

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS TEZAVEH - 5757

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"ohr@jer1.co.il" Parsha Q&A - Tetzaveh

In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's Commentary. Parshas Tetzaveh

Parsha Questions 1. What two precautions were taken to assure purity of oil for the Menorah? 2. How was Aaron commanded to kindle the Menorah? 3. What does tamid mean in reference to the Menorah? 4. What does Kehuna mean? 5. Name the eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol. 6. To what does Rashi compare the Ephod? 7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the Ephod? 8. The stones of the Ephod bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why? 9. For what sins did the Choshen Mishpat atone? 10. What are three meanings of the word Mishpat? 11. What was lacking in the Bigdei Kehuna in the second Beis Hamikdash? 12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material? 13. When the Kohen Gadol wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the Tefillin situated? 14. What does the word 'tamid' mean in reference to the Tzitz? (two answers) 15. Which garments were worn by a Kohen

B'S'D' Hediot? 16. During the inauguration of the Kohanim, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone? 17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aaron and his sons to prepare them to serve as Kohanim (29:4). How were they washed? 18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the Kohanim? 19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the Menorah? 20. What does the crown on the Mizbe'ach Haketores symbolize?

Bonus QUESTION: "And you should command..." Because Moshe said to Hashem "Erase me from your book" (33:32), therefore his name was omitted from Parshas Tetzaveh. Why specifically Parshas Tetzaveh?

I Did Not Know That! The bells on the Kohen Gadol's tunic were there in order that "their noise be heard when he enters the Sanctuary (28:35)." This teaches that one should never barge in to a room, even to one's own house. Rather, one should knock and then enter. Yalkut Shimoni (Thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane)

Recommended Reading List

Ramban 28:2 Royal Robes 28:5 Trustworthy Treasurers 28:30 Divine Communication Through "Urim V'Tumim" 29:9 Donning of the Kohen's Garments 30:1 The Incense Altar Malbim 28:4 Mystical Significance of the Garments Sefer Hachinuch 98 The Menorah Lights 99 Inspiration from Attire 102 Respect from Eating 103 Respect from Smelling

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated 1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used. 2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself. 3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night. 4. 28:3 - Service. 5. 28:4,36,42 - Choshen, Ephod, Me'il, Kesones, Mitznefes, Avnet, Tzitz, and Michnasayim. 6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment 7. 28:10 - According to the order of their births. 8. 28:12 - So that Hashem would see their names and recall their righteousness. 9. 28:15 - For judicial errors. 10. 10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants; 2) The court's ruling; 3) The court's punishment. 11. 28:30 - The Urim V'Tumim -- the 'Shem Ha'meforash' placed in the folds of the Choshen. 12. 28:31 - The fabric of the Me'il was made only of techeles. 13. 28:37 - Between the Tzitz and the Mitznefes. 14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn; 2) The Kohen Gadol must always be aware that he is wearing it. 15. 28:40,42 - Kesones, Avnet, Migba'as, and Michnasayim. 16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden-calf. 17. 29:4 - They were immersed in a mikveh. 18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned. 19. 29:40 - Oil for the Menorah comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives. 20. 30:3 - The crown of Kehuna.

Bonus ANSWER: Originally, Moshe was to have been a Kohen and not Aharon. But because he first refused to be the one to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt he lost this privilege to his brother, Aharon. Since this week's Parsha is the beginning of the command for Aharon and sons to do the priestly service, it is the first place in the Torah where Moshe's punishment of losing the priesthood is apparent. Therefore, the Torah included Moshe's other punishment as well, the punishment for saying "Erase me from your Book." Oznaim L'Torah

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

jr@sco.COM <mj-ravtorah@shamash.org> Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Tetzaveh (shiur date: 3/8/77)
In Parshas Tetzaveh the Torah describes the role of Aharon Hakohen in

lighting the Menorah and Ktores. In addition, Aaron's role in the process of atonement is mentioned. (Shemos 30:7-10)

The Ramban asks why Aaron is singled out here. After all, the daily lighting of the Menorah and the offering of incense did not require a Kohen Gadol. All year, except for Yom Kippur, it could be done by a Kohen Hedyot as well. Why then did the Torah say that Aaron, specifically, should do it? The Ramban suggests that perhaps the Torah mentions Aaron specifically because in addition to the lighting of the Menorah and offering of Ktores, the Torah also briefly describes the Avodas Yom Kippur that could only be done by a Kohen Gadol, by Aaron. The Ramban says that at the end of Emor, Aaron is mentioned in connection with the lighting of the Menorah but his children are not because he was the one who had to perform the initial act of lighting. Also the term Chukas Olam is mentioned in connection with the lighting of the Menorah.

The Rav explained the Ramban: Only a Kohen Gadol can do the Avodas Yom Kippur. In Acharei Mos, where the Torah describes the Seder Avodas Yom Kippur that Aaron did, Aaron is mentioned specifically by name many times. At the conclusion of the description of the Avodas Yom Kippur, the Torah says that this service should be done once a year for all future generations, calling it a Chukas Olam. The Torah continues, saying that Chukas Olam is associated with the fasting aspect of the tenth day of the seventh month. It then says that whoever assumes the Kehuna Gedolah and succeeds Aaron should do the same service that Aaron did as a Chukas Olam. Why didn't the Torah first say that the Avodas Yom Kippur was done on the 10th of Tishrei and then describe the Avodah? Why is there no mention that the Avoda described in Acharei Mos was done on Yom Kippur until the conclusion of the description of the Avoda?

Apparently the Midrash was bothered by the above question and why Aaron is mentioned over and over. The Midrash says that Aaron could enter the Kodesh Hakodoshim any time he wanted to as long as he did the service as described in Acharei Mos. Only Aaron was able to enter on any day of the year. Future generations and Kohanim Gedolim, where Chukas Olam applied, had no dispensation to do this Avodah any time the Kohen Gadol wanted to. The Kohen Gadol could enter only on the specified day, Yom Kippur, as long as he wore the special priestly garments of the Kohen Gadol as the successor to his father. Only on that specific day could he do the service that Aaron was permitted to do any day of the year that he wanted to enter the Kodesh Hakodoshim.

The Torah's emphasis on Aharon in Parshas Acharei Mos highlights that it is Aaron himself, not simply the status of Kohen Gadol, that is indispensable to the Avoda and permits entry to the Kodesh Hakodoshim. The Kohen Gadol who enters the Kodesh HaKodoshim on Yom Kippur is Aaron's representative and stand-in. He has the status of Aaron on Yom Kippur while performing the Avodah. (He is a virtual Aaron). Why does the Torah say that in future generations the Kohen Gadol who takes the place of his father should do this Avoda once a year? It is not that one must be a Kohen Gadol in order to perform the Avodas Yom Kippur and therefore a Kohen Hedyot is excluded from this role. Rather, subsequent Kohanim Gedolim are acceptable because each stands in place of Aaron himself, he is imbued with the Kedushas Aaron. When he does the Avodas Yom Kippur it is as if Aaron himself is doing it. However, subsequent Kohanim are bound by the Chukas Olam that permitted them to act as Aaron and enter the Kodesh Hakodoshim only one day year, on the tenth of Tishrei.

Returning now to the question of the Ramban, we can understand why the Torah emphasizes Aaron in connection with each of the activities noted in Parshas Tetzaveh (Menorah, Ktores and Kapparas Yom Kippur). The Torah is telling us that it is Aaron himself who is charged with the activity. When the Torah emphasizes that Aaron must light the Ktores or the Menorah, and it does not mention Aaron and his sons, it means that Aaron is the only one who is permitted to perform the Mitzvah the first time. Even though we know that a Kohen Hedyot is permitted to light the Menorah and offer the Ktores, they can only do it because they are Banav Shel Aaron, children of Aaron, and not because they are Kohanim per se. The initial performance by Aaron is the facilitator, Machshir, that permits Kohanim Hedyotim, Aarons children,

to subsequently light the Menorah and offer the Ktores.

There are 2 separate Kedushos associated with a Kohen, Kedushas Kehuna and Kedushas Aharon. Even though all Kohanim are also children of Aaron, there is a distinction between these Kedushos. For instance, we require a Kohen for Pidyon Haben. Kedushas Kehuna is enough. However in the Menorah and Ktores, we require something different, Kedushas Aaron is the Machshir.

When it says Aaron Uvanav, the Torah tells us that Aaron himself must perform the Mitzvah the first time. Subsequent acts can be done through his children. The same applies to Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, the first service had to be done by Aaron. As stated in Ata Konanta, the Kohen Gadol was told by the Sanhedrin that he is Bimkom Aaron, he represents Aaron. So after the first time that Aaron lit the Menorah and offered Ktores, Kohanim Hedyotim, who had Kedushas Aaron, were permitted to do so as well. After Aaron did the first Avodas Yom Kippur subsequent Kohanim Gedolim were permitted to do it. In some cases Aaron is a Machshir for Kohanim Hedyotim while in others he is the Machshir for Kohanim Gedolim. In both situations, subsequent Kohanim were allowed to do what he did, because they were Aaron's representative.

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"ravfrand@torah.org" Rabbi Frand on Parshas Titzaveh
"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Titzaveh -

Do It Right The First Time! -----

Towards the end of Parshas Titzaveh, the Torah discusses the concept of "Chanukas HaBayis" -- the anointing of the Mishkan and the various vessels and furniture used within the Mishkan. In general, we have a principle concerning the utensils of the Mishkan that "Avodasam m'chanchasam" -- their usage consecrates them.

The Torah explains the ceremony of consecrating the altar [Shmos 29:38- 39] -- "And this is what you must do for the altar: (Offer) two yearling sheep each day consistently." Every single day that the Beis HaMikdash was in existence -- including Shabbos and Yom Kippur -- a sheep was brought each morning and each afternoon.

This portion of the Korban Tamid, which we say everyday in davening, is repeated one other place in the Torah -- in Parshas Pinchas. There, [Bamidbar 28:1-4] we find virtually the same instructions verbatim as we find in Titzaveh, with one slight difference. In our Parsha, which refers to the first time the Korban Tamid was brought, it says "es hakeves HAEchad" (THE one sheep) and in Pinchas which refers to the ongoing commandment to bring these offerings, it merely says "es hakeves echad" (one sheep). In Pinchas, the verse is missing what is known in Hebrew as the "Hay Hayediya" (the letter Hay as a prefix which calls attention to the following word). Why the difference?

The Brisker Rav, zt"l, said that the Torah is hinting at something here. Throughout the history of the Beis HaMikdash, the morning Korban Tamid and the evening Korban Tamid were totally independent. If, for some reason, one could not be brought, the other was still brought. It was analogous to Tephillin shel Yad and Tephillin shel Rosh. If for some reason one can not wear one, he still must put on the other. However, there was one exception to this rule -- the first time the Korban was brought. The very first Korban Tamid, which "dedicated" the altar had to be brought as part of a pair. If one failed to bring the morning offering, one could not bring the afternoon offering. That is why in our portion, dealing with the dedicating offering, the verse uses the Hay Hayediya -- THE sheep.

The Shemen HaTov explains the ethical lesson to be learned from this law.

We see from here that whenever one starts doing something, it must be done right. Beginnings are extremely important. In order to set the tone for something that is going to last for years and years, it must be done correctly and not "half-baked." Therefore, even though, throughout the generations, the two sacrifices were not mutually indispensable (ainam m'akvim zeh es zeh), when the institution of the Korban Tamid was started it had to be started right.

That is why we have a Hebrew expression: "all beginnings are difficult" (kol hascholos kashos). The initial effort has to be done in the most perfect manner, because it sets the tone.

It is said over in the name of the Vilna Gaon that if a community is so meticulous when they build a synagogue, that the ax handles are only crafted by G-d fearing individuals, then there is a guarantee that all prayers offered in that synagogue will be recited with the utmost concentration and dedication (kavanah). If every act, from the onset of the construction, is done 100% right, it is an entirely different synagogue.

I remember when the present Beis Hamedrash in Ner Israel was built. The Rosh Yeshiva -- Rav Ruderman -- zt"l, said that we should not speak idle words (devarim beteilim) in that Beis Hamedrash -- at least for the first week. The reason is the same. How we would act that first week would set the tone for that Beis Medrash for generations and generations of students who would come through those doors.

Beginnings are crucial. How one starts a child off; how one begins to learn with his child; how one starts off a marriage; how one starts any endeavor should be good and right and correct... because beginnings set the tone.

There is an fascinating Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin [44b]:

When the Jews came into Eretz Yisroel for the first time, they conquered the city of Jericho. Yehoshua placed a Cherem that no article from that city should be used. The booty was to remain Holy to G-d. There was one individual named Achan who stole something for his own personal use. As a result of that, when the Jews went on to conquer their second city, the city of HaAi, soldiers fell in battle. G-d was angry with the Jewish people. They needed to find out who was responsible and punish him. The verse relates that after Achan was stoned, "G-d's Anger subsided" [Yehoshua 7:26].

The Gemara says that, technically, because of that sin of Achan, the Jewish people should have been destroyed! The only reason that they were not destroyed was that when Avraham Avinu came into Eretz Yisroel for the first time, he built an altar between Beis El and HaAi and he davened there. This prayer of Avraham was an antidote for the subsequent sin of Achan.

What was so terrible about what Achan did? Yes, he was not supposed to touch the spoils of Jericho, but what was so bad that the Jewish people should have been destroyed had it not been for Avraham Avinu's prayer? The answer is because that was the first battle. This was their initial entry into Eretz Yisroel. This first battle had to be done right. Yehoshua wanted to make the first entry into the land perfect -- the city was to be conquered and everything in it was to be holy.

One man ruined it. One man ruined the beginning and the Jewish people should have been destroyed. The only thing that saved them was that there was a 'beginning before the beginning.' When Avrohom Avinu came into Eretz Yisroel hundreds of years earlier, he made the beginning right -- he davened between Beis El and HaAi.

So many of our beginnings are done inadvertently. We don't remember the first time we read Aleph-Beis; we don't remember the first time we learned a pasuk in Chumash; we don't remember the first amud of Gemarah we learned; we don't remember our first experiences of marriage.

For some of us our first beginnings are gone, and there is nothing we can do about them. But there are still beginnings left in our lives. If they are not our beginnings, they are our children's beginnings. If not our children's beginnings, then our grandchildren's beginnings. Let us not forget the importance of a beginning and how we can set the tone for generations by doing it right the first time.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD

dhoffman@clark.net

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Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network 3600 Crondall Lane, Ste. 106
Owings Mills, MD 21117 (410) 654-1799 FAX: 356-9931

"jgross@torah.org" , "weekly-halacha@torah.org" Kovod HaKohen
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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS TETZAVE
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Bring near to yourself Aaron your brother and his sons... to serve me (Exo. 28:1)

RESPECT AND HONOR: HOW TO TREAT A KOHEN

Included in Hashem's commandment to Moshe to appoint his brother Aaron and his sons as Kohanim is the Biblical command: 'You shall sanctify him... he shall remain holy to you' (1). The Torah commands us to acknowledge the sanctity of kohanim by showing them respect and giving them preferential treatment, since they are the ones who are entrusted to do Hashem's work in the Mishkan and Bais Hamikdash.

This mitzvah is divided into two parts: a) The mitzvah of honoring a kohen; b) The prohibition against using the services of a kohen for one's needs. Let us elaborate:

THE MITZVAH OF HONORING A KOHEN

How do we honor a kohen?

Whenever a brachah is recited in public, a kohen should be the one asked to recite it. Thus a kohen is the first one to be called up to the Torah whenever it is read. At meal time, he is the one who is asked to recite Kiddush, Bircas Hamotzi and Bircas Hamazon. In addition, a kohen is served first, he is asked to speak first and is generally given more respect than a yisroel or a levi(2).

Some poskim(3) mention that a levi is given priority over a yisroel in all of the above honors, just as he is called to the Torah before a yisroel. Other poskim hold that a levi does not take precedence at all(4). May a kohen forego this honor?

A kohen may be mochel (lit.: forgive) all the forms of honor due him [except being called up first to the Torah](5). The reason why a kohen may be mochel his honor is based on the rabbinic dictum(6) that "one honors a man by doing his will." Since the kohen wants to bestow upon someone else the honor due him, that, in turn, becomes his honor(7).

If a yisroel recites Bircas Hamazon in the presence of a kohen, he must ask for the kohen's permission. It is not sufficient to merely say 'birshus hakohen'(8).

As stated above, the only exception to the rule that a kohen may forego his honor is that he must be called up first to the Torah. This is a Rabbinic edict instituted by the Sages of the Mishnah, who insisted that the kohen always accept his aliyah lest he defer to some people and not to others, and thus cause discord among members of the shul(9).

Are there any exceptions to the requirement of honoring a kohen? The head of a household where a meal is being served is not obligated to offer a kohen guest the honor of reciting Hamotzi(10) or Bircas Hamazon(11).

If a yisroel is a greater talmid chacham than a kohen, the yisroel is not obligated to honor the kohen. It is, nevertheless, proper for him to do so, and one who does so is rewarded with longevity(12).

If the kohen is an am haaretz, a yisroel - who is a talmid chacham - is not permitted to honor the kehunah of such a kohen, since he is thereby degrading the honor of the Torah(13).

THE PROHIBITION OF USING THE SERVICES OF A KOHEN

The second half of the obligation to honor a kohen is the prohibition against having him perform "services" for the benefit of a yisroel(14). It is forbidden to ask a kohen to serve a yisroel or to send him on an errand, etc. Even if a

kohen waives his status and allows a yisroel to use his services, this should not be done l'chatchillah, and certainly, the yisroel should never ask a kohen to perform a lowly task for him like emptying the garbage, etc.(15). For this reason, it is preferable that a kohen not enter a profession which may require his yisroel employer to order him to engage in degrading types of work(16).

When is it permitted to benefit from the services of a kohen?

If a kohen receives payment or if he is serving a distinguished person and derives pleasure from serving him, it is permitted to ask the kohen to serve a yisroel(17). Similarly, if a kohen offers to serve a yisroel without being told to do so, it is permitted to accept his offer(18).

Some poskim allow a yisroel to use the services of a kohen am haaretz, although not in a demeaning manner(19). A kohen who violates the sanctity of the kehunah by marrying a divorcee or entering a cemetery when he is forbidden to do so, etc., forfeits the privileges of the kehunah. It is not a mitzvah to honor him, nor are there any restrictions on asking him to perform services. Such a kohen is excluded from nesias kapayim as well(20).

The poskim debate whether these halachos pertain to a kohen who is a minor(21) or who has a blemish which renders him unfit for the avodah(22).

Why are some people not careful to observe these halachos?

There are some people who, although generally meticulous in mitzvah observance, are not careful about their treatment of kohanim. The poskim offer two possible reasons for their behavior:

Now that the Bais Hamikdash is destroyed, this mitzvah does not apply - except for those who conduct themselves lifnim mishuras hadin(23);

With the passage of time, the lineage and yichus of the kohanim have become blurred. Thus we are not positive who is a kohen(24). These objections notwithstanding, the majority of the poskim agree that the mitzvah of honoring a kohen applies even nowadays(25) and we ought not doubt the purity of lineage of our kohanim(26).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Leviticus 21:8. There is a dispute among the rishonim if this is a mitzvas assei min Hatorah or miderabanan - See Magen Avraham 201:4 and Korban Nesanel 300 (Rosh Gitin 5:20). 2 Mishnah Berurah 201:13. 3 Mishnah Berurah 201:12; Kaf Hachayim 167:101. 4 Aruch Hashulchan 201:4. This is the prevailing custom - Ben ish Chai (Korach 14). 5 Rama 128:45; Mishnah Berurah 201:13. 6 Originally appearing in Sefer Chasidim 152. 7 Shulchan Aruch Harav 128: 60 and Eishel Avraham 128:45. 8 Mishnah Berurah 167:75. 9 Mishnah Berurah 135:9. The custom is that even a private minyan always calls up the kohen first, see Shaar Hatzion 12. See Igros Moshe OC 2:34; 3:20 for possible exceptions. 10 Mishnah Berurah 167:73. 11 See Shaar Hatzion 167:65 and Biur Halachah 201:1; Aruch Hashulchan 201:4. 12 OC 167:14 and Mishnah Berurah 71; 201:12. 13 OC 201:2; Mishnah Berurah 167:70. 14 According to some poskim, a kohen cannot serve another kohen, either. Others allow this - see Ksav Sofer OC 15, Biur Halachah 128:45, Aruch Hashulchan 128:75, Kaf Hachayim 128:283. 15 Mishnah Berurah 128:175; Yabia Omer 6:22. 16 Harav S.Z. Auerbach, quoted in Nishmas Avrohom OC 128:10. 17 Mishnah Berurah 128:175. 18 Eishel Avraham 128:45; Aruch Hashulchan 128:72. 19 Biur Halachah 128:45. Aruch Hashulchan 128:72 rules that no matter if a kohen is an am haaretz or not his services may not be used. 20 OC 128:40-41. 21 Mishnah Berurah 282:12 quotes Magen Avraham that the mitzvah of honoring a kohen does not apply for a minor kohen. In Shaar Hatzion 15 he quotes the view of R' Akiva Eiger who questions this. See Emes L'yaakov al Hatorah pg. 391. 22 Most poskim hold that a kohen who has a blemish is included in this mitzvah. See, however, Minchas Chinuch 269, Aruch Hashulchan 128:72 and Shu"t Avnei Cheifetz 71. 23 R' Tam (quoted by Taz 128:39); Mekor Chaim 128:45. 24 Magen Avraham 201:4. Many other poskim are also of the opinion that the kohanim's yichus is questionable - see YD 322 Taz 5 and Shach 9; Shealas Yavetz 155; Chazon Ish Shviis 5:12. See also Rama OC 457:2 and Mishnah Berurah 22. 25 Mishnah Berurah 128:172 - See Rivash 94. See also Aruch Hashulchan 128:71 26 Maharit 1:149; Be'er Heitev OC 128:83; Aruch Hashulchan 128:72; YD 305:55

Sponsored in loving memory of our father and zaide R' Asher Zelig ben Moshe Yosef Posner Niftar Shevat 9 5757 who, in his own humble way,

served as a beacon of Torah strength to who all those who merited to know him. by Louis and Chanie Malcmacher Dovid, Shlomo, Shmuel and Shana

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SICHOT - 17 - 19 : Prayer in the Teachings of Rav Soloveitchik
yhe-sichot@jer1.co.il (Sichot of the Roshei Yeshiva summarized by students)

SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT" A

Prayer in the Teachings of Rav Soloveitchik ZT"L

[Parts I, II and III of III]

Summarized by Aviad Hacoen

The gemara (Shabbat 10a) teaches:

Rava observed Rav Hammuna drawing out his prayer. He said, 'You are putting aside eternal life and involving yourself with momentary life!' [Rashi explains: 'Eternal life' refers to Torah, whereas prayer focuses on the needs of our ephemeral physical life, such as healing, peace, food.] And he [Rav Hammuna] explained, 'Prayer has its time, and Torah study has its time.'

By virtue of his roots and influences, "the Rav" (as Rav Soloveitchik was known to his students) presumably belonged to the school of Rava.

Obviously, as regards the mitzvot of tefilla (prayer) on the minimal halachic level, the position of Rav Hammuna - "Prayer has its time, and Torah study has its time" - was recognized in both Volozhin and Brisk. Halakha follows Rabbi Yochanan's opinion (Shabbat 11a) that Torah scholars' absolute exemption from prayer is limited to those, like Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, whose "Torah is their profession," i.e., those who devote all their time exclusively to Torah study. Since they are not engaged in matters of this world, they are exempt from prayer. Other than these rare exceptions, the obligation is binding and is taken for granted in the teachings of the Rav.

At the same time, in the tradition of Volozhin and Brisk the value and status of prayer - relative both to other areas of Divine service (especially in comparison to Torah study) and to the special status and importance of prayer in the popular view - were quite limited.

Volozhin and Brisk were guided by the central awareness that, in the words of the Rambam (Hilkhos Tefilla 6:8), "the mitzva of Torah study is greater than that of tefilla." In truth, the issue was never evaluated in these terms. Tefilla and Torah study were never placed on two arms of a scale with a view to comparing their respective weight. The attraction to Torah study and commitment to it were understood first and foremost on the valuational and existential levels. The obligation of conscientious study day and night, uninterrupted and unwavering, was emphasized over and over.

Few were those who would have been courageous enough to emulate the pious ones of old, of whom it is told (Berachos 32b) that they would spend nine hours each day engaged in prayer, and nevertheless "because they were pious their Torah study was preserved and their labor was blessed." Not many believed that they could rely on this promise. In any event, I believe that in Volozhin and Brisk they neither desired nor aspired to this. The prevailing motto was, "If you walk in my statutes' - i.e., if you labor in My Torah." The dominant emphasis was placed on the acquisition of Torah through investing supreme effort in its study.

There can be no doubt that this tradition regarding the relationship between Torah and tefilla left an indelible imprint on the Rav at the outset of his career, and had a determining influence on his way of life and also, to some extent, on his philosophy.

For a long time, at least until the end of the 1950's, the Rav would not hesitate to pray alone in order to make more time available for learning. He found support for this decision in Rav Chaim's understanding of the Rambam's approach to the laws of communal prayer. He also offered an intriguing explanation of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's opinion (Megilla 27a) that "a synagogue may be converted into a beit midrash (study hall)" (but not vice versa, because the sanctity of a study hall is greater than that of a synagogue). According to the Rav, the sanctity and unique nature of a beit

midrash are based not on our preference for the intellectual and rational aspect of our faith, but rather on the greater importance of study than tefilla on the existential plane. Nevertheless, it is clear that prayer held a central place in the Rav's spiritual world.

At the start of his career as a Torah luminary, the Rav paid special attention to the issue of prayer - both between the walls of his own beit midrash as well as from various public podiums. When his father, Rav Moshe zt"l, would invite him to deliver a guest lecture at the yeshiva in New York, the Rav regularly chose to deal with issues in Tractate Berakhot. There is clearly no need to elaborate on the place which this held in the Rav's teachings throughout his life. A brief perusal of his annual "Yahrzeit lectures" (collected in the two volumes of "Shiurim LeZekher Abba Mari Z"L") bears adequate witness to this.

Alongside Torah study, tefilla represented a central and potent ingredient in the Rav's personality and his service of God. Those closest to him remember with admiration not only his brilliant lectures but also the broken heart filled with longing which characterized his stance as a servant of God standing before his Master during the Ne'ila prayer on Yom Kippur, and the ecstasy and power which burst forth during his recitation of "Nishmat Kol Chai" at the Seder table. Anyone seeking to understand the Rav's teachings, his philosophy and his essence must therefore turn his attention to his treatment of tefilla both as a subject of study and as a state of being.

I shall deal with some of the principal points in this regard. It should obviously be kept in mind, though, that all his teachings - transmitted in great detail both orally and in writing, in the framework of Torah study and its practical application in life, all spanning many decades - cannot possibly be crammed into a single lecture.

A

The word "tefilla" is used in two different senses. One is a wider concept, referring to the contents of the siddur, the prayers which we recite in synagogue. The content of "tefilla" in this context includes the portions read from the Torah, birkat kohanim (the priestly blessing), pesukei de-zimra (songs of praise), hallel, etc.

In its narrower sense, the word "tefilla" is used to refer specifically to the Shemoneh Esrei (the "Eighteen Blessings;" also called the "Amida," or "standing prayer"). This differentiation appears in the Rambam, who distinguishes in his Mishneh Torah between the "Laws of Berakhot (blessings)," the "Laws of Reciting the Shema," and the "Laws of Tefilla." The Rav dealt at length with both areas, but we shall concentrate here on his treatment of tefilla as it refers to the Shemoneh Esrei.

Through the Rav's teachings, we may examine tefilla on three levels: The first is that of tefilla itself, alone. The second is an examination of tefilla as typifying a category of mitzvot. The third level is the perspective which sees tefilla as rooted and integrated in the totality of the Rav's philosophical thought.

B

With regard to the first level, we may highlight several central elements which the Rav focused on:

1. The primary emphasis on "bakasha" (petition, request). The Shemoneh Esrei, as we know, is structured such that there is praise (shevach) at the beginning, thanksgiving (hoda'a) at the end, and requests in between. The Rav laid particular emphasis on the element of bakasha as characterizing tefilla. This in itself is not surprising, and perhaps not even innovative: the gemara itself uses the words "rachamei" and "tachananim" (supplications) as synonyms for tefilla. According to the description which appears in the gemara (Berakhot 34a), "[During] the first [set of blessings in the Shemoneh Esrei,] one is compared to a servant who presents praise before his master; [during] the middle [blessings] he is compared to a servant who requests a favor from his master; and [in reciting] the last [blessings] he is likened to a servant who has received a favor from his master, and now takes his leave and departs." Here, too, the central element of the tefilla is perceived as residing in the dimension of request.

The Rav did not stop at emphasizing this fact, reflected as it is in the content of the tefilla itself. (The Sifri also quotes a number of verses from

Tanakh which support this tripartite structure of prayer.) He also examined the question of the legitimacy of this view, and the extent to which it is necessary. This examination was carried out keeping other views in mind: mystical perspectives which highlight at length the dimension of praise, and idealistic-philosophical perspectives which regard the status of "petition" with misgivings, and perceive it as an unacceptable egocentric act: instead of a person being full of praise to God, he is merely concerned with his own personal cares.

The Rav completely rejected these views, insisting instead, over and over, that prayer is indeed - and must be - "supplication and request." I shall quote a few lines from his article, "Ra'ayonot al haTefilla" (Ideas on Prayer):

"As has been explained, tefilla also requires praise and thanks. Nevertheless, the vigor and power of tefilla are embedded in the bakasha. Halakha is interested in the psychosomatic human being - in his actual body. It is not pleased by an ecstatic separation of the soul from the body during prayer." [Printed in *Ish HaHalakha - Galui VeNistar*, p. 265] This tone is echoed in several places and in various contexts.

2. Moreover, the Rav emphasized the view of tefilla as standing before the King. He referred not only to the outpouring of one's request, but also to the consciousness of the encounter itself. This aspect is highlighted especially in the Shemoneh Esrei, as opposed to other prayers in which we recite words before God against a different background. The Rambam gives expression to this idea while addressing the issue of the "preparation of the body" for prayer (Hilkhot Tefilla 5:4):

"And his heart should be turned upwards, AS THOUGH HE WERE STANDING IN HEAVEN."

Similarly, the Ramban in this regard explicitly differentiates between the Shemoneh Esrei and the recitation of the Shema (Chiddushei HaRamban, Berakhot 22b s.v. Aval). The gemara teaches (Eruvin 64a, and see Berakhot 31a) that "a drunk person is forbidden to pray," to the extent that if he does so, his prayer is considered an abomination. The Ramban maintains, however, that a person who is inebriated is permitted to recite the Shema, and may even be obligated to do so:

"Because in 'tefilla' [i.e. the Amida,] he requires excessive concentration, FOR HE IS LIKE ONE WHO STANDS BEFORE A KING, and we know from other sources that the regulations concerning 'kavana' (concentration) are more strict with regard to 'tefilla' than with regard to the recitation of the Shema..."

The Ramban connects this to the issue of kavana. The Rav, however, saw the halakhic conclusion as more than simply a result arising from the requirement of "excessive concentration" which would prevent someone who was drunk from praying properly. He perceived tefilla as an encounter characterized principally by the "standing before the King," presenting oneself before God, a direct appeal to Him expressed in the language of the siddur in the second person singular. This standing before the King gives rise to both obligations: the first - deep concentration, and the second - sobriety, which a drunk cannot fulfill.

The Rav would frequently quote Rashi's comment (Berakhot 25a s.v. Aval le-tefilla) on the gemara which states that when it comes to the Shema, it is sufficient for a person to cover only his private parts and leave most of his body exposed, whereas for tefilla he must "cover his heart." Rashi explains:

"But for tefilla' - he has to present himself as standing before the King, and to stand in fear. But the recitation of the Shema is not [considered] speaking before the King."

The Rav saw in this idea of encounter and dialogue (with consideration for the unique nature of both "the one who stands" praying and "the One before Whom he stands") the central dimension of tefilla.

3. At the same time, the Rav would frequently speak of an additional dimension of tefilla - one on which he focused extensively in his early years. As surprising as this may sound, the Rav used to address much attention to the problematic nature of tefilla: is it actually possible and feasible, permissible and appropriate, to pray?

This subject was familiar to Chazal, and to the Rishonim (medieval

sages) who followed them, especially as regards the category of "praise." The gemara (Berakhot 33a) describes a certain 'shaliach tzibbur' (prayer leader) who, during his repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei, reached the words "ha-gadol ha-gibor ve-hanora" ("the God who is great, mighty and awesome") and then continued with a long list of additional praises: "ha-adir ve-haizuz ve-hayir'ui, he-chazak ve- ha'amitz, ha-vadai ve-hanikhbad." When he finished his Shemoneh Esrei, Rabbi Chanina scorned him:

"Do you think that you have now exhausted the praises of your Master? As for us, were it not for the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu uttered these three praises ("ha-gadol ha-gibor ve-hanora") in the Torah (Devarim 10:17), and that the Men of the Great Assembly later included them formally in the tefilla, we could not [i.e., would not have the right to?] mention even those three. Why, then, did you add on so much?"

The Rav certainly identified with this approach of hesitation and restraint with regard to praise. In one of his "Yahrzeit lectures" he spoke about the recitation of the "Shir shel yom" ("Psalm of the day" - the chapter of Tehillim chosen specifically for each day of the week) as listed at the end of Tractate Sukka (55a). The Rav asked, "Why is this psalm recited specifically on this day, and that psalm on that day? What significance is there to this selection of psalms? Why could a person not recite two chapters?"

Based on these questions, the Rav developed his argument as to the problematic nature of the recital of "shevach" (praise). Perhaps the appropriate response should be silence, due to both our wonderment at God's greatness, as well as shame at our unworthiness?

In his essay "Ish HaHalakha" (Halakhic Man), Rav Soloveitchik examined the subject of praise in the course of his discussion of the Rambam's theory of Divine attributes set forth in his "Moreh Nevukhim" (Guide for the Perplexed). The Rambam maintains that it is preferable to altogether avoid descriptions of God's attributes; however, if one is already doing so, then he should word it in the negative rather than affirming a certain trait or ascribing a certain graphic description to God.

But according to the Rav, a person may indeed approach God and present his requests. Human beings who dwell in this physical world have all kinds of deficiencies, wants and aspirations, and as a result they sometimes choose to knock on the gates of Heaven, to break through the barricades, and to present themselves before God asking that He answer their requests.

Would we dare act in this way before a king of flesh and blood? Would we shout, demand, request and plead? Where do we find such audacity? How do we allow ourselves such "chutzpa" in our relationship with God?

This led the Rav to speak at length of the necessity for the existence of "permission" (a "matir") for tefilla, something that would serve as a license of sorts, and in this regard he pointed towards a number of halakhot. For instance, it is stipulated that tefillat nedava, a "voluntary prayer" (i.e., not one of the mandatory, regular communal prayers), must include something innovative. It is not sufficient to simply repeat the tefilla which one has already recited, for this novelty serves as his "permission" to add a non-mandatory prayer.

The Rav brought another example from the Ra'avad, who held that tashlumin, a compensatory prayer, may be recited only in juxtaposition to mandatory tefilla recited at its set time. Someone who forgets to pray Mincha may make it up by reciting the Amida twice at Ma'ariv. The opening of the gates of heaven for the obligatory prayer - which a person is "permitted" to pray because he is commanded to - allows him to slip in, as it were, at the same time the tefilla which he missed. Otherwise, he would have no opportunity of presenting that missed tefilla before his Creator.

In this connection, the Rav used to quote the gemara in Berakhot (31a) which poses the question, "Can a person pray the whole day long?" and answers, "No, for as we learn from the Book of Daniel (6:11): 'Their times are three.'" The very question is not whether a person is required to pray all day long, but rather whether he is even permitted to do so.

According to the Rav, the problem here lies not in our concern for the

possibility of "berakha le-vatala" (reciting blessings - which contain God's name - unnecessarily), but rather in the very audacity of the idea of standing before God the entire day. The issue is not one of 'bitul Torah' (wasting time that should be spent studying Torah) but rather a person's arrogation of the right to stand before God and petition Him for one's needs. A similar approach can be found in the words of Rabbi Meir in Berakhot 61a:

"A person's words before God should always be few, as it is written (Kohelet 5:1): 'Do not flurry your mouth and hasten your heart to issue words before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth, and therefore let your words be few in number.'"

Admittedly, there are sources in Chazal which point to a different approach. On the verse, "Even if you offer many prayers, I shall not hear" (Yeshayah 1:15), the Yerushalmi (Ta'anit 4:1) comments, "From here we learn that anyone who offers many prayers is answered." (I.e., in the previous quotation God is indicating a situation which is not the usual state of affairs - "Even..."; generally this would ensure God's attention.) But the Rav was inclined to emphasize the theme of refraining from excessive prayer, not only in the "quantitative" sense of "the whole day long" but also in the qualitative sense - the very directing of requests to God (bearing in mind the approach mentioned above, which holds that the principal component of tefilla is the "bakasha" aspect).

In this connection the Rav spoke of two types of "permission." One is to be found in tefilla itself: the praise which comprises the first three berakhot "allows" the subsequent requests. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the last berakha before the Shemoneh Esrei (which has redemption as its theme) and the tefilla itself also provides "permission" of a sort (this juxtaposition is known as "semikhat ge'ula le-tefilla"). The same applies to the recitation of "pesukei de-zimra" in the earlier part of the prayer service. The very joining of the different levels of the tefilla constitutes its "permission."

But for the Rav this was not sufficient. He sought historical and halakhic anchoring for a person's standing before God. In his view, if one were to evaluate purely intellectually the permissibility of prayer and petition, one would be forced to reach a negative conclusion. Nevertheless, there are precedents. "The [three] Patriarchs instituted prayer" (Berakhot 26b). The forefathers prayed; so did Moshe Rabbeinu and King David. It would seem, therefore, that even if it seems somewhat paradoxical and even if it contradicts the conclusion we would reach were we to focus on the fundamental, theological, ideological-philosophical aspects alone - it is indeed acceptable, and even desirable.

This is not all. We are in fact commanded to pray. We find in Ta'anit (2a): "'To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart' (Devarim 10:13) - what is Divine service that is performed by the heart? This is tefilla."

This indicates both the obligation to pray and the permission to do so. Were it not for the obligation, there would be no permission.

In 1953, the first year in which I studied privately with the Rav in Boston, he taught Berakhot. Ever since that time I have been captivated by those issues and have even come to feel something of the sensation experienced by a person who simply stands in wonder: "What are we; what are our lives? What are we in relation to God?" The Rav's teachings made a deep and lasting impression on me. Later on, I had certain reservations regarding this line of thought, and even more so regarding such an existential state. Indeed, the feeling of "What shall a person complain of so long as he is alive, in light of all his sins?" (Eikha 3:39) arises in one's heart. As the midrash explains, "It is sufficient that he is alive; he should ask for nothing else beyond this." Moshe Rabbeinu's words, "And I entreated God at that time..." (Devarim 3:23) indicate, according to Chazal, that all is given as a free gift. God owes us nothing. At the same time, though, can anyone imagine that God would plant us on earth - weak and dependent as we are - with only Himself for us to rely upon, and then block our channel to reach Him?

Indeed, can there be any meaningful human existence, either spiritually or materially, without access to our Father in Heaven? I believe that I was

not alone in recoiling from this line of thought (regarding the audacity of prayer and the need for permission); in my opinion, the Rav himself somewhat downplayed it later in his life.

The Rav dealt further with the "problematics of prayer" both in his lectures and in his writings, but the question was couched differently and his answers conveyed a different tone. I shall quote just a short excerpt, from which the question clearly emerges: How is prayer possible at all?

"To the extent that the individual approaches God, his finite mortal existence is negated. The finite is swallowed in the Infinite and expires in its depths. Man sometimes flees from God or hides from Him - "And Moshe hid his face for he was afraid to look at God" (Shemot 3:6) - lest he be swallowed. Man's independence and self-confidence are nullified before God's splendor and glory. If so, then the question arises: How can prayer exist at all? Prayer is standing before God, before the Divine Presence. How can a person be in God's presence without losing his individual existence?" ["Ra'ayanot al haTefilla," p. 244]]

Here the question is directed not towards the issue of permission to pray - its legitimacy vs. the audacity which it involves - so much as towards man's very ability to pray: Is it existentially possible for a person to stand in God's presence?

Later on in the same work, the Rav does mention the concept of "permission" to pray, but here the principle and the answer which he suggests are different from those which we discussed previously. He maintains (p. 245) that "Halakhic thought toiled mightily to provide an answer to this question and to find something which would permit a creature of flesh and blood to approach its Maker." The Rav lists three fundamental concepts in Judaism upon which this permission rests. The latter two are the precedents set by the Patriarchs and by the Temple service, to which we shall return later. But the first concept, about which the Rav did not speak in the '50's, is as follows (ibid.):

"Prayer is a vital need for the religious individual. He cannot stop the thoughts and emotions, deliberations and troubles which surge through the depths of his soul, his hopes and aspirations, his despair and bitterness - in short: the great wealth that is concealed in his religious consciousness. It is impossible to halt the liturgical outpouring [of these feelings]. Prayer is essential. Fresh, vibrant religious feeling cannot exist without it. In other words, prayer is justified by virtue of the fact that it is impossible to exist without it."

This is not an answer to the question but rather the negation of the question's very legitimacy.

C

Until now we have dealt with the first level of examination: the attitude towards prayer itself, alone. The second level, as mentioned, looks at prayer as representative of an entire category of mitzvot. Let us turn our attention briefly to a concept which the Rav developed at length in several contexts. In Chazal's words, prayer is "avoda she- balev," "[Divine] service of the heart." This concept itself was developed extensively by the Rav, and is beyond the scope of this presentation. Inter alia, on the purely halakhic level, the Rav saw tefilla - and the Divine service which it represents - as an example, perhaps the best and most outstanding example, of a certain type of mitzva.

We rely here on the distinction pointed out by Rabbeinu Bechaye in his "Chovot HaLevavot" between "obligations of the limbs" and "obligations of the heart." The Rav emphasized that, in these two categories, there is overlap between the action (ma'aseh) required of the individual during the performance of the mitzva, and the actual fulfillment (kiyyum) and realization of the obligation itself. On Pesach, for example, the mitzva is simply to eat matza, and if the person fulfills the technical requirements, then he has fulfilled the mitzva. In mitzvot of the "obligations of the heart" variety, if the individual feels awe, love etc., then a certain type of act - even if not physical - is fulfilled.

In contrast, emphasized the Rav, there are some mitzvot which require of us a certain action - sometimes expressed externally - but whose fulfillment and realization are "in the heart" and are conditional not upon the execution

of the act but rather on a certain spiritual state. The Rav found evidence of this category in various contexts. For example, the mitzva of joy on the pilgrim festivals ("Ve-samachta be- chagekha"): the eating of the festive sacrifices dictates a certain lifestyle or certain acts, but the fulfillment of the mitzva is not expressed in the eating of the sacrifices but rather in the feeling of joy which bursts forth from the heart in the wake of that act. A similar idea applies to the mitzva of mourning.

The Rav saw the central focus of this category in the area of prayer. In his introduction to "Chovot HaLevavot," Rabbeinu Bechaye included prayer in his list of "obligations of the limbs" (in contrast to the possibility raised by the "Magen Avraham" according to which the mitzva of prayer can be fulfilled through thought alone). The Rav regarded it as plainly obvious that "Divine service of the heart" takes place in the heart. But, then, how do we explain the obligation to actually articulate the prayers verbally?

And here he presents his answer: there is the "action of the mitzva," expressed in the recitation of the words (the reciting of a certain text with a certain structure, in a certain place and under certain conditions, according to all the details as they appear in the Shulchan Arukh), and there is the "fulfillment of the mitzva," which pertains to the essence of the individual, his experience of the importance of his stance before God and the significance of the message which he seeks to transmit to God.

Here, tefilla is perceived not as an individual mitzva, the halakhic substance of which is open to our investigation, but rather as representing, to the Rav's mind, the epitome of the category of mitzvot which are expressed externally but fulfilled internally, existentially, "in the heart."

D

The third level of investigation which we mentioned above forges the connection between prayer and other central philosophical and moral concerns in the Rav's thought. The Rav raised several questions in his perception of prayer. For example, in "Ra'ayanot al HaTefilla" there is a long passage which parallels another passage in "Halakhic Man" dealing with the connection between Halakha and the entire expanse of life's experience. The Rav elaborated on his opposition to the ritualistic view, according to which the nature of a person's life creates a division between the world of worship and the sphere of general activity. In contrast, the Rav emphasized the integrative, holistic and comprehensive nature of Halakha. Obviously, this is to be seen against the backdrop of what we have discussed above, i.e., the need to perceive in prayer - beyond the focused halakhic perspective - a broad and natural setting for attention to the problem which occupied the Rav extensively: the relationship between the internal and the external, between the world of emotion and the world of logic, between the world of action and the world of experience. The Rav addressed this issue throughout the range of his works.

In his treatment of prayer he also turned his attention to a subject which occupied a profound place in his consciousness: the relationship between the individual and the community. From a structural point of view, tefilla includes both individual and communal prayer. Hence, this subject presents a convenient arena for examination of both aspects: the individual - the "lonely man of faith" who stands alone before the Almighty - and at the same time the person as a member of a wider community, "communal man," "national man," an integral part of Knesset Yisrael.

Despite the fact that the simple meaning of the gemara in Rosh Hashana (34b) suggests that communal prayer is required only in order to provide an opportunity for those who are untrained in prayer to fulfill their obligation, the Rav tended to regard the balance between individual prayer and communal prayer as expressing two components of religious existence. (Incidentally, a similar line is adopted by the author of the "Tanya" in his "Likkutei Torah.")

Beyond this, I believe that tefilla should be seen as the focus of a subject which disturbed the Rav perhaps more than anything else: the status of the individual himself, and his stance before God.

As we know, the Rav spoke extensively, and in different ways, of a dialectical view of man as existing on two levels, as oscillating between two poles. On one hand, he saw man as possessing power, ability, strength and

creativity; on the other hand he is a helpless creature, suspended over the abyss. He spoke of this on a number of occasions (among others during his eulogy for Rav Chaim Heller, [printed as "Peleitat Sofreihem" in "Divrei Hagut VeHa'arakha," and translated into English in "Shiurei Harav"] and in his Hebrew essay "On the Love of Torah and the Redemption of the Soul of the Generation" [printed in full in "BeSod HaYachid VechaYachad" and slightly abridged in "Divrei Hashkafa"]). He described the dialectic between "gadlut ha-mochin" and "katnut ha-mochin" which existed in the great Torah luminaries of Israel: on the one hand, he described the great intellects with which they were blessed, depicting them as giants, conquerors, creators and builders, warriors in the battles of Torah; and at the same time he pointed to their innocence, their child-like and almost poetic aspects.

The Rav gave wide expression to this (and the scope of this essay precludes the opportunity of examining this in depth) in his description of the two types of man in his essay "The Lonely Man of Faith." This dual perception of man was reflected in his view of the act of prayer. On one hand, as emphasized above, the Rav stressed the "bakasha" theme in tefilla. We come and request certain things of God, like a servant who comes before his master. On the other hand, the Rav emphasized no less the connection between tefilla and the sacrifices in the Temple, a connection which Chazal had already pointed out. The connection expresses itself both in terms of the source ("The prayers were instituted to parallel the sacrifices") and in terms of the characteristics of prayer and its necessary conditions (cleanliness of the body, concentration, etc.). There are even those who have compared the washing of the hands prior to tefilla to the kohanim's sanctification of their hands and feet prior to serving in the Temple.

In his treatment of this topic the Rav did not stop at a comparison of the technical details: he sharpened the view of tefilla itself as a sacrifice. Not something similar to or representing a sacrifice, but an actual sacrifice in its own right. The Rav gave expression to this view in his emphasis on the fact that even though practically human sacrifice is forbidden, in principle the individual is actually required to sacrifice himself to God. He saw tefilla as a state of self-sacrifice by the individual:

"Yet there is another aspect to prayer: prayer is an act of giving away. Prayer means sacrifice, unrestricted offering of the whole self, the returning to God of body and soul, everything one possesses and cherishes. There is an altar in heaven upon which the archangel Michael offers the souls of the righteous. Thrice daily we petition God to accept our prayers, as well as the fires - the self-sacrifices of Israel - on that altar ("ve- ishei Yisrael u-tefillatam be-ahava tekabbel be-ratzon"). Prayer is rooted in the idea that man belongs, not to himself, but that God claims man, and that His claim to man is not partial but total. God the Almighty, sometimes wills man to place himself, like Isaac of old, on the altar, to light the fire and to be consumed as a burnt offering." ["Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah," Tradition, Spring 1978, pp. 70-71]

This theme was repeated in several different contexts in the Rav's works. To some extent it is not only different from the theme of bakasha, but actually contradictory.

The Rav dwelt at length on man's dependence, a point which the Maharal saw as standing at the center of the concept of "Divine service." Man is utterly dependent, helpless. Should he become disconnected even for a moment from God, he would be unable to continue to exist. "A prayer of the afflicted when he is faint and pours out his complaint before God" (Tehillim 102:1), "He heeds the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer" (ibid. 18). Man pleads before God out of a sense of his nothingness; it is a cry of broken-heartedness. He feels that were it not for prayer he would not be able to bear his situation.

In a shiur which he delivered before the Rabbinical Council in 1963, the Rav spoke of the famous dispute between Rambam and Ramban regarding prayer. According to the Rambam, the mitzva of daily tefilla is 'de'oraita' (i.e., its source is to be found in the Torah). The Ramban, on the other hand, holds that the biblical source for prayer is limited to the obligation to pray in times of trouble (while daily prayer is mandated only rabbinically). The Rav's daring comment on this debate ran as follows: the Rambam

fundamentally agrees with the Ramban. Indeed, tefilla is obligatory only "in times of trouble," but the Rambam perceives man as existing in a perpetual state of crisis. Were it not for God, he could not exist for a single moment, and there can be no greater trouble imaginable than a person who is, heaven forbid, disconnected from God. Hence, we may deduce that the individual is in a constant state of crisis and needs God's contact and His mercy every day. Here man appears to us as needy, weak, or - to use the imagery of "The Lonely Man of Faith" - Adam II.

In the world of sacrifices and sacred items (kodshim) the situation is entirely different. The key concept in sacrifices, the basis of the whole structure, is that of "ba'alut" (ownership, mastery), either private or communal. With a few exceptions, e.g. the "kayitz ha-mizbe'ach" (Mishna Shekalim 4:4), a sacrifice always involves ownership. The individual who brings a sacrifice is the "owner," the master; the requirement to give is addressed only to someone who is able to give. Thus, in a certain sense, man is considered to be his own master, and only because of this can he be asked to offer himself as a sacrifice to God.

The view of tefilla in the Rav's philosophy is therefore complex. He speaks of tefilla in terms of its dialectical character. As explained, this reflects the Rav's perception of man's status in general. To a certain degree, the Rav tended to think in terms of variety: sometimes one aspect expresses itself more strongly while at other times another aspect is dominant. The same can be said of bakashot of different types. But, ultimately, the perception of man as a complex and dialectical being remains a central characteristic in the Rav's philosophy, such that tefilla is also seen as complex and dialectical. On one hand, man has the power to give, to sacrifice. On the other hand, man's entire existence hangs by a thread; he is weak and powerless.

The Rav went further than this, though. He saw tefilla as an expression of giving, requiring total sacrifice on the part of the individual - in a certain sense to the extent of losing his very existence as an individual. But at the same time he saw tefilla as an incomparable source of gain and opportunity for receiving. This motif ran throughout his thought and his experience. On more than one occasion he mentioned that Judaism never promises instant happiness. There is no peace of mind; rather, there are requirements and demands. But this "long" road is really "short." It begins with maximalist, ultimate demands and requirements, but culminates in the genuine joy of giving.

The Rav saw man as able to find two things in prayer. In his article "Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah," the Rav mentioned that through prayer the individual discovers himself; he reveals his true "I." Tefilla here is depicted as standing before God with one's heart of hearts exposed before Him. At this point, man reveals his innermost secrets, clarifying in his own mind what his real requests of God are: not only those mundane concerns with which he is constantly occupied, but also those goals to which he aspires; that which is needed and that which should be needed; that which is central, that which imbues his life with happiness and meaning, and that which is peripheral. In the midst of these considerations, man finds his true self.

Man reveals his own self not only through the process of self-evaluation and self-revelation, but also by virtue of the fact that he has found God. God takes hold of him, as it were; He communicates with him. True life and inner happiness are derived from this connection. Tefilla opens with sacrifice; it demands much of the individual. But this very sacrifice, the individual himself, this dialectical creature required to give himself completely over to God - he himself reaps the full reward of his tefilla. To the extent that he rises to the demands of tefilla and is capable of combining his bakashot and his "giving" within it, he will ultimately merit not only the realization of those requests which he presented before God but also his own self-realization. He receives what he invested and more, on a different plane, with a different significance, with the elevation and intimacy implied in the verse, "... And you who cleave to the Lord your God, you are all alive today" (Devarim 4:4).

Indeed, there is something dialectical and paradoxical here. At first,

there is an experience of duality, of a torn soul, because this is man's starting point in general. It is specifically through his tefilla and his stance before God, and through his simultaneous (self-)sacrifice and petition that he rises and is elevated, meriting by means of his tefilla both personal growth and connection with the Master of the Universe.

In this connection, the Rav spoke of the structure of tefilla, and specifically of the final three berakhot of the Shemoneh Esrei (see "Ra'ayonot al HaTefilla", p. 256). The following quote (p. 271) is just a brief excerpt of his exposition there, and a fitting summation to this presentation:

"At the end of the tefilla we return to [the theme of the opening blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei,] Birkat Avot - the first approach of the worshipper to God. His faith in the Lord of the world is great. His mercies have no bounds. His goodness flows from one end of existence to the other. If so, then God dwells within me. He is my whole being; His glory fills the world, and we know that all of existence melts away in His infinity. What is existence if not the illumination of the countenance of the Infinite? What is happiness if not the gift of God? What do we want, for what do we long, what do we request - if not to cleave to Him and embrace Him, as it were?"

The God of Avraham, the God of the world, who relates to all of existence, whether from inside it or from the outside, is the Master of peace, blessing and goodness. And then the individual proceeds to request [the final blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei], 'Grant peace, good and blessing, life, grace, kindness and mercy, unto us and unto all of Israel, Your nation.'

In other words, after all the wanderings and circlings [during the tefilla] from love and mercy to moments of fear and helplessness, after the descent from the heights of longing and elevation to the depths of confusion and terror, after self-nullification and self-discovery, after self-sacrifice and then the return to mundane reality - we return once again to calm and gentle existence, full of joy and security. God appears as a serene dwelling place, a secure habitation. The worshipper lounges in green pastures, secure in Him as a son in his father.

His torn and troubled soul finds happiness and calm. His fear and anxiety are forgotten; the terrible Mystery is gone. In their place reigns happiness, and the rush towards the Source of all existence. Man does not flee from God; rather, he runs towards Him, embraces Him, nestles close to the Divine Presence.

All is surrounded by calm and peace. The blessing and bounty of the Infinite One rain down on everything; the mercies of the Holy One, Blessed be He, fall like dew on Mt. Cheron and the entire world is illuminated with the precious light emanating from the Infinite."

(Translated by Kaeren Fish and Ronnie Ziegler. Adapted from a lecture delivered at a Memorial Assembly for Rav Soloveitchik, Iyar 5756 [May 1996]. This adaptation was not reviewed by Rav Lichtenstein.)

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CASE CLOTHED -- DRASHA PARSHAS TETZAVEH

Ateres@pppmail.nyser.net (Mordechai Kamenetzky)

"Clothes," they say, "make the man." But did you ever wonder about the man who makes the clothes? This week's portion discusses the priestly vestments worn by both the common kohen (priest) and the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). The common kohen wore four garments while the High Priest wore eight. The garments of the High Priest were ornate and complex. They needed highly skilled artisans to embroider and fashion them. They included, among others, a jewel-studded breastplate, a honeycomb-woven tunic, an apron-like garment and a specially designed garment that was adorned with gold bells and woven pomegranates. To weave these garments was quite a complex task, and Moshe had to direct the craftsmen with the particulars of the difficult sartorial laws. Yet when Hashem charges Moshe He described the function of the garments much differently than He did in telling Moshe to command the tailors. Moshe himself was told by

Hashem that the objective of the garments was for glory and splendor -- surely wonderful, but very physical attributes. Yet when he is told to command the artisans, the message he is told to impart was quite different. "You shall speak to the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, as they shall make holy vestments to sanctify and minister for me." (Exodus 28:1-3) "The clothes," Moshe tells the tailors, "were not meant for glory or splendor; they were to sanctify and to minister." Why the change in stated purpose?

A Long Island rabbi attended a taharah (ritual ceremony to prepare a deceased Jew for burial) for an individual whose background was rooted in a Chasidic community. Chevra Kadishas (burial societies) are often immune to the emotions, trauma and dread that would normally accompany a dead soul on a table. The Chevra did their job almost perfunctorily, with hardly a word spoken, and that did not strike the rabbi as strange. Years of working with cadavers can numb the senses of even the toughest men. All of a sudden, a murmur bounced back and forth between Chasidic members of the Chevra. "Er hut a visa? (He has a visa?)" they queried. Then the conversation took a stranger turn. They began to mumble about a first class ticket. The rabbi became concerned. Why was anyone talking about travel plans during this most sacred of rituals? That was not the time nor place. It just did not make sense. Immediately the room became silent, it was now filled with awe and a sense of reverence. "Er hut a visa!" exclaimed the senior member of the group. The entire Chevra nodded and the atmosphere suddenly transformed.

They continued to prepare for the funeral as if the deceased had been a great sage or Chasidic Rebbe. The rabbi was unable to understand the sudden change in atmosphere until the eldest man beckoned him. "Come here," he said. "I'll show you something. The old man lifted the arm of the deceased to reveal seven numbers crudely tattooed on the dead man's forearm. "Do you know what they are?" "Of course," replied the Rabbi. "They are the numbers that the Nazi tattooed on every prisoner in the concentration camps." "No," the old man said. "These numbers are the first-class ticket to Gan Eden. They are the visa and they are the tickets. Period."

The badges we wear have different meanings to every individual. Moshe, the man of G-d who saw the world with a profound vision of spirituality, was told about the more mundane aspect of the priestly garments. "They are for glory and honor." But he is told to charge the artisans, who often see only the splendor and glory of the corporeal world, with the true purpose of the garments -- "to sanctify and minister."

Often we see numbers, events, and even garments as the mere manifestation of natural events whose memories impart us with only of a sense of awe for the history or beauty within. Sometimes we mortals must be reminded of a sense even greater than glory and splendor -- ministration and sanctification of G-d's name.

Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore rmk@torah.org

516-328-2490 Fax 516-328-2553 <http://www.yoss.org>

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Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the

High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/>

Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network 3600 Crondall Lane, Ste. 106

Owings Mills, MD 21117 (410) 654-1799

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/drosho.html>

Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel - Calgary

Dvar Torah: Parshat Tetzaveh 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

CREED & DEED

Which is more important in Judaism, creed or deed? Is Judaism a "religion of faith", a common belief system, or is it a way of life, a system of commandments, traditions, and rituals founded on beliefs and values?

We've all asked ourselves this question, in one form or another. We've asked it when we question whether the Torah really expects us to keep each and every law, or halacha, or whether it is sufficient to be a "good person". We

ask it every year on Pesach, when we celebrate our freedom and relive the experience of going out of Egypt. We go to great detail to eliminate every grain of Chametz from our homes, or when we eat the Matzah and the Marror in order to experience and feel what our ancestors experienced, and we ask: is it really necessary?

The great Medieval Jewish thinker and scholar, author of Sefer Hachinuch, coined a phrase which sums up this debate succinctly: Acharei Hama'asim nimshachim ha'levavot, "Our hearts are moved by our actions." In explaining the details of such commandments as the Pascal offering, with its many details, the Sefer Hachinuch says that it is only through the actual performance of these commandments that internalise the lessons and the values that they portray.

Look at the Torah's description of the Tabernacle, which we read during these weeks. The Torah goes out of its way to describe, with great care, every detail of that construction: every cubit carefully designed - in material, color, shape, ornamentation, and construction. The ark goes here... the Menorah there... the tapestries embroidered with such forms and pictures... the structure this long... the courtyard this long... the rooftop sewn this way... the Menorah built with such ornaments... and so on and so forth.

What is even stranger, however, is that the Torah describes this detail twice! In the Parshiyot of Teruma and Tetzaveh, the instructions are given to Moses. In Vayakhel and Pekudey - the Torah repeats every detail verbatim in the context of describing the actual construction! "And the Children of Israel made the ark, 2½ cubits long, 1½ cubits wide, etc." Every verse repeated!! Would it have been so difficult to simply state: "And the Children of Israel performed what G'd Had commanded them?"

The critical lesson here is that it wasn't only what they did, but how they did it: with meticulous care. Our Rabbis explain the repetition: "In order to teach us that they did not change anything." They build the ark, exactly as G'd Had commanded. They placed it where G'd Had said... Every detail was repeated first in command, then in action. Because the Torah wants us to understand that actions are no less important than theory!

Actions do speak louder than words!

How many great works of Jewish philosophy and theology have been written about the nature of G'd, about belief, morality, values, and so on? Yet none of this is philosophy is found in the Torah itself! In the Torah, the emphasis is "Perform my commandments." "Keep my statutes." Do, and then you will understand. Na'aseh ve'nishma, the people said at Sinai: "We will do, and we will learn."

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, of Efrat, once said that this why there is such a great incidence of heart failure amongst the Jewish people. The Torah gives us 613 Commandments, 248 positive ones, and 365 negative ones, corresponding to limbs and sinews of the body. Each Mitzvah is supposed to be performed by and therefore perfect another part of the human body. But we prefer to be "Jews in our hearts." We take 613 Commandments, meant to spread out amongst all the limbs, and place them all on the heart, and the heart can't handle that kind of pressure!

"I'm a Jew in the heart! I'm a Jew on the inside!" Isn't about time that we started being Jews on the outside as well?!!

The holiday of Passover is around the corner. No holiday expresses the Jews' care for detail greater than Passover, as it should be. Because Passover defines the essence of the Jewish People. We are a people guided by the wisdom of Jewish law (halacha) We are a people that has, at times, unfortunately forgotten not how to think Jewishly, but how to behave Jewishly.

We are a people that has, for generations, taught that it is not enough to believe in Torah and Judaism, we must observe Torah and Judaism.

We are, indeed, a people of DEED, not CREED.

Portion

Tetzaveh

The Two Altars

There were two mizbeichos, altars, in the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash. They were the mizbeich hazahav and mizbeich hanechoshes, the golden altar and the copper altar. The golden altar was used for offering incense, while the copper one was used for regular offerings. Details of the copper altar are discussed in the Torah portion of Terumah, while the golden altar is described in the portion of Tetzaveh.

The Mishnah informs us in Tractate Chagigah that both the golden and copper altars were immune to ritual impurity.

R. Eliezer says the reason for this is that the altars are likened to earth, and earth is not subject to ritual impurity. The Sages, however, explain that they were not subject to ritual impurity because the altars were merely covered with gold or copper. As such, their covering was nullified before their interior, which was composed of material not subject to ritual impurity.

In terms of our personal spiritual service, the teaching of the Mishnah is as follows:

In its spiritual sense, the Tabernacle and all its vessels are found within every Jew. The person is likened to the Mishkan, while the faculties of intellect, emotion, etc., are similar to its vessels. These vessels can become defiled and spiritually impure when a person acts contrary to G-d's will.

Once this occurs, the vessels must be purified so that they may continue to be used in the service of man's personal Tabernacle. For every Jew is considered G-d's Holy Temple, and the Temple and its vessels must be spiritually pure. People fall into two categories: either they are wealthy or they are not. This wealth may be either spiritual or material. Of he who is wealthy, it is said that "everything he possesses is of gold," while of he who is not wealthy, it is said that "all his coins are copper."

Every Jew, however, even one whose spiritual status is merely "copper," is whole with regard to that quintessential part of him that makes him what he is, a Jew. That part always desires to fulfill G-d's will. As stated in HaYom Yom: "A Jew neither desires, nor is capable, of sundering himself from G-dliness."

A Jew's inability to separate himself from G-dliness, and his readiness to sacrifice himself and his animalistic desires for G-d, is termed mizbeich, an altar upon which the individual sacrifices his individuality, ego and desires. The above-mentioned Mishnah thus informs us that, whatever a Jew's level, be he of "gold" or "copper," his Jewish essence is not subject to ritual impurity.

According to R. Eliezer, the reason for this is because the innermost desire of every Jew is to fulfill G-d's will to the exclusion of all else. This is because a Jew's essence possesses a humility before G-d that causes him to be likened to earth, which permits itself to be trodden upon by all.

The other Sages, however, feel it is too much to expect that we will be able to see the essence of the Jew to the exclusion of all external characteristics.

They therefore state that the reason Jews are not subject to impurity is because, although externally some Jews may be led astray by their wealth (their "gold") or their poverty (their "copper"), their essence -- their "altar" -- is not subject to spiritual impurity.

The reason for this is that the rich man's gold as well as the poor man's copper are merely external coverings; the individual's core is entirely pure. So indomitable is this internal holiness that eventually, every external impurity is nullified before it.

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. III, pp. 910-913

End of Text - Chassidic Dimension - Tetzaveh

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