



# Ashreinu | אשרינו

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

## PAYING IT FORWARD

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YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

Parshat Tetzaveh is perhaps most noted for what it is missing rather than for what it contains. The conspicuous and curious absence of

Moshe's name from this parsha has been the discussion of many a commentary.

Some Rishonim explain this phenomenon as a punishment to Moshe for blithely offering the erasure of his name from the Torah if God insisted on carrying out his decrees to extirpate the Jewish people after their sin of the Golden Calf. Others, such as Kesuto and Alshich,

see this as God's subtle message to Moshe that you and you alone, Moshe, are responsible for bringing holiness to this world, be it through learning the Torah, observing its mitzvot, or consecrating the Kohanim. All result from and are possible due to you. Therefore, ואתה - it is you who will consecrate the Kohanim, and you who will give the orders of how to construct their clothing, and you who will instruct them in their *avoda* in the Mishkan.

I would like to suggest another possible explanation for the absence of the name of Moshe in this parsha. Perhaps just as the Mishkan and its accompanying *avoda* serve as a daily reenactment of the Sinaitic experience and an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, so too Moshe allows Aharon an opportunity for redemption for his role in the Golden Calf.

Just as Moshe had been absent from the scene during that event that had gone awry under the leadership of Aharon, so too he purposefully stands back now, allowing for Aharon to shine and redeem himself.

Unlike at Har Sinai, where Moshe was inaccessible, here Moshe stands on the sidelines, waiting in the wings, to help the brother who had helped him, facilitating his anointing. Just as back in Egypt, Aharon helped facilitate Moshe's leadership by allaying his fear of speaking to the Jewish people, now Moshe returns the favor by helping facilitate his brother's successful transition to his role as Kohen Gadol. Aharon, with the encouragement of Moshe, shines forth, redeeming himself once and for all in the eyes God and of the people. As your teachers we, too, proudly watch on the sidelines as you students take your places as the future leaders of our people.

## IT'S ALL IN THE NAME

BENNY FRANK ('21)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Tetzaveh, we find that Moshe's name is never mentioned throughout the whole reading. This is surprising, since the main character of the Chumash, constantly referred to, is not in this parsha. Some might view this as a disgrace to arguably the most important and holy man in all of Jewish history, but the opposite is actually true.

Rabbi Michael Jablinowitz explains that the omission of Moshe's name is actually a high compliment which Hashem gives him. Starting right at the beginning of the parsha, Hashem refers to him as "you" as opposed

to his name, "Moshe." This contrast between pronoun and proper noun is important in its reflection of the way that one addresses a person's essence.

Rabbi Akiva Tatz explains that your name is merely your "handle" to which people can "grab on to you," making it just a way for others to refer to you. But the word "you" is a name which takes all limiting connotations away from you, increasing your individuality and expressing your essence more profoundly. When Hashem didn't use Moshe's "handle," it was not a punishment or embarrassment, but rather a gift of making his name limitless and special.

## THE CHOSHEN AND THE EPHOD

MEIR SCHOCHET ('21)

The *choshen* of the Kohen Gadol was to be tightly attached to his *ephod* (apron). The Torah even specifically mentions that the *choshen* should not be allowed to slip away from the *ephod*. This leads to a question: why does the Torah specify this rule, and what is so important about the *choshen* being in the specific place that it cannot slip?

Rabbi Berel Wein offers an intuitive and ingenious solution. He says that each garment that the Kohen Gadol wears represents a part of each human being. The *choshen* represents our spiritual side, as it rests against our heart, the place where human emotion, spirit, and dedication come from. The *ephod* is the necessary physical side of humans. The specific position the *choshen* must rest in signifies the explicit bond between our spiritual and physical parts. The two farthest

parts of a human's entire persona, their spirit and their body, must be bound together for the one common goal.

Therefore, the Torah specifies this to create a whole person, one who is comfortable with their Judaism, both physically and spiritually. Along with many other mitzvot in this parsha, this specific commandment is meant to unify the diverse parts of every person into one full Torah Jew whose body and spirit work together towards the ultimate goal to serve Hashem.

## ETERNAL LIGHT

YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

In this week's parsha we learn about the mitzvah given to the Kohen Gadol to light the menorah in the Beit Hamikdash.

וּאִתָּהּ תִּצְוֶה אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת  
זָךְ כְּתִיב לְמָאוֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד:

“And you shall command the children of Israel, and they shall take to you pure olive oil, crushed for lighting, to kindle the lamps continually” (Shemot 27:20).

The seven lamps of the menorah are lit until the flame rises up and the oil continues to burn. According to Rashi, the nightly lighting of the menorah is a continuous burnt offering in the Mikdash, even though it is lit anew every night.

The idea of keeping the continuous “flame” alive in the Jewish nation, is something that the Jewish people continue to struggle with, from being persecuted as a whole nation by larger forces such as the crusaders and Nazis, to struggling within our own com-

munity with the rising rate of intermarriage and assimilation. Judaism emphasizes the importance of passing on traditions, stories, and values to our children as a sign of being responsible for continuing Judaism as a nation, not to get lost in time like our previous oppressors.

Some believe that anti-Semitism is the key to keeping a strong nation, that living well is the best revenge to show our oppressors, the only way to keep our “light” alive, by defying the odds of existence when no one else thinks we can. We are constantly pushing and pulling between keeping our values strong yet still being part of the greater global community, but the eternal light of the Jewish people is within us every day. It is up to us to pass it on, so it will never be lost.

## A BETTER CHARACTER

SARA DEICHMAN ('19)

Parshat Tetzaveh generally conjures images of the Kohanim's articles of clothing. Moshe is directed to come close to Aharon and separate his brother and his brother's sons from the rest of the Jews in order to instruct them on how to be the holy priests known as Kohanim.

However, Rabbi Meir the Second of Premishlan delves into the text with a deeper meaning, saying that this highlights the contrast in personalities between Moshe and Aharon. Where Moshe was introverted, Aharon was extroverted. Where Moshe was almost reclusive, Aharon was social. When God asks Moshe to come close to Aharon, he is really telling him to sharpen his char-

acter. God asks Moshe to recognize the outgoing personality crucial to leading a people.

The awareness of personality traits is crucial in relationships. The ability to acknowledge another's personality, even though unable to truly feel their feelings, is crucial to becoming an empathetic person. Understanding one's motivation and the emotion behind their actions warrants a clearer and healthier solution. God's decision to acknowledge Moshe's character by highlighting the disparity between him and his brother shows God's willingness to understand Moshe as the individual he is. He further pushes Moshe to improve his own leadership and character by considering the character of his brother. This displays God's love of each individual for who they are, but also his desire to push the character of each person to create a better, stronger person. May we all acknowledge both our strengths and the areas in which we can improve.



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