

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

PARSHA BOOKLET

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

PARASHAT TETZAVEH

Now, you shall command. (27:20)

The commentators note the Torah's use of the unusual phrase, V'atah tetzaveh, "Now you shall command," instead of the more common, Tzav, "Command." Furthermore, Moshe Rabbeinu's name has been omitted from this parsha. Is this deletion significant? Each commentator, in his inimitable manner, offers his explanation. Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl, cites the Be'er Mayim Chaim who explains that the term, v'atah, "(now) you," indicates a higher status than the name, "Moshe." This means, explains the Rosh Yeshivah of Be'er Yaakov, that when Hashem speaks to Moshe, He is actually speaking with Moshe, as if two friends are speaking one to another: ani, I; v'atah, and you. This language represents a higher level of -- and closer-- relationship between the Almighty and Moshe.

The Gaon, zl, m'Vilna explains that this is the essence of the blessings: Baruch atah Hashem, "Blessed are You Hashem." In His infinite greatness, Hashem "lowers" Himself and makes Himself "equal," so to speak, with us, as we recite our blessing. It is as if we are having a "one on one" conversation with Hashem. This demonstrates His greatness.

Likewise, when Hashem speaks to Moshe in this pasuk, it is on the level of, v'atah tetzaveh - no specific name, just simply "you." Moshe has been granted elevated status. He has achieved a closer relationship with the Almighty. We find a similarity in the Talmud Shabbos 133b, when Chazal explains the pasuk, Zeh Keili v'anveihu, "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him." (Shemos 15:20) I will glorify Him in mitzvos, attempting to be "like" Hashem, acting as He does, manifesting His compassion and love, etc. Rashi adds that the word anveihu is a contraction of ani, I, and, v'hu, and Him, as if we and Hashem have a close relationship.

A relationship of this caliber can only be achieved through Torah study. It is through the individual's diligence in-- and application to-- Torah that the unique relationship of re'a, a "friend," develops between the student of Torah and Hashem. Rav Moshe cites the Sifri in Parashas Korach, which explains that after David Hamelech studied Torah and achieved distinction in his study, he said, V'li mah yakru rei'echa Keil, "To me, how glorious are Your thoughts, O' G-d." (Tehillim 139:17) The word rei'echa, thoughts, is a derivative of re'a, friend, as if David were saying, "How glorious is Your friendship." We can elevate this idea of "friendship" with Hashem to another level. The Talmud in Berachos 28B relates that Rabbi Nechuniah ben HaKaneh would offer one prayer when he entered the bais ha'medrash and another one when he left. When he entered, he prayed that he not err in Halachah, and, when he left, he offered his gratitude that he was fortunate to be among those who study Torah. The Rambam writes that it is incumbent upon all students of Torah to recite these prayers.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, explains that these prayers do not simply constitute another way to pursue success in Torah learning. Chazal are teaching us that in order to succeed in Torah, one must view himself to be a partner with Hashem. This is a joint endeavor. Therefore, it is as if Hashem tells us, "Help Me, and I will help you. Let us do it together. You learn and I will help you. Together, we will make a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, out of you."

Moreover, we derive from here that limud and tefillah, study and prayer, are not two mutually exclusive endeavors. They are one. Without tefillah, entreating Hashem for success, one can learn diligently, and he still will not achieve his maximum potential. He needs Hashem's help, which does not occur without the individual requesting it. Thus, the tefillah is an integral part of the limud haTorah process. One who wants to succeed in Torah study, who strives to achieve greatness in Torah erudition, must learn, and he must also supplicate the One Who grants wisdom to make him one of His beneficiaries.

They shall take for You pure olive oil. (27:20)

In the Midrash, Chazal compare the Jewish People to an olive, for all liquids mingle with one another, but oil always separates and rises to the top. The great Kabbalist, Rabbi Suliman Uchna, zl, one of the students of the Arizal, writes that Klal Yisrael is holy. If a Jew errs and strays from the path of observance, even if he descends to the nadir of depravity, it is not a permanent shift. He can still rise to the top, return and perform teshuvah. While both of these ideas are true, they do not clarify the significance of olive oil. The fact that oil and water do not mix applies to all sorts of oil. It is the viscosity of the oil, not the nature of the olive, that separates from other liquids. Why is it necessary to use olive oil specifically?

The Midrash uses the following parable to explain why olive oil was used in the Bais HaMikdash. It is compared to a king whose legions rebelled against him. One legion, however, maintained its fidelity to the king and did not rebel. The king said that in recognition of this legion's faithfulness, he would, in the future, choose his rulers and governors only from it. Hashem said, "This olive brought light to the world in the time of Noach, when the dove returned with an olive branch in its mouth." The Radal, Horav David Luria, zl, explains that the corruption preceding the flood did not affect only man. Indeed, even the plant and animal kingdoms were involved. Various animal species tried to interbreed: plants attempted to intergraft. Only the olive branch resisted all forms of grafting. Thus, it is considered the one legion that did not rebel. Because it remained faithful to Hashem, the olive branch merited to be the sign of rebirth, the symbol of rejuvenation and renewal after the destruction of the flood. Subsequently, the olive became the source of illumination in the holiest place in the world, and the source of light and symbol of hope for generations to come.

In respect to the original thought that oil symbolizes the Jew who always rises to the top - regardless of how deep he has fallen: The reason is that the essential neshamah, soul, which is within each of us never becomes tainted. It always remains pure. Its fidelity to Hashem is unequivocal. We sin; our bodies rebel, but our neshamos continue to remain pure. We cannot harm them. The neshamah attempts to fight its way to the top, to rise up above the muck that we have piled on it. In due time, the Jew finds his way home. In due time.

You shall take the two Shoham stones and engrave upon them the names of the Bnei Yisrael.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

(28:9)

Engraved like a signet ring shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the Bnei Yisrael. (28:11)

Of the two pesukim, one reads clearly that the names of the twelve sons of Yaakov should be engraved on the stones. The next pasuk, if interpreted literally, reads that the two stones should be inscribed on the names of Bnei Yisrael. Rashi explains that the word "on the names" is to be read as "with the names." In his preface to Pischei Chochmah, the Ramchal relates the following story.

A man died, and his soul ascended to Heaven and stood before the Heavenly Tribunal. "How did you educate your son?" he was asked.

"I educated him to be a good Jew who would be self-supporting," he replied.

"Why did you not send him to the yeshivah to study Torah?" they asked.

"Are we then in need of more Torah scholars? There are many people who are studying. What is wrong with him supporting himself?" the man responded.

They replied, "You do not know what you have done. You have no idea what you have created. There are 600,000 explanations to the Torah, one coinciding with each Jewish soul and based on its own distinct level of cognition. True, there are other talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, but not a single one of them can learn like your son; not a single one can offer novellae as your son can. Now, it is all lost. Your son's contribution to Torah is lost forever, because you decided not to send him to yeshivah."

The Alshich Hakadosh interprets this idea in the pasuk in Tehillim 68:13, U'navas bayis techalek shallal, "And the dweller within apports booty." This is a reference to Klal Yisrael who dwells within the land. It will be they who find fulfillment in the Torah, and they will rise over those nations who ascribe to might as the key to human advancement. They will all fall to the nation who devotes itself to the wisdom of the Torah.

The sefer Tzitzim U'Perachim writes that this is the reason the Torah says that the names of Bnei Yisrael should be inscribed on two stones. The two stones are a metaphor for: the Torah She'Bi'ksav, Written Law; and the Torah She Ba'al Peh, Oral Law. Chazal teach us that each Jew should engrave his name on the Torah. His thoughts, his novellae, and his own commentary and interpretation.

To view this from a different vantage point, to understand why the Torah later says, "The two stones shall be inscribed on the names of Bnei Yisrael," we cite Horav Mendel Kaplan, zl, who explains that the Jewish People represent a tangible reality that is greater than that of the two stones. The Torah's choice of words defines the meaning and essence of reality for us.

When one studies the Talmud, he is not simply reading a manuscript. He is actually developing a relationship with a friend. The Mesechta that he is learning is a world unto itself. When Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, asked the Chafetz Chaim, zl, if he should change mesechtos at the end of a semester, the Chafetz Chaim told him that he should first complete one, then begin another; not to jump from mesechta to mesechta. That is not how one should treat a relationship. A mesechta is real.

One can talk to a mesechta like he converses with a person. Just because we do not see its tangibility does not mean it does not exist. Chazal tell us that a mesechta once attended a funeral in the form of a person.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Rav Mendel would ask, "You may know that you have to kiss a gemara, but how do you kiss a gemara? You look it up and learn it and talk about it: that is how you kiss a gemara! The gemara becomes so pleased and happy that it becomes your friend." The Hadran, the prayer said at the completion of a mesechta, demonstrates how a mesechta becomes a person's friend. We "promise" the tractate, lo nishashi, minach, "We will not forget you," and we ask it, lo nishashi minan, "Do not forget us!" That is a relationship. That is reality. This is how the stones are inscribed on the people, because the people are real. They endure.

You shall make vestments for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

The Torah emphasizes the significance of the Kohanim's garments, dedicating more space to them than to any of the vessels of the Mishkan. Chazal teach us that if a Kohen performs a service while he is not wearing the proper vestments, the service is rendered invalid. We wonder what about these vestments has such an impact on the service.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, explains that an individual's character traits and abilities play a dominant role in his life only if they are used and manifested. Having potential, but not maximizing it, is really of no intrinsic value. In order for a Kohen's avodah, service, to reach its potential, it is necessary that the Kohen render honor and glory to Hashem to the best of his ability. Therefore, the Torah commands that the Kohen's garments meet the criteria of kavod and tiferes, glory and splendor. Even the Kohen's garments have to contribute to elevating the service by expressing honor to the Almighty. Thus, only when the Kohen wears his vestments is the service valid, because only then does it reach its highest potential.

The Rosh Yeshivah adds that the lesson imparted by the Kohanim's vestments is not restricted to the Priesthood. It has application to each and every one of us. After all, does the Torah not exhort us to be a "kingdom of Priests" (Shemos 19:6)? Every action that we take must give praise to the Almighty. Our service to Him can only achieve its fullest potential when it is expressed in every aspect of our essence.

The Torah perceives clothing to have a greater degree of distinction than other means of obtaining honor and attention. Clothing is a form of expression through which our avodas Hashem can reach greater elevation. Therefore, dressing in a dignified and immaculate manner is important as part of our service to the Almighty, not simply because it is trendy.

In the Talmud Avodah Zarah 20b, Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair enumerates the various traits one must acquire in his quest for holiness. Nekius, cleanliness, is an important prerequisite to the achievement of purity and sanctity. Horav Yonasan Eibschutz, zl, explains that cleanliness, which is a reference to spiritual purity, can also refer to immaculate clothing and an overall unsullied demeanor, for the cleanliness of one's clothing and appearance play a critical role, both symbolically and literally, in his service to the Almighty.

The clothing one wears defines him. Often, it indicates a tendency toward a certain lifestyle. More often, clothing serves as a reminder of who one is and where he is going, as demonstrated by the following episode. A young man who was a chasid of the Bais Yisrael of Gur related that he once took a trip from Eretz Yisrael to Belgium. He arrived in Belgium on Sunday and took responsibility for the affairs that needed his attention. His plan was to spend the week and leave after Shabbos. Thursday evening, he heard a knock at the door of his hotel room. He opened the door and saw an unusual

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

individual who had just arrived from Eretz Yisrael. In his hands, he held a package. The stranger just handed the package to him, made an about-face and left. No conversation ensued between them. It was as if the package would explain itself. No further conversation was needed. He immediately opened up the package to find his long Shabbos frock which he wore in Eretz Yisrael, but had no plans to wear in Belgium.

Apparently, the Gerer Rebbe knew his students well. He went to the young man's house and asked to see what the young man had packed to take along. When he saw his kappota, frock, hanging in the closet, he knew that his student had no plans to maintain his fidelity to wearing the traditional Shabbos garb in Osland, the Diaspora. He was not planning to dress like a chasid. The Rebbe was intimating a more than subtle hint to him: These are bigdei kodesh, consecrated garments. They are the traditional garb that he was used to wearing. A lapse in such a simple commitment today could, and would, be likely to lead to a greater failing later on. This is how the Bais Yisrael demonstrated his overwhelming love to his students - by ensuring that they preserved their spiritual rectitude.

This is what you shall do to sanctify them. (29:1)

In the waning years of the first Bais HaMikdash, the Navi Chavakuk asked that death be eliminated from the Jewish People. Citing the pasuk above, as well as the opening pasuk of Parashas Kedoshim where we are exhorted to be holy, he argued that in order for us to achieve sanctity, Hashem must abolish death from us. He maintained that holiness and death are incongruous and, thus, cannot coexist. No member of the Jewish People, especially Kohanim, should die. Hashem responded that it was too late. Death had been a part of "life" ever since Adam HaRishon sinned, causing Hashem to decree death against mankind. Hashem's response seems to indicate a sort of acquiescence and agreement with Chavakuk's claim that death and holiness do not share common ground. The idea of death could not be eliminated but only due to an extrinsic reason.

Let us attempt to qualify this statement. On the one hand, we agree that death and holiness do not mix; and the level of sanctity achieved at Har Sinai during the Revelation should repel death. Nonetheless, the generation of Chavakuk deserved the impending destruction of the Bais HaMikdash. A people that was not worthy of keeping the Bais HaMikdash; in fact, catalyzed its destruction. Yet, they possessed the level of holiness necessary to repel death. How is this possible? Why should Adam's transgression be necessary to justify their death decree? Why do we ignore their own misdeeds which brought down the Bais HaMikdash?

Horav Henach Leibowitz, Shlita, derives a significant lesson from here. When Klal Yisrael stood at Har Sinai, they achieved an unparalleled level of kedushah which rendered death inappropriate. They were beyond death. Their new level of sanctity demanded that they be immortal. Death affected them only because of Adam's sin. This legacy of kedushah is bequeathed to all Jews and is an inherent part of their essence. Yes, they sin and will continue to sin, and these transgressions, at times, will be grievous. Nonetheless, it does not affect their inherent kedushah which they retain as part of their spiritual DNA.

Regardless of a Jew's failing, he remains a son of royalty. His lineage does not become tarnished. Therefore, even if he has deviated from the ways of the "palace," he still deserves to be treated as royalty. We must view our non-observant brethren as heirs to the royal throne that have lost their way home. At any point, the inherent holiness that is part of them may be catalyzed such that they

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

will return and reclaim their birthright and legacy.

The Rosh Yeshivah adds that this noble heritage places an even greater demand on those who do know better. All too often we become spiritually complacent and satisfied with mediocrity. Rather than maximize our potential for greatness, we accede to the blandishments of the yetzer hora, evil inclination, and settle for much less than we are capable of achieving. We sell ourselves short, shying away from opportunities for accomplishing spiritual distinction when they avail themselves to us. The Navi Chavakuk intimates that we are a holy People with enormous potential that can, and should, be translated into reality. We have an inborn sanctity that should make us immortal. We must, therefore, empower ourselves to use the gifts with which Hashem endows us, so that we reach the lofty level of kedushah that Hashem expects of us.

Perhaps we should take this idea a bit further. Nobility demands a certain rectitude and demeanor that bespeaks one's station in life. In other words, the prince does not speak or act like the average hooligan. The prince respects people, because he appreciates the value of a human being on a higher level. The higher one has risen, the greater one's achievements, the more that is expected of him. He must bring honor to his position. Thus, a Jew should appreciate all human beings, regardless of their background, race and religious affiliation.

I was recently reading how Horav Mendel Kaplan, zl, the legendary Rosh Yeshivah, would sense a spark of holiness in every human being. When he spent time in Japan and China, he could not bring himself to ride in a rickshaw, even though this was a common mode of transportation, because it required another human being to pull him. Late in life, when he would drive, he would use the horn only for safety purposes, never as a way to vent frustration. When he would drive into a gas station, he made a point to park nearest to the attendant, so that the worker would not have to walk more than necessary. He would treat every one with respect - never talking down to anyone, regardless of his position or disposition. The warm feelings he demonstrated towards others were always reciprocated. When you make someone feel good, they appreciate it and respond in turn.

*And they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continuously.
(27:20)*

The future tense indicates that the oil would have to be brought continuously. Sforno explains that the mitzvah to kindle the Menorah was an ongoing one and was to continue on past the Inauguration ceremony of the Mishkan. There does, however, seem to be an inconsistency in the text. The lighting of the Menorah was apparently related to the Inauguration of the Mishkan, while the term "continuously" implies that it is an on-going mitzvah. How does it fit in with the Inauguration? In his commentary to Parashas Behaalosecha, Rashi explains that the kindling of the Menorah was an extremely important task, one that was worthy of being included in the chanukas, Inauguration, of the Mishkan. The Ramban challenges this exegesis, asserting that inauguration, by its very definition, means a "one time deal," performed at the commencement of a project. The lighting of the Menorah, however, is an on-going mitzvah. How are we to reconcile "on-going" with "inauguration"?

The Ramban cites a Midrash that declares that a day will come when there will be no functioning Bais Hamikdash in the sense that Korbanos will be offered and the Jewish People will assemble three times a year. It will stand, but there will be no service. It will be specifically at this time

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

that a group of Aharon's descendants, all Kohanim, the Chashmonaim, will catalyze the reinauguration of the Bais Hamikdash. This is, of course, a reference to Chanukah, the festival that marks the rededication of the Bais Hamikdash. Thus, Aharon's lighting of the Menorah is foreshadowing a time when Aharon's descendants will inaugurate the Temple service - again. This was the focus of Chanukah. The rededication of the Bais Hamikdash was the most important aspect of the Chashmonean victory over the Greeks.

This preface leads up to a noteworthy question posed to Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita. We celebrate the festival commemorating the miracle of Chanukah with an emphasis on publicizing the miracle that occurred there. A man approached the rav with the following query. He had in his possession an old Chanukah Menorah made of ornate silver. It was an inheritance that had been passed down for generations. A work of art, its value was well into the thousands of dollars. It was inspirational, as well as beautiful. Ever since his marriage, he had used this Menorah for kindling the Chanukah lights.

Prior to Chanukah, the man's young son had come home from school with a prize he had won for hasmadah, diligence, in Torah study - a small brass Menorah. What should the father do? Should he continue using the ornate heirloom Menorah, or, as a sign of encouragement to his young son, should he use his small, brass Menorah?

At first glance, Rav Zilberstein thought that, since Chanukah is a time in which hiddur mitzvah, beautifying the mitzvah, plays such a pivotal role, he should use the silver Menorah. On the other hand, what greater symbol of pirsumei nissa, publicizing the miracle, is there than using a child's prize, a Menorah earned for diligence in Torah study? In a generation aptly called the "me" generation, a child who gives up his time to devote himself to Torah study personifies our true victory over the Greeks - and the victory of everyone else who has tried to destroy our inextricable relationship with the Almighty. This is why we fought the Greeks; this is why we won. We have a responsibility to publicize this fact. I recently attended a wedding, which to me seemed a bit excessive, especially since the father of the kallah, bride, did not have that kind of money. Noticing what must have seemed a disapproving look on my face, the father, a good friend of mine, said, "My parents were Holocaust survivors. The Nazis sought to destroy us all. This is my revenge on them. We are here today, a generation later, marrying off our children. Their plan has failed. The Jewish nation has once again prevailed. I am publicizing this. It is my pirsumei nissa!"

What a beautiful inspiration to us all. This does not mean that we should borrow money so that we can spend it ostentatiously. It just presents the idea that we must take pride in our existence and pay gratitude to He Who has always protected us from harm and Who continues to sustain us, and, yes, it is also a form of reciprocity. We have survived with the help of Hashem - and with His blessing - we will continue to thrive.

Bring near to yourself Aharon your brother... to minister to Me. 28:1

The democratic process of choosing a leader was not applied to Aharon HaKohen. Hashem selected him. There was no room for discussion. Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, felt that Aharon was the most suitable person for the position of Kohen Gadol and future progenitor of the Kehunah, Priesthood, in Klal Yisrael. The Midrash points out the uniqueness of this choice. Hashem did not simply choose Aharon - He was mekarev, brought him close. The Midrash distinguishes between

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Avraham Avinu, Yaakov Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu, who were also selected for their exalted positions by Hashem. Yet, they were the individuals who had to bring themselves close. Yisro was brought close by Hashem, but was not selected for a position. Rachav was likewise brought close, but not chosen. Aharon was the only one - who after being chosen - was also brought near.

In other words, no man was more suitable for this position than Aharon. The very idea that Hashem brought Aharon close indicates that he had an affinity to the position. He was a natural for the Kehunah. Why? Aharon HaKohen's domain was the Mishkan and its holy service. The Mishkan functioned as a moving symbol of the Revelation at Har Sinai. The Mishkan was the focal point in this world for a Jew to come close to Hashem: to sense, feel and experience the sanctity that had permeated the nation when the Torah was given to them. It created a symbolic harmony between Heaven and earth, between man and Hashem, between the physical/material and the spiritual. All this was symbolized by - and emanated from - the Mishkan. The Kohen facilitated this experience. It was his province, his *raison d'être* as the one who guided the Jew's developing relationship with the Divine. It was for this task that Hashem chose Aharon. It was for this mission that he was the most appropriate.

Why? Because Aharon was an individual who divested himself of himself. He had no *anochius*, "I" complex. He never thought of himself - only of the other person. He was never envious of another. Even when his younger brother was chosen to be Klal Yisrael's leader, Aharon came forward and joyfully embraced him with love. This same attitude prevailed in his relationship with the common man. He sought to promote peace among his fellow man and to unite husband and wife in a harmonious matrimonial relationship.

We now understand why it was Hashem who had to select and promote Aharon as Kohen Gadol. Aharon would never have taken the position on his own. He would have felt himself unworthy and would, therefore, have deferred it to someone else. It was specifically his outstanding humility that rendered him the most felicitous person for the position.

Humility is not a simple *middah*, character trait, to acquire. This is especially true when one achieves a position of leadership. People turn to Torah leaders, rabbanim, *roshei yeshivah*, *admorim*, for every bit of guidance, both in a physical/material as well as in a spiritual sense. This can detract from one's focus. There are those *gedolim*, Torah giants, who are revered by all aspects of the Jewish spectrum. They are constantly sought out for their advice, guidance and blessing. At times, it is just their smile that one seeks. I just had occasion to read Rabbi Sholom Smith's introduction to his latest volume in the "Rav Pam" series, *Rav Pam on the Festivals* - and I was moved. Everything he writes about the venerable Rosh HaYeshivah of Torah Vodaath is something I felt every time I had the privilege to meet with him. Regardless of his physical state, the pain he sustained, he made time for the boys from Cleveland whose annual Torah trip to New York always included a visit with the Rosh HaYeshiva. Indeed, he made us feel that it was his privilege to host us. He accorded the greatest respect to each of the *rebbeim*. He had no problem posing for a picture, even if a young student inadvertently asked him to "move over a little." The paradigm of humility, he was a true descendant of Aharon HaKohen. Indeed, he would often say that he was a Kohen *hamevarech ba'avahavah*, "a Kohen who blessed his people with love."

I close with a quote from Rav Pam's introduction to his classic *Atarah LaMelech*, cited by Rabbi Smith. His overwhelming desire in life was "to see my *talmidim*, students, at the peak of character development, crowned with the crown of beautiful *middos* and a pleasant approach to their interaction with their fellow human beings, as men of true spiritual striving who give honor to Hashem and embody in their lives the *pasuk* (Yeshayah 49:3), "Yisrael, in whom I take glory."

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

If this is what a rebbe wants for his talmidim, then apparently he must be a walking and breathing example of these noble and lofty goals. Rav Pam certainly set this standard.

You shall take the two Shoham Stones and engrave upon them the names of the Bnei Yisrael. (28:9)

The Abarbanel explains that the names of the Shevatim, Tribes, were engraved on the Shoham stones, which were later attached to the Kispos haEiphod, shoulder straps of Eiphod, so that Aharon HaKohen would never lose sight of the Jewish People. Whenever he raised his hands, the names would be before him. These stones would serve as a constant reminder. This is the function of a Torah leader: to never lose sight of his flock. He should focus on providing for them at every juncture, keeping them on his mind constantly. Once Horav Aharon zl, m'Belz sent for a doctor. The physician entered the room to see the holy Rebbe engrossed, deep in thought. "What is the Rebbe thinking?" the doctor queried. "Only good things for the Jews," was the Rebbe's immediate response. This can be carried out only when one does not stop thinking about his fellow Jews even for a moment.

The Amshinover Rebbe, zl, once said that a rebbe of chasidim must be acutely aware of three things: a) when he sits on the rabbinic "chair" he should imagine that he is sitting on a bed of nails; b) prior to reading the kvittel, note with the petitioner's request on it, he should be aware of its contents; c) the troubles of the petitioner should grieve him as if they were his own. Moshe Rabbeinu epitomized this type of leadership. He saw the troubles that the Jews were suffering, and he felt them. A leader does not just care about the members of his flock; he actually feels their pain.

With this idea in mind, it behooves the individual who has poured out his troubles to the tzaddik, righteous leader, to also share with him the good, the relief, the blessing that he receives later. The tzaddik shares in your pain. Why should he not also share in your joy? Indeed, the Imrei Emes would cite the pasuk in Yirmiyah 4:22, "They are wise at doing evil, but know not how to do good," embellishing it, saying, "They go to the wise to lament their troubles, but do not know then when they are the recipients of good."

The Piaczesner Rebbe, zl, was an individual who exemplified this sensitivity to his chassidim. He spent literally every penny that he had to redeem those of his chassidim that had been conscripted to the Polish army. He bribed and used every form of guile to subvert their efforts to take these young Jewish men from their homes. When he was queried as to why he went to such great lengths on behalf of his chassidim, he replied, "Any Rebbe who is not prepared to descend to Gehinom to rescue his chassid from falling into the depths of spiritual oblivion is not a Rebbe."

There are a number of versions to the following story concerning Horav Moshe Leib Sassover, zl. I cite the most accepted one, which was related by Horav David Leib Chortkaver, zl. The sainted Sassover left This World for his eternal rest. When he came before the Heavenly Tribunal, the psak din, holy judgment, was that he be granted a lofty place in Gan Eden. The Sassover refused to go - unless he could take with him those souls presently in Gehinom who, during their lifetime, had given him money. The alternative to this was that he join them in Gehinom. After deliberation, the Sassover was "permitted" to enter Gehinom for one hour, during which he succeeded in removing those souls from there.

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that this middah, characteristic, is an extension of the spiritual plateau reached by none other than Moshe Rabbeinu. Throughout his tenure as leader - and even earlier as he walked out on the streets of Egypt - he observed his brothers' travail and was personally pained

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

by it. As a leader, he even said to Hashem, "Erase my name from Your Book" (Shemos 32:32), unless he was assured that Klal Yisrael's sin concerning the Golden Calf would be forgiven. Aharon HaKohen, the other leader of Klal Yisrael, was to carry the mishpat Bnei Yisrael, "Judgment of Bnei Yisrael," on his heart in the Choshen HaMishpat, on which were engraved the names of the Tribes. He was always to remember them and to accept upon himself personally to "suffer" the judgment that otherwise would be leveled against Klal Yisrael.

In addition, the Tiferes Shlomo posits that this is the function of every Torah leader: to feel the pain and, thereby, remove some of the travail that would otherwise be decreed against Klal Yisrael. He interprets this into the pasuk in Devarim 18:15, which addresses "a Navi from your midst, from your brethren, like me." We are enjoined to listen to the words of the Navi emes, true prophet, who will be like Moshe. How are we to understand this? Are we not taught that there never will arise another Navi of the calibre of Moshe? How then could this Navi emes be like "me," like Moshe? The Torah is teaching us that while no other Navi will achieve Moshe's spiritual stature in prophecy, but his ability to be moser nefesh, devotion to the point of self sacrifice, can be successfully realized by those who follow in his leadership footsteps. In other words, our spiritual leadership, whose devotion extends to the needs and travail of all Jews, are the modern day Moshe Rabbeinus of each generation.

You shall fill it with stone mounting, four rows of stone. (28:17)

Aharon HaKohen served in the Mishkan wearing eight Priestly vestments. Among the Kohen Gadol's vestments, the Choshen and Eiphod had singular significance, since these made up the seat of the precious stones with which they were adorned. The Choshen had twelve individual stones, each one representing another tribe. The Eiphod had the two Shoham stones on its shoulder straps. Obviously, the selection of each individual stone with its corresponding Shevet, tribe, was based in profound spiritual rationale. We will focus on the stones of Yosef and Binyamin, the two sons of Rachel Imeinu.

Yosef's stone was the Shoham stone. This stone had another opportunity to be used as the two stones of the Kispos haEiphod, shoulder straps of the Eiphod. The fact that on these two stones were engraved the names of all the Tribes indicates its uniqueness in being a stone representing harmony, unity and homogeneity. All of the Tribes were included in the stone of Yosef. The Sfas Emes explains that indeed Yosef is the shoshon, root, of the Shevatim; it represents and transcends them. On his deathbed, Yaakov Avinu said to Yosef, "From there, he shepherded the stone of Yisrael" (Bereishis 49:24). The word even, stone, can be seen as a contraction of two words, av, father, and ben, son. Rashi explains that this contradiction alludes to the family, for it is the building block upon which the nation is built. Yosef became the foundation stone upon which Klal Yisrael would be built. Yosef was me'acheid, unified all the Tribes, under one banner.

We find that when Yaakov Avinu ran from Eisav, he stopped along the road and had his famous dream. When he lay down he took one stone, which, according to Chazal, was actually comprised of twelve little stones, which became one stone, foreshadowing the twelve Tribes, which would descend from Yaakov. The Zohar HaKadosh draws a parallel between the twelve stones of Yaakov that became one and Yosef's Shoham stone which included the twelve Tribes.

Binyamin's stone was the Yashpah stone. Because of his young age, Binyamin was the only brother who had nothing to do with the sale of Yosef. In other words, he was the only one who was not tainted by a lack of Kibud av, proper respect for his father. Horav Moshe Reis, Shlita, cites the story in

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

the Talmud Kiddushin 31a, which relates how a stone from the Choshen was lost, and the only person who had a similar stone was Dama ben Nesinah, a gentile living in Ashkelon. When the emissaries from Yerushalayim came to him, he said he could not help them because his father was sleeping in the room in which the stone was kept for safekeeping. He was prepared to forego a huge profit if it meant infringing on his father's rest. Which one of the twelve stones was lost? In the Yerushalmi Kiddushin 20:1, Chazal say that it was the Yashpah stone of Binyamin. Incredible! When Hashem sought to portray a situation that personified true Kibud av, He chose a case that involved the Yashpah stone. The stone of the brother/tribe, which symbolized Kibud av.

Chazal characterize Rachel Imeinu's distinction in that she gave the simanim, signs, to Leah, her sister, and did not reveal this to Yaakov. Because of her exceptional ability to be silent, she merited children who exemplified silence: Binyamin who did not reveal Yosef's sale; Shaul HaMelech who did not reveal that he had been chosen as king, and Esther Ha'Malkah, who did not reveal her background. This is alluded to in Binyamin's stone: Yashpah - a contraction of the words yeish, and peh; there is a mouth, but it is silent. Rachel taught us that there is a time and place to speak and a time and place to remain silent.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor.(28:2)

The Kohanim stood at the spiritual apex of the Jewish People. They represented true royalty as a result of their spiritual proximity to the Almighty via the service they performed in the Mikdash. The Kohen Gadol, High Priest, wore eight vestments, each representing a sin that required atonement on behalf of Klal Yisrael. When the Kohen Gadol wore these vestments, not only did they manifest glory and splendor, they would invoke Hashem's mercy. Thus, in conjunction with proper teshuvah, repentance, they would generate atonement for the people. In addition, the Kohen Gadol wore twelve precious stones on his Choshen, Breastplate, each symbolizing one of the twelve tribes.

Therefore, when the Kohen Gadol stood in service before the Almighty, he represented the entire Jewish People. He was the holiest person in the nation and stood in the holiest site, wearing vestments that were a constant reminder of the people's shortcomings. Does this make sense? Should not his clothing relate more to love, compassion, virtue and righteous deeds? The sin was not present in a negative sense. It was, rather, a request for penance, which could have been achieved through a more positive approach. It reinforces the concept that being judged by Hashem in and of itself engenders celebration. Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, is a Festival. One would think that the judgment day would be the one day on which we avoid celebrating. How are we to understand this?

In Forever His Students, an anthology of essays based upon the thoughts of Horav Yaakov Weinberg, zl, Rabbi Baruch Leff explains positive implication of the idea of judgment by Hashem. Hashem judges us because He wants to, not because He has to. He has no needs and, therefore, judges us solely for our benefit. Through His judgment, Hashem demonstrates that He cares about us. We are very important to Him, so He observes and scrutinizes everything that we do. We shape the world through our actions. Hashem's judgment makes us aware that everything we do makes a difference, every action has a repercussion. What we do matters to Hashem. This alone is cause for celebration. What greater cause for celebration could there be than the awareness that Hashem Yisborach cares about every move that we make? What greater motivation for self-esteem is there than the knowledge that Hashem scrutinizes our every action, weighing it meticulously?

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

We live in a society in which low self-esteem is the cause of many of its ills. Depression has become a way of life, as people find it harder and harder to achieve some perspective on their own success and self-worth. Some turn to external stimulants to raise their self-esteem, only to become trapped in the maze of drugs and alcohol. They find out very quickly that the therapy they have sought actually intensifies the illness. If we would only take the time to reflect on the fact that Hashem cares for each and every one of us and that every minute activity that we perform is important to Him, our self-esteem would be elevated. He tests us all of the time, because He cares for us - all of the time. His concern goes beyond anything we can possibly fathom. What greater source of joy is there than knowing that the Melech Ha'Olam, Master of the Universe, is concerned about us? Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, is a day of awe - and joy. It is a festival which enables us to contemplate the fact that our lives have significance.

Our sins are foremost on Hashem's agenda with us, since He loves us and seeks our constant improvement. The Kohen Gadol's vestments are, thus, a symbol of Hashem's love and concern for His People. We have a responsibility to serve Hashem, because He placed us here out of love and concern. It is a reciprocal relationship. We know that Hashem will do His part. What about ours?

Six of their names on one stone, and the names of the six remaining ones on the second stone... you shall place both stones on the shoulder straps of the Eiphod. (28:10,12)

The Eiphod was like a long apron, worn with the upper panel in the back and tied in the front with a belt. It has two shoulder straps sewn to its belt at the apron's corners. Each strap, which reached to the top of the shoulders, had a gold setting into which a shoham stone was set. The names of the twelve tribes were engraved on the stones, with twenty-five letters on each stone. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators exactly how the names were divided. One school of thought suggests that there were six names on each stone. Others feel that one stone had the complete names of six tribes and the other stone had the complete names of five tribes, while Binyamin's name was split between both stones; the first two letters of his name were engraved on the first stone, and the remaining four letters were engraved on the second stone. There obviously must have been something unique about Binyamin that granted him this distinction. Why was his name divided between the stones?

The Meshech Chochmah explains that Hashem gave him this distinction by having the Bais Hamikdash built in his portion of Eretz Yisrael. He cites the pasuk in Devarim 33:12, where Moshe Rabbeinu says: "To Binyamin he said, 'G-d's beloved, he dwells securely beside Him.' (G-d) protects him throughout the day and dwells among his keseifav, slopes." The literal meaning of keseifav is "shoulders." The commentators explain that just as a human beings' head is situated between his shoulders, so, too, the "head" of Klal Yisrael, the Bais Hamikdash, was located between the slopes of Binyamin. Hence, Binyamin is associated with the shoulders. Since he is Hashem's beloved, it is only natural that out of all the tribes, his name should be the one engraved on the two stones.

I feel we can supplement this with two other ways in which Binyamin distinguished himself from all the other tribes and why, accordingly, he should be the one in whose portion the Bais Hamikdash should be situated. Indeed, his character plays an integral role in this designation. Let us go back to when Binyamin was born, and even further back to the events preceding his birth. The Torah records Rivkah Imeinu's death, followed by the death of Devorah, her nursemaid. Then, to add more tragedy to Yaakov Avinu's life, Rachel Imeinu, his wife for whom he had sacrificed so much, also died -

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

in childbirth. This succession of events must have been devastating. What was left for him to keep his faith intact, to keep his hope "alive"? It was Binyamin, for with Rachel's passing, Binyamin was born. The sun set in midday, but then it rose immediately. There was hope. There was a future. Yaakov Avinu shed tears for his wife, for his mother, for her nursemaid. These tears, however, were not tears of hopelessness, tears of desperation. Instead, they were tears of hope. Binyamin was alive. He would carry on, a ben yamin, the son of the right hand, the hand that represents struggle, fortitude and hope.

Two tribes personify this concept. The Izbitzer Rebbe, zl, suggests that we are called Yehudim after Shevet Yehudah. After Yosef confronted his brothers with the planted incriminating evidence, all the brothers gave up hope - except for Yehudah. He immediately approached Yosef and drew himself near to establish a dialogue. Yehudah never gave up hope, regardless of how overwhelming and desperate the situation seemed. All Jews ought to embrace this attitude.

This relationship has characterized the Jewish people throughout the millennia. When the Northern Kingdom seceded - Binyamin and Yehudah stayed together. When the ten tribes were exiled - Binyamin and Yehudah remained together. Indeed, there are opinions that today's Klal Yisrael is comprised primarily of their descendants. As long as there is hope, we will survive.

Alternatively, we suggest that Binyamin demonstrated his unique character in another area. Chazal teach us that Binyamin begot ten sons, each of whom he named after his lost brother Yosef. Every name alluded to his missing brother, his character and virtue, as well as Binyamin's feeling of loss. Binyamin wanted to make sure that the memory of his brother, Yosef, would never be forgotten. He concretized and eternalized his memory by naming his sons after him. This type of action planted the seeds of redemption. The Baal Shem Tov says, "Forgetfulness leads to exile. Remembrance is the beginning of Redemption." If we are to warrant the return of the Bais Hamikdash, we should never forget that it is gone. Binyamin taught us the meaning of remembrance. It is only natural that the Bais Hamikdash should be erected in his portion. His inexorable bond with his lost brother symbolized a level of kinship that could be "shared" between the two stones.

Aharon shall bear the names of Bnei Yisrael on the Breastplate of Judgment on his heart. (28:29)

The Torah dedicates an unusual amount of space to the fabrication of the Eiphod and the Choshen. While it might be somewhat difficult to clearly visualize the exact features of these vestments, their purpose and function are not as elusive. The Torah tells us clearly what was to be their function and purpose. The names of the tribes were engraved on the two stones that Aharon wore on his shoulders, six on each of the stones. Aharon "carried" these when he went in to serve, as a remembrance before Hashem. The fact that Aharon wore those on his shoulders conveys an important lesson about leadership. The leader must "carry" the needs of the nation on his "shoulders," so that he never forgets them. He is not here to enjoy the fruits and benefits of leadership. He has a load to carry. He concerns himself with the people, empathizes with their needs and struggles, and always is there to be their champion. A leader may never shrug off his load. It is his responsibility.

Yet, this is not enough. Aharon Hakohen was commanded to wear the Choshen with the names of Klal Yisrael over his heart. Carrying the weight of their necessities on his shoulders is one component of leadership. The second component of leadership is empathizing with his heart: feeling their pain; being sensitive to their needs. A Jewish leader carries the nation's needs on his shoulders and also engraves them on his heart. Their needs are his needs.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

We may add that the leader should not be sensitive only to the general needs of the populace. He must be attuned to the individual requirements and demands of his flock. There are some people who need more attention than others, and it is up to the leader to distinguish between the general needs of the people and the individual needs of each person.

I recently read an anecdotal story that underscores this idea. The story is about a famous conductor who was rehearsing with a distinguished symphony orchestra. Everything seemed to be going well as the 150 skilled musicians blended together to create a balanced harmony of song. The conductor waved his baton, and everyone responded to his instruction.

Suddenly, in the middle of a fortissimo passage, the conductor rapped on the music stand. Immediately, everyone became silent. "Where is the piccolo?" the conductor asked.

The piccolo player had missed his entry, and the disciplined ear of the conductor, even amidst the imposing volume of sound which emanated throughout the hall, had noted its absence.

A trained and seasoned leader keeps his eyes, ears and heart attuned to all aspects of the community. He is acutely aware of the role and mission of each of its members and knows how best to cultivate their strengths, as well as how to downplay their weaknesses. The leader must lead, but it is only when the community follows in harmony that his efforts meet with success.

And make for them sashes. (28:40)

In the Talmud Arachin 16b, Chazal teach that the Avnet atoned for hirhur ha'lev, improper thoughts and emotions. A chasid once came to the Mezritcher Maggid, zl, and lamented his inability to empty his mind of inappropriate thoughts. They simply entered his mind against his will and impugned the integrity of his spiritual ascendancy. He wanted to do the right thing, but these hirhurim, thoughts, kept creeping into his mind. What should he do? The Maggid suggested that he travel to Horav Ze'ev, zl, m'Zitomir, who owned an inn, to speak with him.

The man traveled to Zitomir, which was a small village. He arrived at night at the home of Rav Ze'ev. The door was locked and, regardless of how often and how loud he knocked, no one answered the door. It was cold and windy, and the elements were getting to the weary traveler. As he knocked, he cried out, "Please answer the door. I am tired and cold. I must rest." After a while, he became angry with Rav Ze'ev, the owner, for not opening the door. He began to berate him, "How dare you not open the door for a Jew in need? I am freezing out here. Open up!" From the house, there was no response, not even a peep.

The man stood there throughout the night. With the light of dawn, Rav Ze'ev opened the door and invited the man in. The chasid remained at the inn for a few days, during which Rav Ze'ev never spoke to him. The man was incredulous, "Why would the Maggid have sent me here?" he wondered. "First, Rav Ze'ev does not let me in, and then, when I finally take a room in the inn, he ignores me." The chasid decided that before he left he was going to speak to Rav Ze'ev in an attempt to get to the bottom of things.

"Pardon me," the chasid turned to Rav Ze'ev, "could you tell me why the Maggid sent me here? It seems that it was all for naught."

Rav Ze'ev looked deep into the eyes of the chasid and said, "The Rebbe sent you to learn a lesson from me. The lesson is: A man is the baal ha'bayis, owner of his home. He allows whomever he

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

wants to enter, and, whomever he does not want, he does not allow entrance into his house!"

The lesson was simple. The man did not know what to do about the inappropriate thoughts that were creeping into his mind. He is the baal ha'bayis, and therefore, he allows in only whom and what he desires. Apparently, he was neither firm enough in how he closed the door nor discerning enough concerning whom he allowed in. Furthermore, such thoughts cannot penetrate where they are not wanted!

Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil. (27:20)

Why are they commanded to bring the oil to Moshe Rabbeinu? What role did Moshe play in the lighting of the Menorah? Was this not the function of Aharon HaKohen? Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, explains that Moshe's relationship with Aharon was unique in the sense that they were like one person. Aharon reciprocated this feeling. Each one was filled with joy about the success of the other. Aharon was as happy when Moshe, his younger brother, became Klal Yisrael's leader, as if it were he that had ascended to this position. Likewise, Moshe was overjoyed to hear that Hashem had selected his brother to become the Kohen Gadol. The lighting of the Menorah was a form of appeasement to Aharon, since he was disturbed that neither he - nor any member of his tribe - had been involved in the Chanukas HaMishkan, Dedication of the Mishkan. Hashem told him, "Yours is greater than theirs, for you will light the Menorah." Aharon's anguish was Moshe's anguish. Consequently, when they brought the oil to Aharon for the lighting, it was as if they brought it also to Moshe. His involvement in the lighting of the Menorah was supportive. He was as excited about his brother's lighting as if he himself had been the one who lit the Menorah.

Aharon Hakohen was the quintessential ohaiv Yisrael, one who loved all Jews. His empathy was not only for his brother; it was for all Jews. This is why he merited to wear over his heart the Choshen Hamishpat, Breastplate, upon which were engraved the names of the Twelve Tribes, representing Klal Yisrael. The heart that was sensitive to all Jews should carry the Choshen, which served as an atonement for Klal Yisrael. Aharon's heart was pure, untainted by any vestige of jealousy. He was truly happy that Moshe had been chosen to lead Klal Yisrael - an unnatural character trait. He was a unique individual, whose abounding love for others was characterized by a heart that was the pulse of the nation.

The true mark of a gadol, Torah leader, is his ability to be the pulse of the nation. The people's pain is his pain; their joy is his joy. There are those who "talk the talk," but the true gedolim live this throughout their lives, worrying, caring, sensitizing themselves to the needs of the wider Klal Yisrael - both spiritually and physically. Some go beyond the expected. Their sensitivity extends even to those whose emotions are not so sharp, but are nonetheless, very fragile. Their sensitivities are just as important. The following story demonstrates this idea as it characterizes one of our greatest Torah leaders, Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl. A posek, halachic arbiter, without peer, he was also a modern day Aharon HaKohen who loved all Jews with a love that was reciprocated.

A couple once arrived at his home to seek counsel regarding their son who was mentally challenged. They had the option of sending him to either of two fine institutions. Each one had pros and cons. They left the final decision up to Rav Shlomo Zalman.

The Rav asked, "What is the boy's preference? Where would he like to go?"

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

"Rebbe," the father replied, somewhat taken aback, "did we not say that he his mentally disadvantaged? Regrettably, he is incapable of making even the most simple decision. Surely, he cannot have a say concerning which school he should attend." Rav Shlomo Zalman looked back at the parents in a manner which was not typical of his usual smiling countenance and said, "You are doing your child a grave injustice. Picture yourself in his position. To be suddenly evicted from the comfort of your home and thrown into a strange place could be devastating. Even the most well-adjusted adult has a difficult time getting adjusted to, and acquainted with, a new environment. This is especially true of a young child whose emotions are already very fragile. He needs more love and attention than the average child. You must include him in your decision." While the parents did not disagree with Rav Shlomo Zalman, they had no idea how to implement his practical suggestions into reality. Taking into account their son's mental capacity, even normal communication was most difficult.

Realizing their dilemma, Rav Shlomo Zalman asked to see the child. "What is your name?" the rav asked the boy affectionately when he came into the room.

"Akiva," the boy answered.

"You have a beautiful name," Rav Shlomo Zalman said. My name is Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and I am considered one of the great Torah scholars of our time. Many Jews throughout the world listen to what I have to say. I would like you, Akiva, also to listen to what I have to say. You will soon be going to a new school. I would like to ask a favor of you. Could you please be my agent to supervise the kashrus at the school? It means very much to me to have you do this." The parents listened in total disbelief. They could not believe what they were hearing. To hear Rav Shlomo Zalman accord such accolades to himself was totally anomalous. This was a gadol who was the paragon of humility. How could he speak this way? It was not yet over. Rav Shlomo Zalman looked at Akiva and said, "By the power vested in me, I grant you semichah, ordination, and appoint you as my agent for all areas of kashrus coordination in your new school. Please carry out your duties courteously and responsibly."

When the parents looked at their Akiva, they understood what Rav Shlomo Zalman had done. The child's eyes glimmered with enthusiasm. His face exuded excitement. He could not wait to transfer to his new school. The transition went so smoothly that the boy never wanted to leave the school. He would often tell his parents, "I am the mashgiach, kashrus supervisor, for the gadol hador, pre-eminent Torah leader of our generation. How can I leave my position?"

Once again, it is the little things that make a great person. Expressed in other words: when great people care about little people, they become greater.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

Glory and splendor - kavod and tiferes seem synonymous with each other. Wherein lies the difference between the concept of glory and splendor? The Malbim explains that kavod, glory, is a reference to the inherent spiritual potential with which one is endowed at conception due to the greatness of his neshamah, soul. Tiferes, splendor, is the fruition of this potential, the achievement and fulfillment of the unique capabilities with which one is blessed. When Aharon HaKohen wore the

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Bigdei Kehunah, he represented these two facets of his unique spiritual character. He was bestowed with a neshamah that was destined for prominence. Second, the unique potential of his neshamah reached fulfillment and, thus, he became the progenitor of all future Kohanim.

Horav Avraham Pam, zl, asserts that this dual concept applies to bnei Torah. They are the modern-day wearers of Bigdei Kehunah. If we were to take into consideration the moral abyss that has become the standard of contemporary society, the permissiveness, licentiousness, violence and drug addiction that confronts us daily in the media and on the street, it is a wonder how in such a poisoned environment the level of Torah study manifest by bnei Torah is so incredibly high. Why do they not sink with the rest of society? How do they overcome the influence of moral degeneration? The answer is: the kavod, glory, the immense potential of the neshamos of these bnei Torah. The prodigious capabilities inherent in those who spend their lives in the pursuit of Torah knowledge, immersed in the holiness and purity of the Torah and mitzvos, are exceptional. They do not abscond to the way of life that is represented by the nadir of depravity to which our society has descended.

"What is the source of this spiritual endowment?" asks Rav Pam. He suggests that it quite probably is a bequest derived from a previous righteous ancestor who served the Almighty under extreme duress and mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice. This total abnegation of one's self earned him the distinction of having his descendant display a similar dedication to Torah and mitzvos. As the Rosh Hayeshivah notes, with kavod comes the responsibility to obtain the mantle of tiferes and see to it that the enormous spiritual potential achieves fruition. It is not enough to just be better than those on the street. One must strive to set the standard and provide the beacon for others to follow.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

The commentaries address the concepts of glory and splendor. Ramban asserts that the vestments were to honor the Kohanim, since these garments were similar to the clothes worn by royalty. Sforno says that the garments were for the glory of Hashem and to lend splendor to the Kohen Gadol as the pre-eminent teacher of the nation, so that he be held in the highest esteem by the shevatim, tribes, whose names he carried on the Choshen Hamishpat. Regardless of the purpose and function of the Bigdei Kehunah, they were exceptional garments that reflected dignity and beauty and raised the esteem of the Kohanim who wore them. Wearing these vestments was an integral component in the Kohen's avodah, service. Indeed, a Kohen who serves in the Bais Hamikdash without wearing the Bigdei Kehunah is liable for Heavenly Excision.

In today's society we have a popular maxim that "clothes make the man." Regrettably, this is true, only in the sense that contemporary society perceives an individual by external appearances. A person is who he is based upon his internal essence, not by the way he dresses and the type of clothes he wears. Human values, however, attribute much to what they see externally. Thus, the ben Torah should reflect the dignity and regality of the Torah. People look at us all the time: some with respect; others with envy and derision. We should raise the banner of the monarchy of Torah by the way we carry ourselves.

There is a fascinating story concerning this concept that occurred with Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, rav of Khal Adas Yeshurun, in Washington Heights. It goes back to 1936, when he was a young Rabbi in Germany. On Shushan Purim, Rav Schwab was accused of publicly maligning the accursed Adolf Hitler. It seems that in the rav's Shabbos derashah, sermon, on Parashas Ki Sissa, he was

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

addressing the sin of the Golden Calf. In his disparagement of the sin and the people's error in thinking that one needs a "middleman" to approach Hashem, he had said, "The Jews do not need a vermittler, German for "go between." A government spy, which was a common occurrence in shul during those times, misunderstood this and thought the rav said, "Hitler," and that the German dictator was the focus of Rav Schwab's criticism.

The rav was brought before the Gestapo to explain himself. Making direct eye contact with the official, the rav emphatically declared his innocence. This was not a sufficient defense for the Nazis. He was told that his case would be reviewed, and he would be advised of the verdict.

After that meeting, Rav Schwab was in fear for his life. He knew that he was not dealing with human beings. In his diary, he recorded that it took up until the middle of Iyar - two months - before the matter was cleared up, so that he was vindicated. During this period, he slept fitfully, if at all - with his clothes on. He feared that he would be arrested in middle of the night, which was common practice for those beasts, and taken to jail - or into the forest to be beaten or left to die.

In other cases, they would rouse their victim in the middle of the night and take him out to the town square for a public hanging. If this would be his fate, he would face it with dignity - and with his clothes on - as befits a Torah leader. He was not about to allow the Nazis to hang the rav of the town in his bedclothes! Chazal view a rav, as well as any Torah leader, as sheluchei d'Rachamana, Hashem's emissaries, and, as such, he must maintain his semblance of dignity at all times. This is the meaning of kavod and tiferes.

You shall make a forehead plate of pure gold and engrave upon it...holy unto Hashem...and it shall be on Aharon's brow. (28:36,37,38)

The Midrash teaches that each of the Kohen Gadol's begadim, vestments, symbolized Divine atonement for various sins. The Tzitz, forehead plate, denoted Divine forgiveness for brazenness. The Hebrew words for brazenness are azuz metzach, literally a "bold brow;" hence, the Tzitz that is worn on the metzach, brow, of the Kohen Gadol. Chutzpah, azuz, brazenness, by any standard, is a character trait that demonstrates a person's lack of shame. It is a middah, character trait, that goes against the personality of a Jew, considering the fact that Jews are defined by three traits: baishanim, they have a sense of shame; rachamanim, they are compassionate; gomlei chasadim, they perform acts of loving kindness. Of course, if the brazenness is employed in a constructive manner, as when a person refuses to yield to the blandishments of contemporary moral standards or stands resolute in the face of overwhelming peer and social pressures, chutzpah is desirable.

In the period prior to Moshiach's advent, chutzpah will be one of the hallmarks of the generation. As mentioned, the true distinction of a Torah Jew is an inherent sense of shame, which prevents him from slipping into inappropriate behavior. Where does today's chutzpah manifest itself and from where does it originate? In the frum, observant, camp it is noticeable in the lack of derech erez, respect/comportment, that we show to our elders, our rebbeim, our parents. There used to be a time when a gadol's, Torah leader's, words were sacrosanct, when students had a respect bordering on fear and awe, for their rebbe. A yeshivah bachur would instinctively show respect to his rebbe. Today, it is different. The student has to "hold" of the rebbe; the rebbe has to conform to the student's line of thinking. The days when a rav was held in the highest esteem are over. Today, he is an employee who often has to take a position commensurate with the future of his paycheck.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Where does this all originate? Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl, relates that he was once on a bus when an elderly gentleman alighted. Rav Stern said to a teenager sitting next to him, "Stand up for him and give him your seat." The teenager replied insolently, "There are children on this bus that are younger than I. Let them get up for the old man." Rav Stern looked at the young man incredulously and countered, "But they are not getting up." In the end, the teenager refused to give up his seat for the older gentleman. Rav Stern then got up and gave his seat to the man. The rav was now standing - the old man was sitting - and so was the young man. Then Rav Stern looked at the teenager and said, "Will you at least get up for me?"

The teenager replied, rather smugly, "If you want to stand, that is your business."

This is the type of chutzpah that challenges us on a regular basis. Chazal foretold this would occur, and it has. Now, if you would like to know how this teenager became such a mechutzaf, Rav Stern cites another incident that occurred on the bus. This time, an elderly woman ascended the bus to find seating at a premium. Seated near the door, where the elderly woman stood with her packages, was a young woman with her young child. The people on the bus insistently told her, "Tell your son to stand up for this old woman!"

The mother turned to her son and said, "Do not get up; let her stand."

We intimate to them to ignore mitzvos in the Torah. We teach our children chutzpah when they see us acting inappropriately to others. As our children grow up, they perceive right and wrong consistent with what they see at home. The lessons we impart by our own demeanor can have a lasting effect. Hopefully, it will be of a positive nature.

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

By beginning the Parsha with the words, "Now you shall command," it seems to imply that heretofore, the previous Parsha which addressed the construction of the Mishkan, was not referring to Moshe Rabbeinu. Now, the command is directly to Moshe Rabbeinu. However, this is not true, because in the previous Parsha, the Torah addresses Moshe Rabbeinu a number of times, with the word, "v'asisa," and you should make. Moreover, in the previous Parsha Moshe is told to act, to take an active role in the construction, while here he is told merely to command. Why is this?

The Ozrover Rebbe, zl, gives the following explanation: The Midrash in the beginning of Sefer Vayikra distinguishes between the value of gold and precious jewels as opposed to sifsei daas, intelligent speech. A person may possess vast amounts of gold and jewels, but if he has no daas, intelligence, they are of little value. He will either not appreciate what he has, or will quickly lose it. Everyone contributed towards the Mishkan - except for Moshe. This depressed him. Why should he not play an active role in this unprecedented experience? Hashem said to him, "Your words are more beloved to Me than all of the gold and jewelry that was brought for the Mishkan."

What is the Midrash teaching us? The Rebbe explains that Moshe was troubled. Here he was the leader of the Jewish People - everybody gave their fair share - everybody - but him. Why should he not be upset? Hashem told him, "Moshe, you are mistaken. A person who possesses great wealth, but does not have the intelligence to manage it properly -- or does not have someone, or some guidelines for

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

taking care of it -- is this wealth of any value to him? While it is true that everyone contributed towards the Mishkan, what value does the Mishkan have if there is no Torah in it? It is merely a mausoleum of gold and silver. Moshe, you have the Torah. Your "words" of Torah which emanate from your mouth have greater significance than anything else. For, without the Torah, everything else is meaningless."

Let us see how great is Moshe's word. His name is not mentioned in Parashas Tetzaveh, because after the chet ha'eigel, sin of the Golden Calf, when Hashem wanted to destroy Klal Yisrael, Moshe declared, "Hashem, if You forgive Klal Yisrael, good! But, if not, first take my life and remove any mention of me from the Torah, for I cannot be a leader who failed to gain mercy for his people." This unparalleled devotion to Klal Yisrael turned the tide and Hashem listened. But, Moshe's name had to be "erased". He made a statement, and his word must be upheld. Parashas Tetzaveh usually falls around the seventh of Adar, the anniversary of Moshe Rabbeinu's birth and death, a date intrinsically bound with his name. Thus, this Parsha was selected as the only Parsha in the Torah, from the time of Moshe's birth, where his name is not mentioned. We wonder - should Moshe be punished for his unequaled mesiras nefesh, devotion and self-sacrifice, for Klal Yisrael? Is this his reward for a life of supreme dedication? Veritably, we must deduce that the omission of Moshe's name is not a punishment at all. On the contrary, there is no doubt that he was rewarded for his "demand" on behalf of Klal Yisrael. But, nonetheless, a "word" left his mouth -- a word that is Torah, for Moshe Rabbeinu's word is Torah. Such a word is not a simple abstract - it is an entity - it is Torah. Such an expression cannot go to waste. It must take effect. Thus, Moshe's name is deleted from this Parsha.

Indeed, heretofore, Moshe did not have a personal share in the building of the Mishkan. V'atah tetzaveh, until now, until this command, it was not you. Now, v'atah, what will be your cheilek, individual contribution? Tetzaveh, your command, the Torah that emanates from your mouth, overrides every other contribution. For without the Torah there is no value to the gold and silver that was brought. The Torah is what gives it meaning and value.

Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Bnei Yisrael on his heart constantly before Hashem. (28:30)

The Kohen Gadol wore the Choshen Ha'Mishpat, Breastplate, over his heart. Aharon HaKohen was selected by Hashem to be the first Kohen Gadol, the progenitor of Kehunah Gedolah. Chazal tell us that Aharon merited this distinction because of a unique quality which he exemplified - the character trait of "nosei b'ol im chaveiro," bearing the yoke with his friend. While to empathize with others, to be sensitive and feel their pain as well as their joy, is a character trait that should distinguish all Jews, it was Aharon who set the standard for this middah.

Regarding Aharon's relationship with his brother, Moshe, it says in Sefer Tehillim 133:1, "Behold how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers." Aharon was sincerely joyful when Hashem selected his younger brother, Moshe, to be Klal Yisrael's leader. Indeed, his benchmark was his unquestionable love for all Jews - regardless of their stature, pedigree or financial status. His joy for Moshe was as if it were his own. Certainly, it is easier to feel a friend's pain than to share his joy. Jealousy is a difficult mountain to transcend. Aharon showed the way for others to emulate.

We must learn to see our own face in the face of our fellow man. His needs should be our needs. We should feel for him as we feel for ourselves. Aharon's heart encompassed the hearts of others. His heart was large - large enough to be sensitive to the needs of others. Hence, Hashem selected him to be the first and ultimate standard bearer who would wear the Choshen Ha'Mishpat over his heart. The holy

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

ornament, which atoned for the shortcomings and indiscretions of Jews, rested on the heart of he who felt for other Jews.

This quality has been the hallmark of our gedolei Yisrael, Torah leaders, who have distinguished themselves in more than their encyclopedic knowledge of Torah. I have selected two short stories from the vast repository of narratives which illustrates this middah.

The Ponovezher Rav, zl, once visited a wealthy philanthropist who supported many Torah institutions. Regrettably, he was far-removed from Torah observance. The Rav asked the man, "How did you come to support Torah so magnanimously when, in fact, you yourself are far-removed from a Torah way of life." He responded with the following:

"I was wild as a teenager and consequently, was not accepted in a number of yeshivos. My parents sent me to apply for placement in the yeshivah of the Chafetz Chaim in Radin, Poland with the hope that I might get accepted there. Well, I was not accepted. I could not stay in the yeshivah overnight, and to go home at that time of night was not possible. The Chafetz Chaim graciously offered me a bed in his home.

"To call it a home would be an overstatement. It was a two-room shack. In fact, the Chafetz Chaim gave me his own bed! It was cold and dark. Apparently, he was very poor. He had no heat, or electricity.

"I was young and used to a warm bed. It was very difficult to fall asleep because of the cold. The Chafetz Chaim came into the room as I pretended to be asleep. He took off his long jacket that he was probably going to sleep in himself and covered me with it.

"I never forgot that night and the Chafetz Chaim's gesture. Since then, I have become very wealthy. Regrettably, Torah observance was not something to which I wanted to commit. But the feeling of being cared for and loved by a total stranger never left me. That one act of kindness touched me like nothing else. Therefore, whenever a Torah institution approaches me for a donation, I gladly oblige. I give from the heart, because the Chafetz Chaim gave to me from his heart."

The second story was recently published by Rabbi Paysach Krohn. I think it is a classic. Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, once asked a close talmid, disciple, to drive him to Kever Rachel, the tomb of Rachel. As they traveled out of Yerushalayim, Rav Chaim began to think of all the people for whom he would pray. He had a list which included the sick, those who were grief-stricken, the childless, and the financially challenged. As he was going through the list, he began to cry. It was a soft weeping - at first - but then it became a loud sobbing that resounded throughout the car.

They arrived at Kever Rachel and Rav Chaim got out of the car, composed himself and entered the hallway leading to the kever. As he approached the kever, Rav Chaim once again began to sob bitterly, crying out, "Mamme! Chaimke is doh!" -- "Mother, Chaimke is here!"

Rav Chaim began to recite numerous kapitlach, chapters, of Tehillim, mentioning the names of those for whom he prayed. He wailed as he closed his eyes, visualizing each one. Then he called out, "De Ribbono Shel Olam hut gezocht Mamme, as du zolst nit veinan, ubber ich Chaimke zog, vein Mamme vein!" -- Hashem said to you, 'Mother, do not cry', but I, Chaimke, say to you, 'cry, Mother, cry!'"

He was referring to the famous pasuk in Yirmiyahu, 31:15, where Hashem tells Rachel to restrain herself from weeping. For the galus, exile, is only temporary. Klal Yisrael will one day return joyfully and reclaim their land.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

On the return trip to Yerushalayim, someone queried Rav Chaim, "If Hashem instructed Rachel not to cry, why did the Rosh HaYeshiva supplicate her to cry?"

Rav Chaim's response was archetypical and defined his character. "A father can make demands of his daughter. He can tell her, 'Do not cry!' A son can tell his mother, 'Mamme, please cry!'"

He felt their pain and anguish. He cared - and he cried. The brilliant Rosh HaYeshiva, rebbe to thousands, cared about every Jew, from his contemporary to the "little guy", from the brokenhearted widow, bereft of her husband and with a houseful of orphans to feed, to the girl who was having difficulty in finding her mate. That was Rav Chaim.

What should leave a powerful impact on us is the manner in which the Rosh HaYeshivah related to Rachel Imeinu. She was not an abstract figure, Matriarch of Klal Yisrael, who lived a few thousand years ago. She was his mother - here and now! He felt that way and communicated his feelings in that manner. What a lesson for us! He related to Rachel Imeinu as if to his very own mother. Is it a wonder that his prayers were heard?

For the sons of Aharon you shall make Tunics...and you shall make them Headdresses for glory and splendor. (28:40)

The Migbaas, Headdress, worn by the Kohen was very distinctive. Rashbam explains that since it is worn on the head, the highest portion of the body, it is noticed and transmits an image of the individual who is wearing the Headdress. The Migbaas and Mitznefes, Turban, were to be regarded as specific marks of distinction or worthiness, similar to the crown worn by a king. The Kohen's Migbaas was made of white linen, reminding him that maintaining his purity, distancing himself from anything that is base and immoral, is his sine qua non. The Headdress was a subtle reminder of the Kohen's function and responsibility. People looked up to him. He had to be worthy of their respect.

We understand now why Chazal tell us that the Mitznefes atoned for gasus ruach, arrogance, gross haughtiness. The Mitznefes warns even the highest and most distinguished in the nation of the necessity to be constantly on guard, to rise above and remove himself from everything ignoble or impure. By doing this, he comes to realize that he must banish any overestimation of himself and divest himself of any form of conceit.

Paradoxically, these Headdresses are to be made for glory and splendor. This seems to be in direct contrast with the goal of abrogating conceit and atoning for haughtiness. The answer is simply that the Kohen must understand that he is merely a medium, a vehicle for inspiring holiness and respect. He is nothing more than an agent through which the lofty concepts that he represents are taught. Thus, by wearing the Headdress, he serves to atone for the sin of arrogance.

To know one's worth, to realize one's position in life is not arrogance. Indeed, one must demand the proper respect for his position - otherwise, he demeans his position and himself. He is a representative of an ideal. To demean the agent is to denigrate the ideal. A ben Torah represents the Torah. Therefore, to degrade a ben Torah is to debase the Torah he embodies.

What is the definition of kavod? Chazal in Pirkei Avos 4:1, ask, "Who is honored? He who honors others." One would think that he who is honored by others is honorable, rather than he who honors others. Apparently, one who depends on others to honor him is not really honorable, since the honor he receives is of a dubious nature. It is not his - it is dependent upon the whims of others. Honor

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

that is contingent upon others is not honor. True honor is controlled by the individual. Therefore, Chazal view the one who gives honor as the honorable one. For, by giving honor to others, he indicates that he understands the meaning and value of honor. This is an expression of his own understanding - something that is not contingent upon others. The need for kavod, the obsession for kavod is a tragic disease that devours a person. Its cure is based upon developing respect. For if one respects himself, he really does not need or obsess about the fleeting praise of others.

TORAH BRIEFS

In the Ohel Moed, outside the Paroches... Aharon and his sons shall arrange it from evening until morning. (27:21) Pardes Yosef renders this pasuk homiletically as referring to Ner Elokim, the candle burning the light of Hashem / the Jewish spark of devotion to Hashem, that should be aflame in every Jew's heart. It should burn in the Ohel Moed - the Shul and Bais Ha'Medrash -- during times of prayer and devotion. It should be kindled also outside the Paroches - in the street, the business, anywhere that one is involved in mundane endeavors. The flame should never flicker. It should burn brightly - always.

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

Meshech Chochmah cites the Yerushalmi that says that Binyamin's name was split on the stones of the Eiphod. Bais, nun, were engraved on one stone, while the yud, mem, yud, nun, were on the adjoining stone - which was situated on the other side. Thus, part of Binyamin's name was on one shoulder, while the other part was on the other shoulder. Therefore, it says in Sefer Devarim 33:12 in regard to the Bais HaMikdash, "And (the Temple) rests between his shoulders," because his name was split between the two kisphei/shoulders of the Eiphod.

You shall make a Breastplate of Judgment. (28:15)

The letters of the word Choshen - ches, shin, nun, also spell the word nacheish which refers to a medium who reveals hidden things by means, and with the assistance, of the forces of impurity and evil. Haksav v'Hakabalah notes that the Choshen's function was to reveal the hidden through the powers of kedushah, sanctity, using the medium of the Urim V'Tumim. There are two ways - the right way, the holy way, and the wrong, evil method.

Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary. (28:35)

Chasam Sofer interprets this pasuk as conveying an important message to the Torah leader. Tznius, modesty, acting with humility, is the appropriate and refined approach - especially for a Torah leader. This is only in regard to worldly, mundane matters. When it concerns matters of kedushah, sanctity, whether it is the sanctity of the nation or the sanctity of Jewish life, it is incumbent for the leader that his voice be heard loud and clear.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

*Now You shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take for you pure, pressed oil for illumination.
(27:20)*

The commentators wonder why Klal Yisrael was enjoined to bring the oil to Moshe Rabbeinu, when Aharon was the one who needed the oil. Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, z.l., cites the pasuk in Tehillim 133:2: "Behold, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of the brothers, moreover, in unity. Like the precious oil upon the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aharon, running down over his garments." The harmony that existed between Moshe and Aharon -- the brotherly love that connected them, was so strong that when the oil was on Aharon's beard, it was as if Moshe Rabbeinu had also been anointed. Rav Chaim supplements this, stating that Moshe actually felt the oil on his beard, so great was the unity between them.

Had Moshe been a lesser person, he would have had every reason to be envious of Aharon. Kehunah Gedolah, the High Priesthood, was the zenith of spiritual appointments - and Hashem granted it to Aharon. Moshe was not jealous, because he loved Aharon as if they were one. It was no different with Aharon. The love was reciprocal. When Moshe was chosen by Hashem to be Klal Yisrael's leader, Aharon, the older brother, came to greet him with open loving arms. In fact, the love and joy was so immense that it could not be expressed verbally; it could only be manifest with his heartfelt love.

Accordingly, Horav Chaim Beifus, Shlita, explains the concept of "veyikchu eilecha," "that they shall take for you." The word eilecha/you implies both of them - Aharon and Moshe. The oil that was brought to Moshe was considered as if it had been brought to Aharon, because Moshe viewed Aharon's anointment as if it were his own. The two brothers each viewed the other as one with himself.

The harmonious relationship between Moshe and Aharon is not exclusive to these two famous brothers. It is the type of relationship that should be the natural ideal for all Jews. After all, are we not all brothers? This harmony can be divided into two components: joy and pain. While it is important to share in another Jew's joy, to feel a sense of happiness at his friend's good fortune, it is also essential that one feel the pain and hurt his friend experiences. The Torah first introduces us to Moshe Rabbeinu as a young man, when he went out and noticed the hard labor to which his People were being subjected. He immediately shared in their pain. That is the paradigm which Moshe sets before us.

Jewish lore is replete with narratives that demonstrate to us the concept of sharing the simchah, joy, of a friend's good fortune, as well as sharing in his grief and pain. These stories usually revolve around a great tzaddik or Rosh Yeshiva. What about the simple fellow? Does this equally apply to him, or is he considered to be different? Ostensibly, unity within our People, harmony among Jews from all walks of life, is an essential prerequisite in our nation's present and future.

How does one "feel" his friend's joy? How does one submit himself totally to another person, so that their two hearts beat as one? First of all, it takes self-confidence. An insecure person, one who is afraid of his own shadow, will certainly have a difficult time supporting someone else. One must manifest respect for another person, appreciate his virtues and qualities. Lastly, sharing a big heart - a

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

heart filled with compassion, a heart that is prepared to cheer at another person's success, to cry at his failure. It may seem like an insurmountable criterion, but people attain this level all of the time. In fact, a secular program is founded upon this concept. It is called the Special Olympics, a program in which those who participate are accompanied by an able-bodied person to help them do anything they would have done had they not been physically challenged. They swing a bat together; they throw a ball together. The prize goes to the participant, but it is the teamwork that "brings home the gold." Hopefully, we can develop this form of teamwork without the "external" motivation.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

One's clothing affects him in two ways: his individuality; how others relate to him. The Kesav Sofer explains that what a person wears reminds him of his station in life and prevents him from assimilating with those beneath him. Indeed, their manner of dress is precisely what distinguished Klal Yisrael in Egypt. This is what 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 he wears, manifests his personality and status. Thus, people view him in accordance with the way he presents himself.

The Torah tells us that Aharon did not need the Priestly vestments 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 vestments were "for glory and splendor," so that the people would realize the spiritual glory and splendor of the Kohen Gadol, High Priest, and his august position. Clothes do not make a person, but they definitely tell a lot about him. Hopefully, the message we send is the one we wish to be sending.

You shall make a forehead plate of pure and engrave upon it... holy unto G-d... and it shall be on Aharon's brow...(28:36,37,38)

Chazal tell us that the Kohen Gadol's begadim, Priestly vestments, were more than outer coverings for his body; they symbolized Hashem's forgiveness for various sins. The Tzitz HaKodesh, Holy Forehead Plate, personified absolution for the sin of brazenness. The Hebrew term for brazenness is azus meitzach, which translated literally means "a bold brow." This expression is found in Sefer Yirmiyah 3:3, "You have the meitzach ishah zonah," the brazenness of the brow of a loose woman, in that you refuse to be ashamed (of your loose behavior).

When all is said and done, this trait can be summarized in one word: chutzpah, audacity, insolence, a characteristic which has a clearly negative connotation. It undermines authority, impedes discipline and, hence, destroys any semblance of constructive order. A mechutzaf, one who is audacious, disrespectful and shameless, can sabotage the hard work of the most dedicated leader on the other hand, one must earn respect. Repression and coercion will never effect reverence; they will only incur wrath, disillusionment, and chutzpah from those whom we seek to command -- and from those whose respect we want to build.

Chazal teach us that every character trait can have both desirable and undesirable applications. Indeed, whether a trait is considered positive or negative depends on the manner in which it is applied.

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

Hence, we may commonly refer to chutzpah as an undesirable character trait but, it can, at times, be constructive, necessary and laudable. When a person refuses to defer his morality and spiritual strength in the face of overwhelming social and peer pressure, when one refuses to yield his religious beliefs in the face of financial pressures - chutzpah is a wonderful character trait to possess. In fact, we are taught time and again that one must observe the Jewish rituals of worship, even when he confronts derision and mockery. This is not only "kosher" chutzpah; it is requisite chutzpah. Regrettably, all too often we equate boldness and daring with impertinence and insolence. It all depends on what side of the line of religious conviction one stands. Our nation is here today because of its "chutzpah" to believe in Hashem Yisborach, despite the challenges that have threatened its survival.

The Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh teaches that if one recognizes his character deficiencies, he should do everything within his power to channel them toward constructive endeavors. Thus, one who is quick to "lose his cool" should direct his anger l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven, to cleanse the world of evil, to eradicate sin, to stamp out injustice, to expose those charlatans who claim to represent our People, but are actually only striving for self aggrandizement. One who has difficulty overcoming feelings of arrogance, who is given to notions of grandeur and pride, should channel this pride to take a stand for his People, to publicly proclaim with dignity that he is the bearer of a Divine Soul. He should view immorality with the disdain and derision it deserves. Last, one who is stubborn, who does have chutzpah, should focus his obstinacy and fortify himself against any incursion directed towards his ethical/moral standards. Indeed, in today's society -- where "everything goes" and "just do it" is the catchword of the generation -- chutzpah will help us to maintain our identity in a sea of confusion and will prevent us from yielding to the forces of assimilation.

As mentioned above, chutzpah should be equated with daring, with the mettle necessary to survive as a Jew. I could cite a number of instances where the Jew has demonstrated his temerity and determination to survive and thrive as a committed Jew. Jewish stoicism is part of our emblem, a primary component in our self-definition. There is another word which, although is not a clear synonym for chutzpah, clearly is a result of its constructive application. The following story explains this statement:

The narrator of the story remembers himself as a young boy in the Auschwitz concentration camp. For awhile he was able to share a barracks with his father. Despite the unspeakable horror, heinous cruelty and overwhelming hardship, many Jews clung to whatever religious observance they had when they entered Hitler's purgatory. One cold wintry night, one of the inmates reminded the men in the barracks that it was the first night of Chanukah, the festival of dedication. How could they overlook a festival that represented the Jew's fight for spiritual freedom and religious conviction? How were they going to light the Menorah in the concentration camp? Moreover, where would they get a Menorah?

The narrator's father fashioned a small Menorah out of scrap metal. It probably could not have received many awards for its artistic beauty, but its spiritual meaning was unparalleled. For a wick, he took some threads from his prison uniform, his "vestments" of Jewish heroism. For oil, he used some butter that he was somehow able to procure from one of the guards.

They were taking a great risk. Such observances were strictly forbidden, so that being caught meant certain death. Taking risks was part of their Jewish chutzpah, daring. The son/narrator observing the scene questioned his father: "It is a terrible 'waste' of precious calories to take the butter that could feed a starving man and use it as oil to burn in the Menorah," the son queried. "Would it not be better to share the butter on a slice of bread than to burn it?" "My dear son," the father responded, "both you and I know that a person can exist a very long time without food. But, my child, I tell you, a person cannot

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

live a single day without hope. This is the fire of hope, the fire of faith. Never let it go out. Not here. Not anywhere. For without it, we are nothing."

The word that we seek is the word "hope". It is something that has preserved us throughout our tumultuous history. Hope and faith are not really two different concepts. As Jews, our faith engenders hope. It is our faith that gives us that "chutzpah" to hold our heads up high with pride. That is the kind of chutzpah that every Jew should possess.

You shall offer one sheep in the morning. (29:39)

What seems to be a simple statement instructing us regarding the Korban Tamid, Daily Sacrifice, had a profound impact upon the Apter Rebbe, z.l., the Ohaiv Yisrael. Once, a chasid who dealt in sheep came to the Rebbe to bemoan his plight. He described the various difficulties he encountered raising the sheep and preparing them for the market. During this entire time, the Rebbe was listening attentively. Suddenly, the Rebbe emitted a bitter moan. He turned to the sheep trader, saying "You have been speaking this whole time about your sheep. Have you given any thought to Hashem's sheep? Do you realize the tragedy that occurred this morning to Klal Yisrael?"

"What tragedy happened, Rebbe? I am not aware of anything that occurred," responded the chasid incredulously.

"I see that you have forgotten that we once had a Bais Hamikdash," responded the Rebbe. "Every day the Korban Tamid, consisting of a sheep in the morning and one in the evening, was offered. Today, as in every day since the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, a tragedy occurs: we do not fulfill the mitzvah of offering the Korban Tamid."

This is how a tzaddik learns a pasuk Chumash, and how he views the sad state of affairs since the destruction of the Temple. We suggest that there is an additional tragedy: the fact that we do not remember - or think about the fact that we once had a Bais Hamikdash. The Baal Shem Tov was wont to say, "Forgetfulness leads to exile; remembrance is the secret of redemption." The genesis of our "problems" is our inability -- or lack of desire -- to remember, to study our glorious past, to come to grips with its lesson and message for the future.

The Baal Shem would explain the pasuk in Shemos 17:14, regarding erasing the memory of Amalek, "Write this as a remembrance in the Book and recite it in the ears of Yehoshua, that I will surely erase the memory of Amalek from under the heavens," in the following manner: The destruction of Amalek is the beginning of the redemption. We are to write a remembrance, since remembering and redemption are synonymous.

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

Hashem commanded Moshe to have direct personal involvement regarding the next three *mitzvos*: the preparation of the oil; the designation of the *Kohanim*; the selection of those wise and talented people who would make the *Bigdei Kehunah*, Priestly vestments, and build the *Mishkan*. **Horav Shabsai Yudelevitz, zl**, interprets this *pasuk* homiletically. He cites an incident in which a student of *Rav* Yisrael Salanter came to the famous founder of the *Mussar* movement, stating that he

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

would like to go to Germany to give *Mussar*, lectures in character refinement and *Torah* observance, to the people therein the hope that he would catalyze them to repent and mend their ways. *Rav* Yisrael responded by saying that the student's undertaking was admirable. He said, however, "I think what you are doing is truly noble, but have you finished Russia, that you are so bent upon going to Germany?" The student thought a moment and responded, "The *rebbe* is right. I will first focus on Russia." *Rav* Yisrael said to his student, "Have you completed inspiring Poland to repent, that you are prepared to undertake Russia?" "No, *rebbe*, you are right. I will concentrate on Poland before I go on to distant countries."

Rav Yisrael was not yet finished with his student. He turned to him and asked, "Have you addressed the lack of observance in your own community? Furthermore, what about your family? Are you so sure that all is well at home? Also, since we are getting close to home, have you introspected and confirmed that there are no areas to correct in your own personal behavior? Before you attempt to save the world, first verify that you have developed spiritually."

This is the meaning of the *pasuk*. "*Veatah*," and you. First and foremost, one must mend his own areas of observance. His total demeanor should be paradigmatic, setting an example for others. Only then can he "*tetzave es Bnei Yisrael*," command others, reproaching them, showing them the way to a *Torah* life; marked by sincerity and sensitivity. If he follows this prescription, he may hope for success in his endeavor.

Horav Ovadia Yosef, Shlita, makes a similar observation regarding the *Eiphod*, apron. The *Torah* teaches us that the *Kohen Gadol* wore a garment that was similar to an apron. This was called the *Eiphod*. The *Eiphod* was attached by the *Cheishav Ha'Eiphod*, belt. The *Torah* says in *pasuk* 28:8, "*The belt with which it is attached which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship.*"

Horav Yosef explains that the *Torah* refers to children as the *begadim*, garments, of their parents. We find this analogy in the *Talmud Sanhedrin*, 93, as *Chazal* interpret the rebuke to *Yehoshua Kohen Gadol*, "*Take off the soiled garments from him.*" Does the *Kohen Gadol* wear soiled vestments? This must be a reference to the behavior of his sons, who married women who were unbecoming to the stature and lineage of the *Kehunah*, and *Yehoshua* did not protest. He was, therefore, held in contempt.

This analogy presents the idea that, just as one is proud of and dignifies himself with the clothes he wears, so, too, are children reared with proper *derech erez*, who are G-d fearing and *Torah* erudite, a credit to their parents. Thus, the *Eiphod*, which was a special vestment, implies a lesson regarding one's children. There is one caveat, however: Children are, for the most part, a product of the parents who serve as a standard for children to emulate. Regrettably, the converse is also true. The character refinement, virtues and observances of children are reinforced by the exemplification of the goals and aspirations of their parents.

The story is told of a father who was about to punish his son physically for eating bread without washing his hands. The father grasped his son's two legs in one hand while he held a stick which he was about to "use" on the boy's legs in the other hand. As the father was about to strike his son, the stick "slipped," and he instead hit himself on the hand that was holding the boy. The somewhat insolent son remarked to his father, "It is Heavenly justice that you struck yourself instead of me. For had I observed you washing your hands/*netillas yadaim* before meals, I would have followed suit. You are being reprimanded for what you have neglected to do."

This is the meaning of the *pasuk*. The "*belt*" refers to children; "*with which it is emplaced, which is on it*" who are dependent upon their parents for physical and spiritual sustenance; "*shall be of the same workmanship,*" as the parents set the standard, so that they can expect their children to

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

emulate them. The actions of parents serve as a foreshadowing of what they might expect from their children.

That they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination. (27:20)

The oil that was used for the *Menorah* was to be pure, untainted by any olive particles or sediment. The oil that was used for the *Menachos*, meal-offerings, was derived from crushed, rather than pressed, olives. Hence, this oil was not as pure. The commentators render this disparity homiletically. **Horav Shlomo Sofer, zl**, cites the fact that the *Menorah* and its light are symbolic of the *Torah* and *daas Torah*, its perspective. When dealing with *Torah* perspective, we must retain the essence of purity. We make no allowance for alien philosophies. It must be pure - like the oil for the *Menorah*. Indeed, our fear has never been in response to those that have chosen to transgress the *Torah*. Rather, the major threat to *Torah* Judaism has been from those whose interpretation of the *Torah* has either been blemished from the start or has been tainted as a result of an alien, non-*Torah*-oriented perspective.

We may add another lesson that can be derived from the fact that the oil for the *Menorah* was prepared by a gentle pressing of the olive, releasing the purest oil. The *Menorah*, which serves as an analogy for *Torah* study, teaches us an important lesson in Jewish education. In order to effect the most desirable and successful result in teaching our students, we must teach them in a gentle and loving manner. By crushing the olive/student, placing upon him almost unbearable demands, we will not produce a *ben-Torah* according to the *Torah's* perspective. "*Divrei Torah b'nachas nishmaim*," words of *Torah*, if taught in a pleasant manner, are heard and received.

You shall make vestments for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

The *Kohanim*, especially the *Kohen Gadol*, were to wear vestments that reflected the nobility of their station and service. The commentators offer a number of explanations for the terms "*glory*" and "*splendor*," as well as the reasons for demanding that the *Bigdei Kehunah* be such garments that are similar to those worn by royalty. Let it suffice that the *Torah* demanded that the vestments worn by the *Kohanim* were to be unique in their beauty, thereby dignifying the *Kohanim* and Hashem, Whom they served. Indeed, if a *Kohen* served in the *Bais Hamikdash mechusar begadim*, not wearing all of the priestly vestments, he was liable to *kares*, Heavenly excision, before his time. We may question the necessity for this overwhelming emphasis on the *Bigdei Kehunah*. The idea of *hiddur mitzvah*, beautifying a *mitzvah*, applies to all *mitzvos*. Why did the *Torah* single out the *Bigdei Kehunah* as a *mitzvah* that requires beauty and perfection?

Horav Avigdor Halevi Nebentzhal, Shlita, distinguishes between the concept of *hiddur mitzvah*, which applies throughout all *mitzvos*, and the necessity for the *Bigdei Kehunah* to be made *l'chavod u'lesiferes*, for glory and splendor. For every *mitzvah*, in addition to the actual commandment that the *mitzvah* be fulfilled, there is a separate *halachah*, law, that demands this *mitzvah* be performed with beauty and dignity. For example, a *Sefer Torah* should be written with a beautiful script, the letters clear and precise. Yet, if the letters are kosher, the *Sefer Torah* is deemed kosher, even if the letters are not overly distinctive. The *Bigdei Kehunah*, however, must be regal and beautiful as part of their

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

composition. *Tiferes* and *hadar* comprise the actual *mitzvah*; they are not supplementary criteria regarding the *mitzvah's* appearance.

Horav Nebentzhal points out that it is necessary to be cognizant of the relationship between the principal component in a *mitzvah* and its secondary aspect. A *succah* which fulfills the architectural specifications for a kosher *succah* is completely valid for *mitzvah* performance, regardless of its outer and inner decoration. As mentioned before, this is not true regarding the *Bigdei Kehunah*. This idea can be applied to life in general. One must learn to prioritize what is truly essential and place less emphasis upon the ancillary.

Let us examine the concept of material possessions. Certainly it is difficult to perform many *mitzvos* if one does not have the necessary wherewithal. Without money, one will have a difficult time purchasing a *Lulav* and *Esrog* or *Matzos*. There is a place for money, however, second place. *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* were criticized for placing the well-being of their sheep ahead of their children.

The same idea applies to precedence in *mitzvos* and *chumros*, stringencies, that are erroneously prioritized. *Horav* Nebentzhal cites **Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl**, who commented regarding this story in the *Talmud Yoma, 23a*: Two *Kohanim* were racing up the *Kevesh*, ramp, in order to be the first one to get the *Terumas Hadeshen*, ashes from the burnt sacrifices. In his overwhelming desire to perform the *mitzvah*, one *Kohen* grabbed a knife and slew the other *Kohen*. Unquestionably, this violent act is outrageous. The same *Kohen* who was overcome with love and devotion to serve in the *Mikdash* because it is Hashem's command, "forgot" about Hashem's command of "*Lo sirtzach*," Do not murder!

Rabbi Tzadok was delivering *divrei hisorerus*, words of arousal and inspiration, to all those who witnessed this tragic act, when suddenly the father of the *Kohen* who died cried out, "The knife did not become *tamei*, actually contaminated; my son is not yet dead!" During his son's final moments, the father was concerned about the *tumah* of the holy vessels of the *Bais Hamikdash*! The tragedy would be diminished, the pain of his son's death would be decreased, by the knowledge that the knife did not become contaminated.

The Rabbis of the *Talmud* address this shocking response: were the *Kohanim* overly stringent with the laws of ritual purity, or were they overly lenient in regard to human life? The *Talmud* responds that they did not accept the same degree of stringency for human life as for ritual purity. *Rav* Chaim commented that even had the *Talmud* responded that they were not lenient in regard to murder, but simply following the letter of the law, for ritual purity was an area for which they had profound respect, it would still have been a travesty of Jewish law. The mere thought that anything, any area in Jewish law, would take precedence over the sanctity of human life is in itself a tragic and destructive attitude. This undermines the foundation of Judaism itself. It is forbidden to forget to distinguish between the *ikar*, fundamental and essential requisite, and the *tafel*, secondary, and -- in this case -- insignificant principle. Regrettably, some of us have still not established appropriate priorities.

They shall take for you pure olive oil...to kindle the lamp continually. (27:20)

In the *Talmud Berachos 57A*, Chazal tell us, "If one sees olive oil in a dream, he may hope for the light of Torah." They cite this pasuk to support the analogy between the light of the Menorah and the light of Torah. The Midrash supplements this by comparing the light of Torah, that shines brilliantly for he who engages in studying it, to a candle which illuminates a path for someone groping in the dark. Interestingly, the Midrash cites two instances to elucidate how the light of a candle protects. The

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

first example is a person who, while walking in the dark, stumbles on a stone; the second, is a person who falls into a ditch because the dark obscured the hole. Likewise, one who does not have the Torah's light to guide him will inevitably confront the challenge of sin and stumble onto it. Those who have the light will not stumble on the stone or fall into the pit. The redundancy of the Midrash begs elucidation. What does the analogy of the pit add to that of the stone?

Horav Yitzchak Goldwasser, Shlita, cites the Mesillas Yescharim who addresses the pasuk in Tehillim 104:20, "You make darkness and it is night," He suggests that Chazal are comparing living in this world to being in the darkness of night. He explains the metaphor in the following manner: Darkness can cause two problems in perception. First, one may be unable to notice the pitfalls and obstacles that stand in his way. Second, the shadows in the dark may cause optical illusions. One may see a pillar and mistake it for a person, or vice versa. The former can result in a person falling to his destruction, as he is unaware of the pitfalls in his path. The latter is even more serious, because one can mistake good for evil and evil for good, thereby persisting in self-defeating behavior which he is convinced is appropriate.

The reason that the Mesillas Yescharim considers the second error more serious is obvious. If one stumbles and hurts himself he realizes that this path is fraught with danger and should be avoided. Thus, he will wait until it becomes light before he continues his journey. One who thinks he sees properly, but is actually misperceiving reality, will likely go forward based upon his perceptual distortions.

We learn from the above that succumbing to sin may result from two errors: not perceiving an obstacle; mistaking an obstacle for something else. A stone that lies in one's path is like a sin that one notices only after he has erred. Now, however, he understands how to protect himself, because he is aware of his area of deficiency; he is aware of his transgression. The light of Torah guides him, illuminating the obstacles. The individual who falls into a pit may continue along this self-destructive path because he fails to see what is not there. He is guilty of denial, a phenomenon which is endemic to the habitual sinner. His thought process is distorted, affecting his judgement. Regrettably, many people function in darkness, mistaking the hostile aggression of the yetzer hora, evil inclination, for a pillar. They fail to see the danger signals because in their mind there are none. Likewise, there are those who look at a pillar and see an enemy. People conjure up bizarre rationalizations about this "pillar/enemy," doing everything in their power to destroy them. Only through the illumination of Torah can we bring light to the darkness, to differentiate between that which exists in reality and that which is only in our imagination. Perhaps the unity that eludes so many of us would finally be realized if we could only allow that light to shine.

Bring near to yourself Aharon, your brother, and his sons with him. (28:1)

In the Midrash, Chazal relate that Moshe Rabbeinu was actually upset when Aharon was selected as Kohen Gadol rather than he himself. Hashem assuaged Moshe, telling him that his position as the manhig, leader of Klal Yisrael, as Lawgiver and expositor, was greater than Kehunah, Priesthood. Moshe was the one who received the Torah at Har Sinai - no position can take precedence over this role. The Midrash cites an analogy to explain this: After many years of a marriage that produced no children, a husband decided that he had no alternative but to take another wife. Rather than do so himself, he approached his wife and asked her to search for him, to find him a second wife. He explained that while he was perfectly capable of doing this himself, by asking his wife to find her,

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

he was ensuring that the second wife would always remain secondary to her. Similarly, Hashem told Moshe that He could have easily chosen Aharon without asking Moshe to do so. By asking Moshe, however, Hashem was emphasizing that Aharon's position would always be secondary to Moshe's.

When one reads this Midrash, it is difficult to reconcile this characterization with the Moshe Rabbeinu we know: the quintessential Torah leader, the paradigm of humility, the "eved Hashem," consummate servant of G-d. How is it possible that he was disconcerted by Aharon's appointment as Kohen Gadol? Envy and humility cannot coexist in one person. Moshe Rabbeinu, the "anav mikol adam," most humble of all men, surely could not have been envious.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, Shlita, explains that Hashem purposely waited until after the command to light the Menorah to tell Moshe about Aharon's new position. He was teaching Moshe a fundamental lesson about Kehunah and its function in relation to Torah. The Mishkan, a microcosm of the entire world, contained within it every spiritual and physical quality. The Menorah symbolized the light of Torah, the true light of the world. By establishing an association between the Menorah and the Priesthood, Hashem was conveying to Moshe that the kedushah, sanctity, of Kehunah is derived from the Torah. The Torah gives meaning and distinction to Kehunah.

This idea troubled Moshe. If the Priesthood's sanctity originates from the Torah, then he must have been deficient in Torah. Why else would he have not merited Kehunah? Moshe was not envious; he was simply introspective. When something did not seem to be right, he blamed himself. When Hashem told Moshe that he was greater than Aharon, He was responding to Moshe's feelings of inadequacy. It was the Divine Will that granted Aharon Kehunah. It had nothing to do whatsoever with any deficiency on Moshe's part. Indeed, regardless of the Priesthood's pre-eminence, Aharon could merit it only through Torah Moshe. It was Moshe's Torah that created the foundation for the concept of Priesthood. Aharon was a Kohen only as a result of Moshe's Torah.

The reassurance that his portion in Torah was not deficient gave Moshe solace - not the knowledge that his role was more significant than his brother's.

Aharon shall bear the judgement of the Bnei Yisrael on his heart constantly before Hashem. (28:30)

Aharon Hakohen merited Kehunah Gedolah. Consequently, he wore the Choshen Hamishpat, Breastplate, over his heart. The Midrash remarks about the choice of Aharon: "We find a number of famous "brothers" whose feelings for each other were less than cordial. Yishmael hated Yitzchak; Eisav hated Yaakov; the shevatim did not get along with Yosef. Regarding Aharon and Moshe, it is said, 'Behold how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers.' (Tehillim 133)"

Aharon Hakohen was unique in that he was overjoyed when Hashem selected his younger brother, Moshe, to lead Klal Yisrael. Aharon's love for his brother, in fact for every Jew, was his hallmark. His ability for his happiness for someone else to transcend his own personal emotions earned him this status. Aharon's joy for Moshe was as if it were his own. He was the consummate "nosei b'ol im chaveiro." He was the same individual who bears the yoke with his fellow: empathizing with his friend, grieving with him during moments of pain, and smiling with him during periods of joy. Another Jew's problems became his problems; another Jew's joy was his joy.

This "big heart", that encompassed and empathized with every Jew, was to be the "site" where the Choshen Hamishpat with its Urim v'Tumin would rest. The Urim v'Tumin responded to the

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

questions of the Jewish People. Horav Chaim Shmulevitz, zl, explains that in order to perceive the correct answer from the Choshen, the heart must be sensitive to both the question and the questioner. When Eili the Kohen Gadol questioned the Urim v'Tumin regarding Chanah, the mother of Shmuel Ha'Navi, the answer he saw was "shikorah," drunk. The answer was actually "kesheirah," referring to Chanah's status as a virtuous and proper woman. The letters of both words were the same: one meant drunk, the other meant proper. How did he make such an error? He did not empathize with her pain. He did not feel the heart-ache of a childless mother. The letters were there; he just could not fathom the correct combination.

Aharon's heart -- the heart that shared the joy and grief with other Jews as if they were his own -- would wear the Choshen. In order to lead successfully one must be sensitive to the collective and individual emotional needs of his group. He cannot divorce himself from them because, as leader, he is one of them. This idea applies not only to leadership, but also to every individual Jew. We are all parts of a whole, components in the glorious and holy community of Klal Yisrael. It is natural to feel a pang of pity for another Jew, to be sympathetic to his plight. We still remain outside the situation, however, and regard our fellow Jew objectively. To "bear the yoke" means to experience everything the way the other does, to share his burden, sense his pain and suffering as if it were our own. This is the profound kinship as envisioned by the Torah. Indeed, it is one of the basic reasons that the world of Torah has endured throughout the millennia. After all, does not Hashem say, "Imo anochi b'tzarah," "I am with him in his pain"? This is the point at which our elusive quest for unity should begin.

Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary before Hashem and when he leaves, so that he will not die. (28:35)

The Ramban questions the need for the bells at the hem of the Me'il to sound when the Kohen Gadol left the Mikdash. What purpose did the sound have after the service? The Imrei Emes feels the Torah is conveying an important message. Undoubtedly, while the Kohen Gadol is involved in the holy service, he is inspired by the holiness of the ritual, the proximity to the Creator and the entire aura of kedushah, holiness, which permeates the air of the Sanctuary. What happens, however, when he is about to leave? Does the hashpaah, influence, depart with him? Is he a different person than he was when he entered? Is the roshem, impression, evident when he exits the Mikdash? This is the true test of one's affinity to kedushah. When we hear an incredible speaker whose oratorical skills are matched by his scholarship, do we remain inspired? Do we take his lesson with us? Many of us become exhilarated by a speaker. We bring our tape recorders, sharpen our pencils, take lengthy notes - but regrettably, it only lasts till the end of the speech. Alas, we tend to focus on the speaker, rather than on his message.

Horav Avraham Kilav, Shlita, in his sefer Avnei Barakas, offers an alternative approach towards this phenomenon. He cites the following story related in the Yalkut Shimoni. Rabbi Chananya ben Chachinai and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai studied with Rabbi Akiva in Bnei Brak for thirteen years without going home. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was in touch with his home; Rabbi Chananya was not. Rabbi Chananya was so thoroughly engrossed in his studies that when he received a letter from his wife with the message, "Your eldest daughter is of marriageable age; come and marry her off," he continued his studies in oblivion of the message. Rabbi Akiva, however, was aware of the situation

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

through Ruach Ha'kodesh, Divine Inspiration. He, therefore, announced, "Anyone who has a daughter to be married off should go home and attend to his responsibilities." Rabbi Chananya took leave of his rebbe and returned home. Upon arriving he did not recognize his old neighborhood, since so much had changed. In order to locate his house, he went to the square where the girls of the community would go to draw water. He remained there until he heard one of the girls refer to another as "daughter of Chananya." Assuming that this was his daughter, he followed her home. Upon entering his home, his wife looked at him, and the shock was so overwhelming that she collapsed and died. Immediately, Rabbi Chananya cried out to Hashem, "Is this the reward for the thirteen years that she gave up for me?" A miracle occurred, and she came back to life.

The Talmud in Kesubos 62b relates a similar story regarding Rabbi Chama bar Bisa, who, after twelve years of non-stop study said, "I will not do as Rabbi Chananya." He proceeded to inform his wife of his impending return home. We must endeavor to understand what prevented Rabbi Chananya from keeping "in touch" with his home. Indeed, we must say that Rabbi Chananya was so engrossed in his Torah study that he relinquished his *olam hazeh*, affairs of this world. He had no time or emotional energy for areas that dealt with the temporary world in which we live. He was devoted to the eternal world. Sensing this, Rabbi Akiva encouraged his two prize students to devote some of their time to the present, to the immediate needs of their families. Rabbi Chananya was too far removed from this world to respond in the affirmative. As great as Rabbi Shimon was, he was able to keep his feet planted on the earth, even though his mind was soaring in the Heavens.

Horav Kilav suggests that this idea may be the underlying motif behind the *paamonim*, bells, sounding at all times - even when the Kohen Gadol left the Mikdash. When the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh, his mind was to be completely on the task at hand. His entire essence was suffused with *kedushah*, as he renounced all aspects of the outside world. He was now in the center of holiness, in communion with the Almighty. There is one drawback, however, to this lofty spiritual plateau: He might forget from whence he comes, for whom he is praying - the people outside the walls of the Mikdash. If the Kohen Gadol became too removed from those whose agent he was; if he lost sight and touch with them, he could not properly perform his function. He could not pray for people to whom he cannot relate; he could not reach out to people whom he did not understand. The bells at the hem of his vestment were to remind him that he is returning to the outside world, to remember the people out there, to empathize with them, to be sensitive to their needs. The Kohen Gadol's purpose is to bridge the gap between the spiritual dimension within the confines of the Mikdash and the physical dimension represented by the People.

With this idea in mind, we can understand why the Kohen Gadol would wear the *Avnei Shoham*: One stone on each shoulder, each engraved with the names of six tribes; six names on the right shoulder; six names on the left shoulder. The left side connotes the physical dimension, *artzius*, earthliness, while the right side symbolizes the spiritual dimension. The *shevatim*, tribes, are divided in accordance with their chosen endeavor. There are those whose primary goal and vocation is in the area of the spirit, while others devote themselves to commerce and to secular pursuits. The Kohen Gadol is the bridge between them. He is *me'ached*, unifies both sides, creating harmony, respect and love among the *shevatim*.

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

Parashas Tetzave is the only parsha since Moshe's birth that does not mention his name

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

explicitly. Every mitzvah and command mentioned in the parsha, however, is initiated with the word, "V'atah," "And you," referring to Moshe. Apparently, Moshe is the prime focus of this parsha, although his name is not recorded. Why? Chazal tell us that the curse of a tzaddik, even if it is contingent upon specific conditions, takes effect despite the fact that those conditions are not met. When Moshe Rabbeinu entreated Hashem on behalf of Klal Yisrael after they sinned with the Eigel Ha'zahav, Golden Calf, he said to Hashem, "If you do not forgive their sin, I beg You, erase my name from Your Book," a reference to the Torah. We may question why, of all the parshios, Tetzave is chosen to be the one from which Moshe's name is excluded?

The commentators offer various answers to this question. Some say that since Moshe Rabbeinu's yahrzeit is on the seventh day of Adar, which invariably falls out during the week of Parashas Tetzave, it is logical that this is the parsha from which Moshe's name is missing. This answer is enigmatic. One would think that specifically during the week in which Moshe passed away, his name would be remembered as much as possible. After all, what greater tribute is there to our great leader than remembering him on his yahrzeit?

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, feels that the Torah's omission of Moshe Rabbeinu's name specifically in Parashas Tetzave, during his yahrzeit, speaks volumes about Moshe's greatness as a leader and as a Jew. Moshe Rabbeinu was prepared to sacrifice more than just his physical life for the Jewish People; he was prepared to relinquish his spiritual life, his neshamah, for them. The Torah is called Toras Moshe, the Torah of Moshe. For what greater appreciation can one hope? Our Torah is immutable; it will never be revised or exchanged. It will always remain Toras Moshe. Yet, Moshe was ready to relinquish the ultimate spiritual nachas, his name engraved for all eternity in the Torah. When Moshe entreated Hashem and gave his incredible "ultimatum," he knew that regardless of the outcome, his name would be erased. A person of his position does not make idle "threats." He was prepared to have his name erased; he knew that once he had made such a statement, his name would be erased. Yet, Moshe's love for his people was so overwhelming that he did it despite the consequences. Is there then any greater tribute to the adon haneviim, father of all prophets, the quintessential leader of Klal Yisrael, than to leave his name out of the parsha that falls on his yahrzeit? In this manner, everyone will acknowledge the greatness of his deed.

You shall make holy vestments for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

The Kohanim are to be clothed in vestments which reflect their wearers' noble position. These garments were similar to the garb worn by royalty. They gave glory to Hashem as they lent splendor to the Kohanim who wore them. The Kohen serves as the spiritual mentor to Klal Yisrael. His total demeanor, including his clothes, must reflect the lofty position he holds. He teaches Torah, the code of Jewish Law authored by Hashem. As the Almighty's representative for disseminating His Torah, his mode of dress must reflect dignity, sanctity and splendor. When the people gaze upon the Kohanim donned in their beautiful vestments, they will accord them the respect they merit.

The Torah's focus upon the Kohen's external appearance seems inconsistent with his focus in life. The Rambam at the end of Hilchos Shemittah v'Yovel writes that the Levi did not receive a portion in Eretz Yisrael because Hashem distinguished this shevet, tribe, for devotion to His service and to teach His Torah to the people. Shevet Levi is not to be involved in the mundane. They do not go to war like the other tribes; they do not inherit the land or bequeath it to others. They constitute Hashem's army. He is their portion.

Why is it that Hashem's legion, the tribe who is to devote itself totally to Him, who is to divorce

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

itself completely from the pedestrian affairs of life, is required to dress in a regal manner? Is it appropriate for the individual who is most removed from everyday life to place so much emphasis on the manner in which he dresses? Should someone who wears the "crown of Hashem" concern himself with clothes?

Horav Shmuel Truvitz, Shlita, explains that just as the other tribes are adjured to show deference to the Kohen, to exalt his position and to give him special honor, so too, should the Kohen himself reflect upon his position. He must remember who he is and what he represents. In other words, the Torah's demand that the Kohen's vestments be exceptional is as much a command for the Kohen himself as it is for the people. He must maintain himself on a level becoming his station in life. The vestments he wears completes the picture. They complement the kedushah, holiness, inherent in the Kohen. Without them the Kohen is missing a very significant aspect of his total persona. He may not serve without his vestment, because they constitute an integral part of the Kohen's total demeanor.

The idea that one must recognize his own lofty status is an important one. All too often people fall prey to sin and depression because they fail to realize who they are. The respect we receive from others is commensurate with our own self-respect. If we do not appreciate who we are, how can we expect others to do the same?

The Yalkut Shimoni in Bereishis cites Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel who says, "All the days that I served my father I never came within one hundredth of the manner in which Eisav served his father, Yitzchak. When I served my father, I dressed in everyday clothes. When I went outside I changed into my finer, fancier clothes. Eisav, on the other hand, served his father dressed in bigdei malchus, clothing fit for royalty." The question is compelling: If Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel felt that something was lacking in the way he was dressed when he went to visit his father, why did he not change into better clothes? Why would he believe that his Kibbud Av was not as good as Eisav's if he could simply don fancy clothes and do as Eisav did?

The Baalei Mussar explain that wearing fancy clothes as an end in itself has little significance. Eisav distinguished himself in that he recognized that serving and honoring one's father was such an important and sublime thing to do that it mandated wearing the finest clothing. It is not the clothes; it is the underlying idea that those clothes represent. Eisav had the correct idea. Regrettably, he did not follow through.

Horav Chaim Shmulevitz, zl, supplements this idea. Eisav sensed that wearing these stately garments transformed him into a more distinguished person. After all, do not clothes reflect the person? He became more dignified, a greater person, making his act of Kibbud Av that much greater. When an activity is performed by a prominent person, it lends greater significance to the endeavor. Wearing distinctive clothing without sensing that they do something for the wearer undermines their significance. If the person does not feel different, then the mitzvah will not be distinct either. Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel did not sense the need to wear new clothes because he did not feel that they would accomplish anything for him. Clothing was not something this great Tanna needed to make him feel any more important. His self-image did not need any external reinforcement. Consequently, putting on fancy clothes would have created a superficial facade, something which would only have demeaned the mitzvah.

And Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Bnei Yisrael on his heart constantly before Hashem. (28:30)

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

This pasuk is a reference to the Choshen, Breastplate, which Aharon wore. The Choshen was folded in half to form a pocket into which was placed a parchment containing Hashem's Ineffable Name. This was called the Urim V'Tumim. The Urim V'Tumim catalyzed the individual letters of the names of the shevatim which were inscribed on the Choshen to light up and give answers to questions of national importance. The zechus, merit, of wearing the Choshen was given to Aharon because of his special character. When he was coming to greet Moshe, after Moshe had been selected by Hashem to be the one to lead the Jews out of Egypt, he came with a smile and a gladness of heart, as the Torah records in Shemos 4:14: "And when he (Aharon) sees you (Moshe) he will rejoice in his heart." This remarkable devotion and love for a younger brother, this incredible selflessness, was rewarded with the Choshen that was worn over the heart that rejoiced.

Was it so difficult to rejoice for a brother's good fortune? Does Aharon deserve such an amazing tribute just for being happy for his brother? Horav Avigdor Halevi Nebentzahl, Shlita, identifies that there are various levels of selflessness. It is one thing to defer to one's brother. It is a totally different phenomenon when an individual has shouldered the responsibility of leadership for years of persecution, pain and sorrow just to have his younger brother take over--and yet be happy about it. This represents middos tovos, good character, in the truest sense of the word. Aharon experienced pure, unadulterated joy for Moshe's good fortune. Furthermore, Aharon was himself the leader of the Jewish People. He would now descend from the pedestal of leadership to be second-in-command, and he was pleased for his brother!

It is easier to share in one's sorrow than to celebrate his joy. In order to transcend personal feelings, one must consider his friend to be an integral part of himself. His heart is my heart; his joy is my joy. We are one. This was the madreigah, spiritual level, of Aharon. Only a person who possesses such a big heart, who was able to include others in his reality, had the merit to wear the Breastplate over his heart.

Horav Nebentzahl notes that Aharon is praised and rewarded for his love of his brother. Is that such a great challenge? The Torah implies that one who demonstrates love, one who is sensitive to the needs of those close to him, will similarly be loving and caring to those that are distant from him. Does this represent a realistic approach? One would assume that the real test of a sensitive person is that one cares about those that are suffering in distant lands or those with whom he has no familial relationships. The Torah view obviously does not coincide with what has regrettably become normative behavior in our society.

Caring about those in distant lands is not as demanding as caring about people who are close by. Such love has no requirements. We do what we can. Some even go beyond their means to help faraway people with total devotion and love. When all is said and done, however, such caring does not carry with it heavy responsibilities. The individual in need is not at my doorstep. I do not have to cope with him all of the time, even when it is inconvenient. In contrast, to love a neighbor, to get along with a friend whom we see every day, who can be bothersome, might not be as easy. To put up with a brother who might be very demanding, a friend whose luck has changed, or who is depressed and needs someone with whom to talk--at all hours of the day or night--might be a bit more difficult. Friendship can be very exhausting at times.

Is it any wonder that so many communal organizations flock to help the Jew overseas, while the Jew in town has nowhere to turn? Many individuals open their wallets, their homes, and their hearts, to those that are distant, those that are not even Jewish, while their brethren are so needy. We tend to gravitate to the exotic tzedakos, the attention grabbers, while those who are very near and very much in need continue to suffer. Aharon was lauded for the love he demonstrated for his brother. It would serve

Please visit www.puretorah.com for more inspiring lectures

us well to exhibit similar devotion at home.

And Aharon shall burn upon it (the mizbayach of ketores) the incense--spices every morning; when he cleans the lamp he is to burn it. (30:7)

Aharon was commanded to burn the Ketores at the same time that he cleaned the lamps of the Menorah. Is there some significance to performing these two seemingly unrelated aspects of the avodah together? Horav David Feinstein, Shlita, cites Chazal who say the burning of the Ketores atoned for the sin of lashon hora. The Menorah, on the other hand, was the symbol of limud ha'Torah. The Menorah is the remedy for the sin of lashon hora. One who studies Torah will invariably sanctify his entire body, including his power of speech. How can he use the mouth that studies Torah to slander another Jew? How can he defile his G-d-given power of speech? This represents the essence of Torah.

We may supplement this idea when we take into consideration that it was specifically the cleaning of the Menorah that was performed at the same time as the burning of the Ketores. One should view the preparation for the lighting as being an integral part of the lighting. Likewise, one's attitude and approach towards Torah study from the time of preparation will affect the actual learning. In fact, the attitude is the most critical. If one approaches Torah study as an exercise in mental gymnastics, it will not be an endeavor that sanctifies him. If, however, from the very onset his approach is one of kedushah and taharah, holiness and purity, it will have a dual effect on him, protecting him from sin.

This article is provided as part of Shema Yisrael Torah Network
Permission is granted to redistribute electronically or on paper,
provided that this notice is included intact.

For information on subscriptions, archives, and other Shema Yisrael
Classes, send mail to parsha@shemayisrael.co.il
Shema Yisrael Torah Network
info@shemayisrael.co.il
<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>
Jerusalem, Israel
972-2-532-4191