



Dedicated in memory of Rachel Leah bat R' Chaim Tzvi

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Parshat Tetzaveh: The Silent Pair

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

The priestly garments described in Parshat Tetzaveh, symbolize the Divine Service of every Jew. Specifically, the ephod (apron) and choshen (breastplate) represent the dual nature of the Jewish nation as both a collection

of individuals and a united community.

The two stones on the shoulders of the ephod represent the totality and unity of Am Yisroel, with the names of six tribes engraved on each shoulder, while the breastplate had twelve individual stones, a different one for each of the twelve tribes. The entire nation must face upward, toward Hakodosh boruch Hu, as the stones on the shoulders. But that goal can only

be achieved by recognizing the individual, unique characteristics of each tribe and each person and how he can contribute to the beautiful mosaic that completes service to Hashem.

We live in a physical world, but we aspire to create spirituality. The ephod, facing upward and outward, represents olam hazeh, the physical world, which we must use to create a spiritual home worthy of the Divine Presence. The choshen lies on the heart of the Kohen Gadol, and as such represents the inner world of every Jew, which aspires to G-dliness. Together they form the simplest social unit necessary for building a "mikdash me'at", a spiritual home. The apron-like structure of the ephod represents the role of the woman. It is her responsibility to see that the home remains pure and clean, to create an environment of spirituality, while the husband must elevate the home by injecting it with Torah.

Just as it takes every member of the family to create and maintain the proper atmosphere in the home, so does it take all the different tribes together to reach the goal of making the entire earth a place of holiness. Each stone on the breastplate was different, for each tribe was different, and each contributed its own unique

character towards the achievement of shared goals. For example, the silence of Binyamin could be paired with the speech of Reuben. Each could bring his own salvation in the appropriate time. Reuben saved Joseph with his power of speech, by convincing his brothers not to kill Joseph, while Binyamin's descendent, Esther, saved the Jewish Nation with her silence, never revealing that she was the descendent of King Saul.

We need the speech of Moshe teaching Torah paired with the controlled silence of Aharon. We need to operate in the outer, physical world of the ephod while maintaining the integrity of the inner world of the choshen. We need to value each individual, but understand that our strength lies in our unity and in working together for our national mission. May we be zocheh soon to see the return of the kohain in his vestments performing the service in the Beis Hamikdash.

The Power of the Month of Adar

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

After the splitting of the Red Sea, all the nations were terribly afraid of the Jews. Then Amalek came and attacked the Jews in Refidim. Rashi explains, "*Rafu yedeihem min haTorah.*" The Jewish people's hands were weakened from the Torah. This enabled Amalek to fight against them. Yehoshua took a group of Jews to fight them and Moshe went up on a hill together with Aharon and Chur. When Moshe lifted his hands, the Jews too raised their thoughts and prayers to heaven and Hashem helped them win over Amalek. When Moshe's hands fell, Amalek triumphed.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger discusses lifting one's hand to heaven as a form of prayer. This leads us back to Yaakov and Esav. Yitzchak said, "the voice is the voice of Yaakov and the hands are the hands of Esav." Hands symbolize action in this world. Hands develop and create. Esav signifies practical accomplishments. Yaakov's strength is his voice as manifested in prayer and Torah study. Hands

are capable of creating things that will stand on their own independently. Halacha states that a person must wash one's hands before prayer, because they are constantly busy touching things and perhaps unconsciously one may have touched an impure place. This indicates that hands act on their own. When man acts with his hands he doesn't necessarily express his inner essence. This opens the possibility of disconnecting action from Hashem, who is the source of all creation. Esav was a man of accomplishment, but he attributed it all to himself. In contrast, voice expresses one's inner essence, thoughts, and feelings. It exists only as long as the person is alive. This signifies Yaakov's constant attachment to Hashem.

Chazal say that the verse, "*Vahaya emunat itecha,*" hints to the first order of the Mishna, Sedar Zeraim (the laws of agriculture). Seeds, if ground into flour, can be made into food.

Why should a farmer put it in the ground to rot

and disintegrate? It can only be that he has faith in Hashem who will make the seeds grow and give him more than he invested. If I apply for a job and I do everything necessary to get it, in reality there's no link between what I did and the results. Hashem made me get the job, although it may not be so obvious. But with planting it's all quite obvious. Only Hashem can make the seeds grow. Therefore, Chazal considered planting a paradigm of faith.

Esav sees his accomplishment as the fruits of his own labor. Yaakov sees Hashem creating something for him unrelated to what he did. Esav lives for momentarily pleasure, while Yaakov pursues a greater goal. When a Jew plants, he has in mind the fruit that will grow in *Gan Eden*. In contrast, Esav's prime interest is the fruit in this world.

Our way of life tells Esav that his life is meaningless. Hitler wrote that the Jewish people are our conscious and we must destroy

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them. Chazal say that when the Torah was given at Sinai, "Sinah yadah l'olam." (Hatred came down to this world.) Our very existence gives vexes the nations. Lifting our hands to heaven symbolizes the admission that our ability to accomplish is from Hashem.

When the Jews were in Refidim they asked, "Hayesh Hashem b'kirbeinu." (Is Hashem among us?) When their hands weakened and did not study Torah, when they felt weak in their connection to Hashem, Amalek was strengthened. When they turned to the Almighty, Amalek grew weak. Moshe hands

were heavy, because he had to lift the hands of the entire nation. He had to engender the *teshuva* that would raise every Jew's hands to Hashem. Chazal say that when the Jewish people submitted their hearts to heaven, when they recognized that ultimately it was all up to Hashem, Amalek fell.

Parshat Tetzaveh: Losing The Self

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur on Chassidut by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

In Parshat Tetzaveh, Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jewish people, "Ve'yikchu eilecha shemen zayit zach, They shall bring for you pure olive oil." This is in contrast to Hashem's previous command in Parshat Teruma, where He says, "Ve'yikchu li teruma." They shall bring an offering for me." Why is there a distinction between the general command for donations to the *Mishkan*, for me, and the specific request for oil, which was brought for you?

The Shem Mishmuel explains based on a *mishna* in Avot. The *mishna* says there are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship. The fourth crown, a good name, overweighs them all. Why does the *mishna* note that there are three crowns when there are really four? Furthermore, if a good name means good deeds as the Bartenura explains, shouldn't it be included in the crown of Torah? The *midrash* says that the crown of kingship corresponds to the Shulchan, which represents wealth, stability, and power. The Aron, which contained the *luchot*, signifies the crown of Torah. The Mizbeiach Hazahav

corresponds to the crown of priesthood, and the *Menora* corresponds to the crown of good deeds. If the *Menora* was above all, why did it not have a crown-like ridge as part of its construction, as the other vessels did?

A crown symbolizes rulership and power. The Torah doesn't encourage exercising control over others. Most people are slaves to their own passions. The Torah ideal is to be a king over your own spirit and desires. The crown of Torah, its laws and wisdom, give us the ability to rule over ourselves. The crown of priesthood, sublimates the *kohen's* personal ambitions to serve Hashem. The crown of kingship is given to the one who subdues his own personal interests for the good of his people. Indeed, the Jewish king is called the heart of the nation because his heart is not his own. It belongs instead to his nation.

The Shem MiShmuel discusses the idea of *yesh* and *ayin*. The three crowns of self-control use the *yesh*, the self, to attain goodness. The *shem tov* is *ayin*, losing oneself in Hashem's vastness. Valued above the good performed for a person's own goodness, the good

performed solely for Hashem's sake. This is the good beyond good.

Our sages say that olives are a bitter fruit and make one forget Torah. However, after they are pressed to a pulp and lose their identity, they transform into olive oil, highly prized for its outstanding qualities. This represents *bitul hayesh*, self nullification with the goal of producing something transcendental beyond the self.

We can now understand why Hashem first says "ve'yikchu li." Hashem is saying, I will approve your actions in the yesh state. Hashem tells the Jews to use their powers of self to build the *Mishkan*. However, He then says, "Ve'yikchu eilecha." *Eilecha* refers to Moshe, who was the paragon of self-nullification. This is the *shem tov*, the *shemen zayit*, which is above the three crowns.

At some point, we must ascend to a higher level of *bitul hayesh*, of coming to the realization that we exist only as an extension of Hashem's infinite all-encompassing being.