



Wembley Synagogue

תְּצַוֶּה

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Tezaveh

וְאָתָּה תְּצַוֶּה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - And you shall command the Children of Israel." (27:20)

Why is the name of Moshe not mentioned in *Parshat Tetzaveh*? The Vilna Gaon suggests that the reason for the exclusion is because, in most cases, this week's parshah always falls either the week of, or the week before the 7th of Adar. For this reason, Hashem built into this week's Torah reading a hint to this day, as a memorial to the greatest leader the Jewish people ever had.

Another commonly given explanation for Moshe's name being missing from the Sidra is based on Moshe's remark to Hashem following the sin of the golden calf. He said "this people has erred greatly, and have made gods of gold. However, please tolerate their error, and if not, *remove me from Your book which You have written.*" (32:31-32)

The rabbis tell us that words of a righteous person always count for something, and though Hashem didn't comply completely with Moshe's request, He did so in part - in this week's sidra, where Moshe's name is nowhere to be found.

The Vilna Gaon also suggests that although Moshe's name is not mentioned explicitly in the Sidra, it is nevertheless hinted to.

There are one hundred and one verses in the Sidra. If the letters that make up the name of "Moshe" are spelled out in their entirety, one would have the following:

מ - The letters comprising מֶם are mem and mem

ש - The letters comprising שֵׁן are shin, yud and nun

ה - The letters comprising הֵי are hei and aleph

If we add up the numerical value of all these letters and then subtract the numerical value of the letters mem, shin and hei - the name Moshe- we are left with the number one hundred and one - the exact number of verses in the Sidra! (Source: A Shabbos Vort)

וַעֲשִׂיתָ בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אַחֶיךָ לְכָבוֹד וּלְתִפְאֳרָתוֹ - And you shall make clothes of holiness for Aharon your brother for honour and glory (28:2)

Clothing affects a person in two ways: their individuality; how others relate to them. The Ketav Sofer explains that what a person wears reminds them of their station in life. Indeed, their manner of dress is precisely what distinguished Bnei Yisrael in Egypt. This is one element that kept them from integrating into Egyptian society. A second aspect of the clothing one wears is from the perspective of other people. The manner in which one dresses, the type of clothing they wear manifests their personality and status. Thus, people view us in accordance with the way we present ourselves.

The Torah tells us that Aharon did not need the Priestly clothes to remind him of his exalted and sanctified position. Aharon was holy and distinct in his own right. He did not need external motivation. The clothes were for "glory and splendour," so that the people would realise the spiritual glory and splendour of the High Priest, and his dignified position.

(Source: Peninim on the Torah)

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ חֹשֶׁן וְאַפָּדוֹ - These are the vestments that they shall make: a Breastplate, an Ephod (apron) (28:4)

Rashi writes "I found no explanation nor did I hear from anyone a description of the Ephod. My heart tells me that it looks like the apron-like garment worn by regal women while riding on horseback." People wonder what led Rashi to associate the Ephod with regal women riding side-saddle. R' Yechiel Meir of Gostinin suggests that Rashi was puzzling over the definition of the Ephod when suddenly he looked up and noticed French noblewomen wearing aprons and riding on horses. He was perturbed over having been exposed to such a sight. Then he became convinced that it was for this reason that he saw them. From Heaven he had been taught what the Ephod looked like.(Source: The Torah Treasury)

וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת מְעִיל הָאֶפֶדוֹ..... - And you shall make the cloak of the Ephod completely out of blue wool. And the edge (lit. mouth) of its top (lit. head) should be turned into it, a border (lit. lip) should be to its edge (lit. mouth) all around woven, like the edge (lit. mouth) of armour, it (the collar) may not be torn. (28:31-32)

The donning of the Me'il (cloak) by the High Priest during the services in the sanctuary atoned for the sin of Lashon Hara (evil gossip) according to the Gemara Erchin 16a. The design of the Me'il incorporated allusions to several lessons about Lashon Hara.

The border of the Me'il, referred to as its mouth, was doubled over into the cloak itself and sewn as such. This is so that people should remember to guard their own mouths when tempted to speak ill of others. It is interesting to note that the verse refers to the turned-in

"mouth" of the Me'il as being "like the mouth of a suit of armour". The reference to armour, which protects its wearer, alludes to the fact that guarding one's mouth protects from sin and strife.

The colour of the Me'il was T'chelet a bluish shade which a person associates with the sky. Thinking of the heavens should make a person realise that all words are heard in heaven and judged by Hashem. Upon such reflection, people should refrain from evil gossip.

The hem of the Me'il was decorated with bells and woolen pomegranates in an alternating sequence. The bells would resonate as the Kohen Gadol would walk and the woolen pomegranates would remain silent. This symbolized that in some situations one must let his voice be heard like a bell, and at other times it is best to remain silent like the woolen pomegranates.

וְהָיָה הַשְּׁבִיעִי יַשְׁפֵּיחַ - The fourth row of stones [in the breastplate] was chrysolite, onyx, and jasper. (28:20)

The Jerusalem Talmud (*Pe'ah* 1:1) says we can learn a lesson in *kibud av* — honoring one's father — from a non-Jew by the name of Dama ben Netina. Once, the *yashpeih* (jasper) stone of the breastplate got lost, and Dama ben Netina happened to have one. When the Jews came to him, he refused to sell it, even at a very large profit, because the key to his safe was under the pillow upon which his father was sleeping.

Why was a lesson in *kibud av* — honouring one's father conveyed specifically through the stone *yashpeih*?

On each of the 12 stones of the breastplate was written the name of one of the 12 tribes. The stone *yashpeih* had on it the name "Binyamin." The numerical value of "*yashpeih*," counting the word itself as one, is 396, which is the same numerical value as *Binyamin ben Yaakov*.

By plotting against Yosef and selling him, the brothers caused much grief to Yaakov. Thus, their performance of the *mitzvah* of *kibud av* was lacking. Binyamin was the only one who had absolutely no part in his brothers' thoughts or activities against Yosef. Consequently, he surpassed his brothers in the observance of the *mitzvah* of *kibud av*, and it is therefore most appropriate that a lesson in *kibud av* should be learned from the stone which had his name engraved on it.

וְנָתַתָּ אֵל חֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאוּרִים וְאֶת הַתּוּמִים - And you shall place in the breastplate the *Urim* and the *Tumim*. (28:30)

What were the *Urim* and the *Tumim*, and how did they function?

The *Urim* and the *Tumim* were two inscriptions of the Divine Name. Hashem revealed to Moshe the secret of how he should make the *Urim* and the *Tumim*. Only Moshe, to whom the secret was revealed, was able to make them, and he placed them into the fold of the breastplate. Therefore, it is not written anywhere that anyone should contribute to the making of the *Urim* and the *Tumim* nor were there any instruction to the workers about how to make it.

On the 12 stones of the breastplate were written the names of the twelve tribes, the names of the patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and also the words *shivtei yeshurun* (another name for Bnei Yisrael) (*Yoma* 73b). On each stone were six letters, including the name of the tribe, and thus there were 72 letters in total. When a question was brought before the *Kohen Gadol*, he would concentrate on the *urim*, and the letters would light up but although these letters spelled the answer to the question, he still did not know their correct order. The *Kohen Gadol* would have to meditate on the *Tumim* and, then he would be given *Ruach Hakodesh* — Divine inspiration to arrange the letters properly and convey the correct answer.

The *urim* and *tumim* were often consulted throughout Biblical times. However, the Kohen was not always able to figure out at first what the letters were saying. There is a famous account about the High Priest Eli and the barren Hanna, who prayed fervently to G-d for children: "But Hanna was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, and her voice was not heard, and Eli thought her to be a drunken woman." (Sam1:13)

As Eli observed her, he read the letters appearing on the Breastplate as Shin-Kaf-Reish-Hay: *Shikorah* a drunken woman. In fact the correct reading was Kaf-Shin-Reish-Hay: Kesheira a worthy woman.

Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 5.28pm



Shabbat ends: 6.31pm

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson
Online at: http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra_notes.html