to assure us in advance that we can be purified after any bereavement. Human mortality does not ultimately bar us from being in the presence of Divine immortality.

This is the key to understanding Terumah. Though not all commentators agree, its real significance is that it is God's answer in advance to the sin of the Golden Calf. In strict chronological terms it is out of place here. It (and Tetzaveh) should have appeared after Ki Tissa, which tells the story of the Calf. It is set here before the sin to tell us that the cure existed before the disease, the tikkun before the kilkul, the mending before the fracture, the rectification before the sin.

So to understand Terumah and the phenomenon of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary and all that it entailed, we have first to understand what went wrong at the time of the Golden Calf. Here the Torah is very subtle and gives us, in Ki Tissa, a narrative that can be understood at three quite different levels.

The first and most obvious is that the sin of the Golden Calf was due to a failure of leadership on the part of Aaron. This is the overwhelming impression we receive on first reading [62]Exodus 32. We sense that Aaron should have resisted the people's clamour. He should have told them to be patient. He should have shown leadership. He did not. When Moses comes down the mountain and asks him what he has done, Aaron replies: "Do not be angry, my lord. You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make an oracle to lead us, since we do not know what happened to Moses, the man who took us out of Egypt.' So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewellery, take it

off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this Calf!" (Ex. 32:22-24)

This is a failure of responsibility. It is also a spectacular act of denial ("I threw it into the fire, and out came this Calf!"). So the first reading of the story is of Aaron's failure.

(In Deuteronomy 9:20, Moses discloses a fact which has been kept from us until that point: "God also expressed great anger toward Aaron, threatening to destroy him, so, at that time, I also prayed for Aaron.")

But only the first. A deeper reading suggests that it is about Moses. It was his absence from the camp that created the crisis in the first place.

The people began to realise that Moses was taking a long time to come down from the mountain. They gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Make us an oracle to lead us. We have no idea what happened to Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt.'

God told Moses what was happening and said: "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have wrought ruin." Ex. 32:7

The undertone is clear. "Go down," suggests that God was telling Moses that his place was with the people at the foot of the mountain, not with God at the top. "Your people" implies that God was telling Moses that the people were his problem, not God's. He was about to disown them.

Moses urgently prayed to God for forgiveness, then descended. What follows is a whirlwind of action. Moses descends, sees what has happened, breaks the tablets, burns the Calf, mixes its ashes with water and makes the people drink, then summons help in punishing the wrongdoers. He has become the leader in the midst of the people, restoring order where a moment before there had been chaos. On this reading the central figure was Moses. He had been the strongest of strong leaders. The result, though, was that when he was not there, the people panicked. That is the downside of strong leadership.

But there then follows a chapter, Exodus 33, that is one of the hardest in the Torah to understand. It begins with God announcing that, though He would send an "angel" or "messenger" to accompany the people on the rest of their journey, He Himself would not be in their midst "because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way." This deeply distresses the people. (See Ex. 33:1-6)

In verses 12-23, Moses challenges God on this

verdict. He wants God's Presence to go with the people. He asks, "Let me know Your ways," and "Pray let me see Your glory." This is hard to understand. The entire exchange between Moses and God, one of the most intense in the Torah, is no longer about sin and forgiveness. It seems almost to be a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of God. What is its connection with the Golden Calf?

It is what happens between these two episodes that is the most puzzling of all. The text says that Moses "took his tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, far from the camp" (Ex. 33:7). This must surely have been precisely the wrong thing to do. If, as God and the text have implied, the problem had been the distance of Moses as a leader, the single most important thing for him to do now would be to stay in the people's midst, not position himself outside the camp. Moreover, the Torah has just told us that God had said He would not be in the midst of the people -- and this caused the people distress. Moses' decision to do likewise would surely have doubled their distress. Something deep is happening here.

It seems to me that in Exodus 33 Moses is undertaking the most courageous act of his life. He is, in essence, saying to God: "It is not my distance that is the problem. It is Your distance. The people are terrified of You. They have witnessed Your overwhelming power. They have seen You bring the greatest empire the world has ever known to its knees. They have seen You turn sea into dry land, send down food from heaven and bring water from a rock. When they heard Your voice at Mount Sinai, they came to me to beg me to be an intermediary. They said, 'You speak to us and we will hearken, but let not God speak to us lest we die' (Ex. 20:16). They made a Calf not because they wanted to worship an idol, but because they wanted some symbol of Your Presence that was not terrifying. They need You to be close. They need to sense You not in the sky or the summit of the mountain but in the midst of the camp. And even if they cannot see Your face, for no one can do that, at least let them see some visible sign of Your glory."

That, it seems to me, is Moses' request to which this week's parsha is the answer. "Let them make for Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst." Ex. 25:8

This is the first time in the Torah that we hear the verb *sh-ch-n*, meaning "to dwell," in relation to God. As a noun it means literally, "a neighbour." From this is derived the key word in post-biblical Judaism, *Shechinah*, meaning God's immanence as opposed to His transcendence, God-as-One-who-is-close, the daring idea of God as a near neighbour.

In terms of the theology of the Torah, the very idea of a *Mishkan*, a Sanctuary or Temple, a physical "home" for "God's glory," is deeply paradoxical. God is beyond space. As King Solomon said at the

inauguration of the first Temple, "Behold, the heavens, and the heavens of the heavens, cannot encompass You, how much less this House?" Or as Isaiah said in God's name: "The heavens are My throne and the earth My foot-stool. What House shall you build for Me, where can My resting place be?" (Is. 66:1)

The answer, as the Jewish mystics emphasised, is that God does not live in a building, but rather in the hearts of the builders: "Let them make for me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8) -- "among them," not "in it." How, though, does this happen? What human act causes the Divine Presence to live within the camp, the community? The answer is the name of our parsha, *Terumah*, meaning, a gift, a contribution.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from everyone whose heart moves them to give.' Ex. 25:8

This would prove to be the turning point in Jewish history. Until that moment the Israelites had been recipients of God's miracles and deliverances. He had taken them from slavery to freedom and performed miracles for them. There was only one thing God had not yet done, namely, give the Israelites the chance of giving back something to God. The very idea sounds absurd. How can we, God's creations, give back to the God who made us? All we have is His. As David said, at the gathering he convened at the end of his life to initiate the building the Temple: "Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things... Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." (I Chronicles 29:12, 29:14)

That ultimately is the logic of the *Mishkan*. God's greatest gift to us is the ability to give to Him. From a Judaic perspective the idea is fraught with risk. The idea that God might be in need of gifts is close to paganism and heresy. Yet, knowing the risk, God allowed Himself to be persuaded by Moses to cause His spirit to rest within the camp and allow the Israelites to give something back to God.

At the heart of the idea of the Sanctuary is what Lewis Hyde beautifully described as the labour of gratitude. His classic study, *The Gift*, looks at the role of the giving and receiving of gifts, for example, at critical moments of transition. He quotes the Talmudic story of a man whose daughter was about to get married, but who had been told that she would not survive to the end of the day. The next morning the man visited his daughter and saw that she was still alive. Unknown to both of them, when she hung up her hat after the wedding, its pin pierced a serpent that would otherwise have bitten and killed her. The father wanted to know what his daughter had done that merited this Divine Intervention. She answered, "A poor man came to the

door yesterday. Everyone was so busy with the wedding preparations that they did not have time to deal with him. So I took the portion that had been intended for me and gave it to him." It was this act of generosity that was the cause of her miraculous deliverance. (Shabbat 156b)

The construction of the Sanctuary was fundamentally important because it gave the Israelites the chance to give back to God. Later Jewish law recognised that giving is an integral part of human dignity when they made the remarkable ruling that even a poor person completely dependent on charity is still obliged to give charity. (Maimonides Hilchot Shekalim 1:1, Mattenot Ani'im 7:5) To be in a situation where you can only receive, not give, is to lack human dignity.

The Mishkan became the home of the Divine Presence because God specified that it be built only out of voluntary contributions. Giving creates a gracious society by enabling each of us to make our contribution to the public good. That is why the building of the Sanctuary was the cure for the sin of the Golden Calf. A society that only received but could not give was trapped in dependency and lack of self-respect. God allowed the people to come close to Him, and He to them, by giving them the chance to give.

That is why a society based on rights not responsibilities, on what we claim from, not what we give to others, will always eventually go wrong. It is why the most important gift a parent can give a child is the chance to give back. The etymology of the word Terumah hints at this. It means not simply a contribution, but literally something "raised up." When we give, it is not just our contribution but we who are raised up. We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give. *Covenant and Conversation 5775 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l ©2015 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks z"l and rabbisacks.org*

**RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

## Shabbat Shalom

**M**oses and Aaron were the two great leaders of the Israelites in the desert; prophet and priest. Moses, the master prophet, seems to have arisen to leadership not because he came from a prominent Hebrew family – indeed, the Bible introduces him merely as a child of “a man from the house of Levi who took a Levite woman as a wife” (Exodus 2:1-2), and his adoptive mother with whom he lived his most formative years in the palace of Pharaoh was a gentile Egyptian princess.

The Bible relates three incidents in which Moses fought against acts of injustice – his slaying of an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Hebrew, his berating of a Hebrew raising his hand against another Hebrew, and his protecting a Midianite shepherdess

(who later became his wife) from unfair treatment by other Midianite shepherds. Apparently, Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites not because of his ancestral pedigree, but rather because of his Abrahamic character of compassionate righteousness and of a universal sense of moral justice.

Prophetic leadership apparently depends not on who your parents and grandparents were, but rather on who you are.

Aaron, the high priest, is of very different typology.

Firstly, the priesthood is all about genealogy – priesthood comes exclusively from being born into a family of priests. Hence, in our portion of Tetzaveh – the only portion in the biblical books from Exodus to Deuteronomy in which Moses's name doesn't appear – the task of setting up the menorah is given to “Aaron and his sons” (Exodus 27:21). The Bible lists them by name, “Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron,” and states that they are to be brought forward to serve as priests. Aaron and his sons comprise a unit of familial inheritance from father to son, a phenomenon completely absent in the case of Moses.

The kohanim have special vestments, which they must wear while performing the Sanctuary (or Temple) service: four specific garments for the regular kohanim, and eight specific garments for the high priest. Indeed, if a priest is without his unique garb, he must vacate the Temple Mount – which leads the Talmud to declare that the sanctity of the kohen seems to reside in his external garb. However, the prophet has no distinguishing garment whatsoever.

Apparently, the prophet is a charismatic leader whose only qualification is that he is inflamed with the fiery passion of the spirit of the Lord; the kohen inherits his position, which relies on priestly vestments to bestow “honor and glory” and inspire the masses with prideful religious fervor.

In order to understand the different and complementary roles each of these officiates must play in the drama of Israelite leadership, we must first understand the essence of our Jewish mission. The first task of religion – and the fundamental search of most philosophers from earliest times – is to provide a stable and unchanging constancy in a world of frightening flux, to give people the sense that they are participating in experiences and rituals which were there before they were born and will continue after they die. This allows transient mortals to grasp eternity, and to feel that they are in the presence of God.

Herein lies the power and the noble task of the priest, the guardian of our ancient religious traditions.

The verse which most defines him is: “Remember the days of old, understand the years of past generations. Ask your father and he will tell you, your grandfather and he will say to you” (Deut. 32:7).

His primary function is to safeguard the rituals; he must hand over the exact structure of the ritual, the precise text of the prayer or legal passage, from generation to generation.

His expertise lies in his mastery of the external form – and preserving it at all costs.

But the root of every religion is the sense of awe at being in the presence of God, the passionate commitment to Divine command in the here and now! What happens when parts of the ritual lose their relevance, when people get so caught up in the form that they lose the essence, so involved in the precise structure of the Divine service that they forget that the real Divine service lies in their human sensitivity? Then it is the prophet who must come forth, speaking as the mouthpiece of the Voice of the Living God, reminding the religionists that all their ritual is of no value if they forget the poor, the orphan, the widow and the “chained” wife-widow, the other, the stranger, and the proselyte knocking at our door. The prophet’s message must insist that God despises our rituals (Isaiah 1:11-17), unless “moral justice rolls forth like the waters and compassionate righteousness like a mighty stream” (Amos 5: 24).

Thus far, and especially during these last decades, the Chief Rabbinate in Israel has majored in the priesthood, but is sadly lacking in a prophetic dimension.

The last time that happened, the Holy Temple was destroyed. ©2022 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

#### **RABBI BEREL WEIN**

### **Wein Online**

In the Torah reading of this week, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the preparation of the oil that will be the fuel for the flames of the great Candelabra that existed in the Tabernacle and, later, in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Torah emphasizes that the oil to be used must be of the purest kind, refined to produce only illumination. Through this verse, the commentators attempt to explain why such a special emphasis is to be placed on the oil.

Perhaps it would be sufficient for the Torah to simply command that the flames that emanated from the Menorah should be of the highest quality and have the greatest power of illumination. We would then understand that to produce flames of such a nature and quality, only the finest oil possible would have to be produced for the Candelabra to possess that proper fuel and extraordinarily fine flames. Thus, we see that the Torah emphasizes the preparation of the oil in more detail and with greater urgency than it does the description of the flame of the Candelabra that results.

In a strange way, it is as though the oil itself, which after all is only the fuel in the cup of the lamp of the Candelabra, somehow receives more prominence

and detailed instruction than the flame itself. Not only that, but the great Candelabra has miraculous powers, and one of its lamps burned continuously, according to many commentaries, without having any added oil to the cup of that lamp. As such, if we are relying on that miracle, then why should the production of the oil for the Candelabra be deemed important at all?

Judaism places great weight not only on the fulfillment and actualization of commandments, but also regarding the preparation that precedes the actual fulfillment of the wishes of Heaven. Holiness and holy acts require preparation and forethought. They are not random acts that rarely occur because of the spontaneity of the moment.

All the holy days of the Jewish calendar require periods of planning – thirty days before the holiday itself, as well as physical, mental, and emotional preparation. One must enter the performance of commandments prepared. They are not to be performed haphazardly and without proper forethought and cognitive intent.

This is also true for the Sabbath day that occurs every week as well as all the daily commandments that we are privileged to perform on a regular basis. The Talmud teaches us that preparation is an important aspect of life – many times as important as actualizing the commandment.

Without proper preparation, performance of the commandments is likened to a body to which no soul is attached. Therefore, if we understand and appreciate this attitude towards life and commandments, we can readily appreciate why the Torah is so emphatic regarding the necessary methods of production of the oil to be used to light the lamps of the holy Tabernacle and Temple. ©2022 *Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)*

#### **RABBI AVI WEISS**

### **Shabbat Forshpeis**

One of the more famous objects worn by the high priest is his breastplate, the Urim v'Tumim, literally, the “Lights and the Perfection” (Exodus 28:30). On its surface were twelve stones, and on each stone was spelled out a tribe of Israel. The Hebrew name Urim v'Tumim teaches us much about its deeper meaning.

Urim comes from the Hebrew word or (light). At times, the high priest would turn to the Urim v'Tumim for advice. Letters from the Urim v'Tumim would light up in response.

Tumim expands on this idea. The term is similar to tamim, a pious person who walks on the “correct” path. As the letters lit up (urim), they needed to be read correctly, in proper order (tumim).

The Vilna Gaon points out that a misreading occurred when Eli the high priest turned to the Urim v'Tumim to understand whether Channah, who was praying for a son, was sincere. The letters shin, kuf, reish, and heh lit up. Eli mistakenly combined those letters and read it as "shikorah" (drunk), when he should have read it as "kesheirah" (kosher, morally upright), as she was absolutely sincere (I Samuel 1:13, 14; Aderet Eliyahu, I Samuel 1:13–16). Here, tumim must be joined with urim to avoid the message of the breastplate being misread with devastating consequences.

Perhaps, too, it can be suggested that tumim – which also means "whole" – teaches that the urim, the light to which it is connected, must be loving, as there is no wholeness without love. This is or ahavah (the light of love). Thus, after concluding the first of the morning blessings before Shema with the words Yotzer ha'meorot (the One Who forms lights), the next blessing begins ahavah rabbah (with great love).

For the high priest wearing the Urim v'Tumim, this message is critical. The priest is associated with Temple ritual, following specific detailed rules and regulations. These externalities, as crucial as they are, must be complemented by inner love. Hence, the Priestly Blessing before the benediction closes with the word love – "Blessed are You, the Lord...[Who has] commanded us to bless His people Israel with love [ahavah]."

While the high priest wears the Urim v'Tumim, our challenge is to live its message: after all, we are called a mamlechet kohanim, a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) whose goal is to bring light, whole light, holistic light into the world: The urim that is tamim; the or that is loving. Or ahavah. ©2022 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

#### ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

## Adar Rishon & Adar Sheni

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

**T**he Jewish leap year, which occurs seven times in a 19-year cycle, has 13 months instead of the regular year's 12. The additional month is added after Adar and is known as *Adar Sheni* (the second Adar). The question arises: During a leap year, if someone simply refers to Adar without specifying the first or the second, what does he mean? The *Tannaim* (Mishnaic Sages) disagree. Rabbi Yehudah says that if someone simply refers to Adar, we assume he means the first Adar. Thus, if a legal document is written during a leap year, when it is written during the first Adar the month may be written simply as Adar; if it is written during the second Adar, it must be specified that the month is the second Adar.

Rabbi Meir disagrees. He maintains that during a leap year, if someone refers simply to Adar, he can be assumed to be speaking of the second Adar (*Nedarim* 63a). While most of the halachic authorities accept the view of Rabbi Yehudah, the Rambam follows the view of Rabbi Meir. In any case, when writing a bill of divorce we always specify during which Adar the document was written, *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Sheni*.

This disagreement has many ramifications. For example, if a person rents a house during a leap year, and the lease expires in Adar, does this mean the start of the first Adar or the start of the second Adar? The landlord would likely claim the lease ends with the start of the first Adar, while the renter would likely insist it ends with the start of the second. In such a case, some rabbis suggest that the renter pay half for the second month (in effect splitting the difference). Others state that the landlord has the upper hand, as he owns the property. Accordingly, the burden of proof is on the tenant (to prove that the lease was meant to extend through the end of the first Adar). This is because there is a principle that "*Ha-motzi mei-chavero alav ha-re'aya*." This means that whoever wishes to extract something (here the right of tenancy) from its current owner must prove that he is entitled to it.

The controversy also affects the commemoration of a *yahrzeit* (the day on which a relative died). For example, let us say someone passed away on the tenth of Adar. During a leap year, some recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* on the tenth of both the first Adar and the second Adar.

When it comes to the *yahrzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu on the seventh of Adar, there are indications that it should be commemorated during the second Adar, close to Purim (which during a leap year is celebrated in the second Adar).

On the Shabbat preceding the start of a new month in the Jewish calendar, a prayer is recited in *shul*, ushering in the new month by name. It is questionable which name we should use to usher in each Adar during a leap year.

In short, the disagreement about this topic extends to many areas. Therefore, the prudent thing to do is to always clarify which Adar we mean, by specifying either *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Sheni*. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and Encyclopedia Talmudit

#### RABBI DAVID LEVIN

## More than Light

**P**arashat T'tzaveh begins and ends with two mitzvot which are tied together and appear to be out of place. We begin with the oil for the Menorah and end with the one object that was not built until everything else was completed, the incense altar, which was placed at the entrance of the Holy. Since the majority of Parashat T'tzaveh concerns the special

clothes of the regular Kohein and the Kohein HaGadol and their anointments, the two paragraphs about the oil and the Golden Incense Altar appear out of place, especially since Terumah contains the commandments to build the Mishkan and its objects as given to Moshe by Hashem. We must derive from this that the order was not a mistake, but was a purposeful act.

Moshe is told at the beginning of our parasha, "And you will command the Children of Israel and they will take for you pure olive oil, pressed, for illumination to light a lamp continually. In the Tent of Meeting outside of the Parochet (curtain) that is near the Testimony (in the Ark) Aharon shall arrange it, with his sons, from evening until morning, before Hashem, an eternal decree for their generations, from the B'nei Yisrael." The oil for the ner tamid was prepared on a regular basis and constantly needed to be renewed. We know that it was not only the Kohanim who prepared this oil and brought it to the Temple. Every Jew was involved in the gathering of enough oil to fulfill this mitzvah.

The conclusion of our parasha introduces the Golden Altar that was used for incense each day. "You shall make an altar on which to bring incense up in smoke, of shittim wood shall you make it. Its length an amah and its width an amah – and two amot its height; from it shall its horns be. You shall cover it with pure gold, its roof and its walls all around, and its horns, and you shall make for it a golden diadem (crown) all around. ... You shall put it in front of the parochet that is by the Aron of the Testimony (Holy Ark), in front of the lid that is on the Testimony, where I will arrange audience for you. Upon it shall Aharon bring the spice-incense up in smoke, every morning at his cleaning the lamps he shall bring it up in smoke. And when Aharon kindles the lamps in the afternoon, he shall bring it up in smoke, continual incense before Hashem, for your generations. You shall not bring up on it, foreign incense, or olah-offering or meal-offering; nor may you pour a poured offering upon it. 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."

HaRav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains that both the oil and the incense were listed previously among the donations for the Mishkan even though neither was needed for the actual building. Perhaps it is for that reason that neither is mentioned in last week's parasha, Terumah, but are included in this week's parasha which deals primarily with the Kohanim and their special clothes that were worn when they performed the service of the Temple, which, in some cases, used the oil and the incense. Hirsch describes the oil as "representing illumination and clarity of mind," and the incense as "complete sublimation of all actions to make them something that is pleasing to Hashem."

Once each year, the Golden Altar was used for

the sprinkling of the blood of a sacrifice, the sin-offering brought by the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur. There are two exceptions to this rule but we will not deal with them now. This is an atonement for any Kohein who is aware of his impurity and yet enters the Temple grounds or unwittingly eats from a portion of a sacrifice or a Kohein who is unaware of his impurity and wittingly eats from a sacrifice. The incense which was kindled each day and night had a slightly different purpose. The Kli Yakar compared the Golden Altar with the main Altar which was located just outside of the Mishkan in the courtyard. The main Altar was used for the animal sacrifices and the meal-offerings which were brought daily. The blood of these sacrifices was sprinkled on the Altar according to the method used for each kind of sacrifice. This Altar's primary purpose was for the atonement of sins. The Kli Yakar understood this as a cleansing of the body of the individual; the animal's body received the punishment which should have been received by the individual, its body for his. This physical atonement was insufficient for the total atonement of the individual. The individual still needed a spiritual atonement, for his soul was damaged by his sin. The sweet-smelling incense rose up before Hashem every morning and afternoon. This smoke from the Golden Altar atoned for the spiritual damage that had been done to the sinner's soul.

The as yet unanswered question is why the Golden Altar, which is clearly one of the objects of the Temple, is not mentioned until after the commandments for all of the other objects and after the commandments concerning the clothing and the inauguration of the Kohanim. Its rightful place should have been in last week's parasha. Rav Hirsch explains that the placement of the Golden Altar was indicative of its importance. It was placed inside the Holy, opposite the Holy Ark. "This position makes one regard it as representing the realization of the ideal taught by the Torah in the combination of the material and the spiritual blessings granted by the Torah." The covering of pure gold on this Altar as compared to the Alter of animal sacrifices indicates that Man, too, must strive for that level of purity without blemish. HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin presents a more practical reason for the Golden Altar's late presentation. Were the Altar that was outside of the Mishkan in the courtyard be unusable or damaged, it would be impossible to bring a sacrifice until a new Altar was built. This was not true of the Golden Altar. Were it to be unusable, the incense would continue to be burned each day in the place where the Golden Altar had stood. According to the Rambam, the Golden Altar was not required for the service.

The oil for the Menorah and the incense for the Golden Altar are both kindled tamid, continually: the light to be kindled for clarity of mind, and the incense to be kindled for purity of soul. May we seek both clarity

of mind and purity of soul continually in our lives.

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### RABBI JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

## Migdal Ohr

"Six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six remaining on the second stone, according to their birth." (Shmos 28:10)

The Kohain Gadol's apron had two straps which came up the back, went over the shoulder, and attached to the Choshen, the breastplate he wore on his heart. On each strap was an epaulet with a precious stone. The names of the Twelve Tribes were inscribed on these stones as a remembrance before Hashem, that He recall the righteousness of the tribes.

A number of commentaries dwell on the phrase, "the six remaining." Normally, the word, 'nosarim,' connotes leftover and somewhat inferior to the previous items mentioned, such as "the remainder of Lavan's flocks" after Yaakov separated his. In this case, the meforshim point out, the words should NOT be taken as implying that the six tribes whose names appeared on the second stone were any less great than the first six.

There are different opinions of which names were on which stone, how they were placed, and the order. The Torah mentions, "according to their birth," to let us know that to some degree they were listed in birth order, further negating the idea that some were not as great as the others. Regardless of what layout there really was, the word, "remaining," does not convey inferiority or superfluosness, so why use it at all? Why not simply say, "Six on one and six on the other?"

The Chasam Sofer asks why the names of the Avos were inscribed on the stones of the Choshen but not of the ephod. He explains that the righteousness we're recalling is the fact that the Jews stood on two mountains, Har Grizim and Har Eival, and took oaths to uphold the Torah. At that time, six tribes stood on one mountain, six on the others, and the Levites stood in the middle. When wearing the two stones on his epaulets, the Kohain Gadol reenacted that, with six on either side and himself in the middle. The Avos weren't there.

It would seem, therefore, that the point intended here was the necessity of having ALL tribes present and represented. The oaths devolved on the Jews required both the tribes that were on the mountain of the blessings and those on the mountain of the curses. There were no greater or lesser tribes, because they all needed to be together.

Therefore, if one stone had six tribes on it, the other stone by necessity needed to have the other six tribes on it as they were connected. The word "remaining," in this case, refers to the fact that they all come as a unit, and if six were there, there had to be another six waiting in the wings, and their names were

placed on the second stone.

One final point is that the Baal HaTurim points out the roshei taivos, the acronym of the words, "Shisha Mishmosam Al," spell out Shema, as they said, "Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad." When did they say that? When Yaakov was afraid that perhaps one of his sons was not as pure and holy as he should be, and he needed 12 tribes! Then his children in unison reassured him that they ALL were united in their faith in Hashem.

An impudent youth once told R' Meir Shapiro that the Talmud was racist. The Gemara says, on the posuk, "And you My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, are man..." (Yechezkel 34:31) that Yisroel is "man" but not the Gentiles. "How racist this is!" he said. "To say the goyim are not people?! Perhaps they are not spiritual or holy, but not called menschen?!"

"You misunderstand," said R' Meir. "The Torah is teaching that all of us together are called "a man." When one of us has pain, we feel it as if it were our own body. The Gentiles have no such connection. While they are definitely men, only Klal Yisroel is "a man," unified, necessary, and caring about every other Jew." © 2022 Rabbi J. Gewirtz and Migdal Ohr

### RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

## RavFrand

*Transcribed by David Twersky*

*Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman*

The pasuk in Parshas Tezaveh says: "And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from the midst of the Children of Israel, so that he shall be a Kohen to me -- Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Isamar the sons of Aharon." [Shemos 28:1]. I heard a thought on a tape from Rav Isaac Bernstein linking this pasuk with a very novel teaching of the Dubno Maggid.

Rav Bernstein is bothered -- what does the pasuk mean when it says "You should take Aharon your brother and his sons with him FROM THE MIDST (mi'toch) BNEI YISRAEL"? The words "Mi'toch Bnei Yisrael" seem superfluous. Obviously, Kohanim will not be taken from a different nation! Is there then some kind of message that the Torah is trying to convey with these words?

The Dubno Maggid says a mind-boggling idea.

The Talmud teaches [Rosh HaShannah 25B] that Yiftach in his generation was like Shmuel in his generation. The Shofet Yiftach is a very enigmatic Biblical personality. He was not what we would call the greatest man who ever walked the face of the earth. He certainly was not anywhere near the caliber of the prophet Shmuel. Shmuel haNavi stands out in a Tanach full of great people as one of the dominant personalities of Jewish history. When Chazal say that Yiftach in his generation was like Shmuel in his generation, they are trying to convey that Yiftach was

not on the level of a Shmuel, but every generation must live with the leader it has. Therefore, the people living in Yiftach's generation had to give him the same honor and deference as if he was a Shmuel haNavi.

This is the simple interpretation of this gemara in Masseches Rosh HaShannah. The Dubno Maggid quotes a Medrash in Koheles (which I could not find in any Medrash on my computer database, but the Dubno Maggid is greater than any computer -- so I am not questioning the authenticity of his source). According to this Medrash the intent of the Talmudic passage is the reverse: Had Shmuel lived in the generation of Yiftach, he would not have been considered to be anything special. This is mind-boggling, because we see in the story of Yiftach that Yiftach made some terrible mistakes in his life.

The Dubno Maggid explains that the Medrash does not mean that Yiftach was greater than Shmuel. Shmuel was far greater than Yiftach and most other people. The Medrash means that every generation needs a leader to whom they can relate. Sometimes, a leader can be TOO BIG for his generation. He could be too far above them and too removed from them to lead them properly. The Dubno Maggid, in his inimitable fashion, gives a parable to explain this:

Just like the clothes a person wears cannot be too small on him, so too the clothes a person wears cannot be too big on him. Someone who is a size 42 who wears a size 56 suit will not be properly dressed! That is the way it is with leaders at well. The leader needs to be appropriate and fit the particular generation he is leading. The Dubno Maggid explains that had Shmuel been in the generation of Yiftach, he would not have been an effective leader because he was too spiritually superior to that generation. The people could not have related to him.

Rav Bernstein suggests that this is perhaps what the pasuk is hinting at in our parsha as well. The pasuk says "And you should take Aharon and his sons... FROM THE MIDST OF BNEI YISRAEL." The Kohanim need to be the leaders of their generation, consequently they need to come from the midst of the people -- individuals whom the people can look up to, and yet relate to. If they are too far above the level of the people, they will not be able to function as role models. "Augh! He is too above us. He is a Malach! We need a human being!" ©2022 Rabbi Y. Frand and [torah.org](http://torah.org)

**SHLOMO KATZ**

## Hama'ayan

**O**ur Parashah opens: "Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael..." R' Yitzchak Dov Koppelman z"l (1906-2011; Rosh Yeshiva in Antwerp, Belgium; New York; and Lucerne, Switzerland) writes: In last week's Parashah, the focus was on voluntary donations, as we read (25:2), "From every man whose

heart motivates him you shall take..." In this week's Parashah, in contrast, Bnei Yisrael are commanded to give.

He explains: Hashem wanted the Mishkan / Tabernacle to be built from voluntary donations, reflecting Bnei Yisrael's love of Hashem and their desire for closeness to Him, because it is those feelings that create a dwelling place for the Shechinah in this world. At the same time, the Gemara (Kiddushin 31a) teaches: "One who performs an act that he is commanded to do is greater than one who performs an act that he is not commanded to do." Although responding to a command does not demonstrate the same love of G-d as a voluntary act, it does demonstrate a recognition that fulfilling Hashem's will is man's highest calling. This, explains R' Koppelman, is why it was not sufficient that Bnei Yisrael volunteered, "Na'aseh ve'nishma" / "We will do and we will hear." Rather, the Gemara (Shabbat 88a) teaches that Hashem held the mountain over their head and coerced them to accept the Torah.

R' Koppelman adds that there are two ways to serve Hashem: "Ahavah" / love and "Yir'ah" / reverence. While Ahavah surely is the higher form, we need to know that we cannot serve Him without Yir'ah as well. (Siach Yitzchak)



"Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael..." (27:20)

Commentaries note that this Parashah does not begin, as most others do, "And Hashem spoke to Moshe..." Many attribute this to Moshe's saying (Shmot 32:32), "Now if You would but forgive their sin! -- but if not, erase me now from Your book that You have written." Since Moshe suggested that Hashem erase his name from the Torah, one Parashah does not contain Moshe's name.

Even so, asks R' Yaakov Aharon Yanovsky z"l (rabbi of several towns in Poland; died 1869), the Parashah could have opened, "And Hashem spoke to him...", without mentioning Moshe's name. Moreover, why should Moshe be punished for offering to sacrifice his entire legacy for the sake of the Jewish People?

R' Yanovsky explains: Moshe is not being punished. Rather, in our Parashah, and, likewise, in much of last week's Parashah, the instructions regarding the construction of the Mishkan and its implements are introduced with, "You shall speak...", "You shall place...", or "You shall make...", to inform us that the entire Mishkan was possible only in the merit of Moshe's holiness. The Torah relates that the craftsmen who built it were blessed with wisdom and Ruach Hakodesh / Divine Inspiration, but that too flowed through Moshe to the craftsmen. (Bet Yaakov) ©2022 S. Katz and [torah.org](http://torah.org)

