

Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT TETZAVEH



What Does It Mean To Be HaShem's People?

By Abigail Hematian

In honor of my bat mitzvah birthday this week, I wanted to write a D'var Torah about the Parasha because I really enjoy learning about the Parasha every week and connecting it to our lives today. I want to dedicate this D'var Torah to my grandfather, Effy Hematian Z"L, who I love and miss very much. He was a big role model in my life and he taught me what true emunah in Hashem is. He was definitely an example of what it meant to be Hashem's people.

In this week's Parasha, Parashat Tetzaveh, we learn about the priesthood given to Aharon and his sons, and the instructions on how the clothing of the Kohen Gadol should be made.

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָשָׁן וְאֶפֹד וּמְעִיל וְכִתְנֹת תְּשֻׁבָּעַ
מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ : וּלְבָנָיו
לְכֹהֲנָיִל (שְׁמוֹת: כ"ח: ד).

"And these are the garments that they shall make: a choshen, an ephod, a robe, a tunic of checker work, a cap, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for your brother Aaron and for his sons to serve Me [as kohanim]." (Shemot 28:4)

One of the items that was part of the Kohen Gadol's outfit was the Choshen, which was to be on the chest of the Kohen Gadol at all times.

This item was special because it had 12 stones on it, each one engraved with the name of a Shevet. The Choshen, along with all of the garments of the Kohen Gadol were to act as Bigdei Kadosh (holy clothing), and were meant to inspire holiness among the Jewish nation.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Z"L) brought up a question relating to this. He asks; since when is HaShem and His Torah focused so strongly on outer beauty? We can find the answer as we learn from this parsha. While the Choshen was truly beautiful to look at, HaShem wanted it to sit on the heart of the Kohen Gadol, to show us that it is what is in our hearts that matters. True beauty is about how beautiful we are on the inside. It's not about how we may look or dress, rather it is about how much our heart is connected to HaShem and how we treat others. We should make sure to always do chesed and mitzvot and behave as best as we can.

I remember learning about a story in the Navi, in Sefer Shmuel Alef, where Hashem is deciding who will be the next king of Bnei Yisrael and HaShem chooses David HaMelekh, because He sees that David's actions and heart are so beautiful, and that he is the right role model for Bnei Yisrael. That is what Hashem wants from us.

(Continued...)

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וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-שְׂמוּאֵל אֶל-תִּבְטֵ אֶל-מְרֹאֵהוּ וְאֶל-גְּבוֹהַ קוֹמָתוֹ
כִּי מֵאִסְתִּיהוּ כִּי לֹא אֶשֶׁר יִרְאֶה הָאָדָם כִּי הָאָדָם יִרְאֶה
לְעֵינָיִם וְה' יִרְאֶה לְלִבָּב (שְׂמוּאֵל א: טז: ז)

"And Hashem said to Samuel, "Look not upon his appearance, or the height of his stature, for I have rejected him, for it is not as man sees, (what is visible) to the eyes, while the Lord sees into the heart." (Shmuel I, 16:7)

Our purpose in life and the meaning of being Hashem's children is to show all the other nations how unique and good hearted we are.

There is another Mitzvah commanded to the Bnei Yisrael in this Parasha, which is to build a Mishkan where they can serve HaShem. Earlier in Parashat Yitro, Bnei Yisrael received the Torah and became Hashem's nation, but unfortunately they did the sin of Chet HaEgel and so they were not fully ready yet to act like the People of HaShem. HaShem now commands them to build the Mishkan so it can be a holy place for Bnei Yisrael to serve Hashem and prevent them from sinning again. The Mishkan was their separation from all regular things, and it was meant to inspire them to improve and behave more as Hashem's nation.

This reminded me of Shabbat. Shabbat is a time when we separate from the regular things we do every day, like going to school or using electronics.

It is a day to work on our holiness. Shabbat makes me feel closer to HaShem. For example, I feel that my prayer and concentration is much better on Shabbat than during the week in school, when I am often in a rush or distracted. I also am able to spend more time with my family on Shabbat, which I am not able to do during the week. I enjoy playing games, talking about the Parasha, and walking places together. I also look forward to going to my grandparent's house for Shabbat meals or having them come sleep over at my house for Shabbat. We connect and make a lot of memories during these times.

In summary, there are many beautiful and powerful lessons we can learn from in this weeks Parasha, but these two lessons truly stood out to me, and I feel we can all learn from them. Firstly, we should focus more on the way we act and how we treat other people, rather than care so deeply about how we look. Secondly, just like the Mishkan separated the Bnei Yisrael from their normal every day routine, we should appreciate Shabbat and view it as our own Mishkan, where we can separate from our daily habits, and enjoy the higher levels it allows us to achieve.

Thank you Charlotte Shabverdi for helping me learn and prepare for this D'Var Torah! Shabbat Shalom!

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It's All in the Details

By *Desiree Kashizadeh*

When we read Parashat Tetzaveh, the main focus seems to be on the intricate details of the vestments that the Kohanim wear during their service in the Mishkan. What is the importance of going through all these details?

The Parasha starts with the process of the lighting of the Menorah. It specifies that the olive oil used needs to be completely pure.

According to the Ibn Ezra, this is a fitting way to begin the Parasha, because Aharon and his sons as Kohanim must also remain pure and separate from the rest of the nation.

One of the ways this separation, or holiness, is manifested is through the way that the Kohanim dressed, especially during their services in the Mishkan.

It's also important to note that all the vestments that the Kohanim were required to wear were constructed from materials that were contributed by the Jewish nation for the service in the Mishkan.

This shows that the Kohanim were not there to serve their own interests, rather they were representing the nation as a whole, and their desire to serve HaShem fully and properly.

Even though we currently do not have a Mishkan or a Beit Hamikdash, we can learn this that the way that we dress and present ourselves, especially as part of the Jewish nation, is very important.

We need to take care to dress and conduct ourselves with dignity and respect in our everyday lives, especially when performing the Mitzvot. The Kohanim are meant to be spiritual leaders to the Jewish people. When one thinks of spirituality, it is often not associated with the physical.

However, this Parasha seems to go into elaborate detail of what the Kohanim and the Kohen Gadol wore - including an Ephod, a robe, a tunic, a turban, a sash, and the Breastplate.

These vestments were also not made from simple materials - they were made with gold, turquoise, purple, scarlet wool, and linen. There is also so much care taken into how each garment is constructed.

So we can ask - why is there so much focus on the physical, when what is really important is the spiritual aspect and our intentions when serving HaShem?

When HaShem decided to give the Torah to Moshe Rabbeinu to bring down to the Jewish people, the Talmud brings a story that the Angels questioned Hashem.

Why are these human beings, who are merely of flesh and blood and are imperfect, deserving of receiving the Torah?

The reason that the Jewish people were deserving of the Torah is because the rules apply to them. The Angels don't need the commandments of the Torah, because they don't possess the physical characteristics in order to.

That's precisely why there's so much focus on the physical, especially in this Parashah - because the goal is to elevate the physical aspects of our lives for the purpose of serving HaShem. The complexities of constructing these garments of the Kohanim - and even the entirety of the Mishkan itself - is so exact and precise because that is what HaShem brought us into the earth for: not to be entirely perfect and spiritual beings, but to take the physical in this world, which could be used towards both frivolity and purity, and to use it to serve HaShem in the best way that we can.

THANK YOU TO THE SHABBAT SPICE TEAM
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