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Rabbi Hershel Schachter
Parshas Zachor

When Hakadosh Baruch Hu first created the world, everything was "tohu va'vohu" (Breishis 1:2). By the end of the sixth day of creation, most of the tohu va'vohu was replaced with a beautifully developed world. Some, however, was still left behind for man to join with Hashem in completing His creation (see Breishis 2:3). Amalek is part of the remaining tohu va'vohu[1], and we were instructed that we should not assume that all of the evil in the world will go away by itself; but rather we have an obligation to fight against evil, and complete Hashem's bria'h by removing all of the remaining tohu va'vohu.

The chumash tells us (Shemos 17:16) that Hashem swore by His throne that we would have an everlasting and ongoing campaign against Amalek. Both Hashem's name and His throne are mentioned there in abbreviated form (see Rashi there) to indicate that until Amalek will ultimately be obliterated, His name and throne are incomplete. When we observe contradictions between the moral, ethical, and religious G-d given principles and the "real" world (for example – we see righteous people who suffer and wicked people who prosper), it seems to indicate that Hashem's throne is "incomplete". It appears to us as if (kevayachol) He is not in full control of the world and is unable to see to it that His wish should prevail.

The full name of Hashem (Havaya) indicates that in the past, present, and future He is the all-powerful One. As long as "Amalek" is still around, it appears as if He was only all-powerful in the past, and will be so in the future, but is not all-powerful in the present. In the shortened version of Hashem's name (Koh) the yud represents the future, the heh represents the past, and the missing heh and vuv (which should have been in the middle) represents the fact that it appears as if (kevayachol) He were not all powerful in the present[2].

It is because of this mistaken perception that the name of the city of Yerushalayim is almost always spelled (in tanach as well as in kesubos and gittin) missing a yud. Yerushalayim is the official capital of Eretz Yisroel[3], and Hashem is officially the King of all of Eretz Yisroel. That is why Yerushalayim is referred to as "the throne of Hashem" (Yirmiyahu 3:17). Because the throne today seems to be incomplete, therefore Yerushalayim is always spelled in an incomplete form.

After all the evil forces in the world (Amalek) will be overcome and there will no longer be any contradiction between the natural world and G-d's moral, ethical, and religious principles, then the power of His kingship will be apparent, His throne will be complete, and the name of His capital city (Yerushalayim) will be spelled in its complete form. We will refer to Hashem by His full name (Havaya), as opposed to His abbreviated name (Koh), and the prophecy of Zechariah (14:9) that Hashem will only have one name (Havaya) will be fulfilled. Not only will we believe, as we always have, that the One and only G-d is omnipotent, but that will be our perception as well.

When we recite Shema we say "baruch shem kevod malchuso" in a whisper. We don't proclaim Hashem's kingship out loud because we don't readily perceive it. On Yom Kippur, when we think about tikkun of the world, the custom is to recite "baruch shem" out loud. The day will yet come when Hashem's Malchus will no longer be whispered about, but will be clear and obvious.

[1] See note #108 in Ish Hahalacha

[2] See Mepenei Horav, Parshas Vaera

[3] See Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 1:5 Copyright © 2009 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

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The Honor of Torah and the Priestly Garments
Rosh Hayeshiva Harav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht, zt"l

(Adapted from Asufat Ma'arachot) English by Rav Meir Orlian

A. The Honor of Torah It says in the Midrash regarding the sanctification of Aharon and his sons (Shemot Rabbah 38:5): "This is the matter that you shall do for them [to sanctify them to minister for Me.] (Shemot 29:1) This is what is written: "The wise shall inherit honor." (Mishlei 3:25) Honor is nothing other than Torah. Here is proof: What does it say in the beginning of Divrei Hayamim: "Adam, Shet, and Enosh." All the others are the same. You do not find "honor" regarding any one of them until you reach Yabetz, as it says, "Yabetz was more honorable than his brothers." (Divrei Hayamim I 4:9) Why does it mention "honor" regarding him? Because he toiled in Torah. Thus, "The wise shall inherit honor." You find the same regarding Aharon. What does it say about him? "The Teaching of truth was in his mouth." (Malachi 2:6) What did G-d say to Moshe? "You shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for honor and splendor." (Shemot 28:2) All this is in the merit of the Torah in which he toiled. Thus, "The wise shall inherit honor." Our sages blend here two concepts of honor with one another: the "honor" written regarding the priestly garments – "You shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for honor and splendor" – with the "honor of Torah" that Yabetz achieved, honor which arises from the toil of the oral Torah. We would like to understand the common root of this wonderful blend.

B. Garments of Honor "Honor" is the spiritual element, which mandates both Shabbat clothes and the priestly garments, and is itself embedded in the "cloaks of skin" of Adam. (These ideas are already discussed elsewhere in the Asufat Ma'arachot.) In our parsha, Chazal further comment that the source of this spiritual light is hidden in the toil of the Oral Torah. We would like to clarify: What is a garment of honor, and what function does it serve? To understand this, we must first discuss on a more basic level: What is the "honor" that the Torah talks of?

C. "I Created it for My honor" Let us preface that the "honor" that the Torah talks of is the external expression of the internal quality. We would like to explain this point, which is one of the deepest principles; one that Jewish thought deals with at length. We will explain here the little that can be explained of it. Everyone is aware of Chazal's teaching

that the purpose of the creation of a material world is to give honor to the Creator King: Everything that G-d created in His world was created only for His honor, as it says: "Everyone who is called by My Name I have created for My glory, I have fashioned, even perfected." (Avot 6:11) The "honor" that is incumbent upon us; the creatures of the lowly physical world; to grant the Creator, is to reveal His existence from within the concealment. To uncover the Divine light, which is hidden-captive within the darkness of the material. This is the honor that the angels, who lack free will, cannot grant the Creator, since they dwell in a world of revelation. Only man, who has free choice and dwells in the depths of a dark and physical world, he alone is capable of uncovering this. G-d created His world specifically for that slight honor that is accorded Him by the beings of the lower world, since even before the Creation His honor filled all in a revealed manner. What was added through the creation of the world was the concealment of the Divine. Thus, the world, with all its levels of concealment was created in order to allow the uncovering of the light from within the darkness. The physical reality that is visibly tangible has no right of independent existence, since there is no possibility of existence and life for purely physical matter. Rather, G-d's command, through which it was created in the six days of creation are planted within it, and say to it every moment: "Be!" If this vital Divine element were removed from it, the entire Universe would turn to nothing immediately. This is what Chazal instituted in the daily Morning Prayer, "Who renews every day the works of Creation." The AR"IZ" explained in this way what it says, "You give them all life." (Nechemiah 9:6) "You"; this is the Divine spark that is embedded in the embers of the physical existence; "give them all life"; the Divine command which is hidden in the thickness of the physical material is what gives life to the physical wrapping, and provides it with the ability to exist. However this spiritual-soul content is cloaked with a physical "garment," which enwraps and hides the spiritual quality, just as a person's body is nothing other than clothing and a "garment" for his true "self"; the Divine soul from above, which dwells within him. However, the physical world, as it is perceived with physical senses is misleading, and tricks man to relate to it as "something" of self-existence. However, the truth is that it serves only as a covering that G-d created and wrapped with it the spark of the Divine honor, which dwells, as mentioned, in the thickness of the material world.

D. The Service of the "Garments" We can formulate, as the Kabalists did, that the physical covering is nothing other than a kind of garment which encases and covers the Divine reality that is hidden and embedded within it. This "garment," when it misleads man and hides from him the spiritual reality, is defined as a covering that hides the face; the hidden Holy Face. Man's role in this world is to remove this covering and to recognize the reality of the Creator, from within the material itself. If a person succeeds, then the physical universe itself points, shows, and proves to him the Divine reality inherent in its depths. And when a person succeeds in doing this, he uses the material covering itself and turns it into a tool and expression of G-d's honor. Through this, the physical cloak turns into a "garment of honor," through serving as a testimony to the existence of its Creator, through expressing the Divine honor that is inherent in it. This is the "honor" about which we established earlier, that "honor" is the external expression of compressed spiritual qualities. We have now arrived at a concise definition of the notion of "garments" that we are dealing with. The "service of garments" is the great effort and toil of man in order to peel away the layer of physical coating, so that he perceives and senses the light embedded in its inner depths.

E. The Priestly Garments We now can now approach an understanding of the Temple service. The service of the Temple is intended to elevate and refine physical activity through offering it to G-

d. All the actions of the offering: the burning on the Altar, the wine libations and meal offering, the sprinkling of the blood, etc. are branches emanating from the basic function of the Temple service, to reveal the spiritual point that maintains the world of action. Indeed, the uncovering of the spiritual side of the physical existence was great in the Temple. The most dramatic expression of the subjugation of Nature to spiritual existence was, indeed, in the Temple, through the ten miracles that occurred there. This wondrous conduct of the daily routine of the Temple clearly shows the inner goal of the Temple service: to subjugate Nature, with all its limitations, to a Divine destiny. Thus, the Temple service is one of the primary ways through which the physical coating is peeled away, and the Divine spark; the "honor" that is encased within it is revealed. Hence, it plays a central role in the service of the "garments." We can now continue further and include in the Royal "garments" also the essence of the priestly garments. The kohen himself, who is involved in this service of "garments," also requires clothes that properly reflect this service. These "garments" are amongst the "tools" which he utilizes in order to carry out this role. Thus, the priestly garments define the essence of the entire Temple service. "When they have their clothes on; they have the priestly status; their clothes are not on them; they don't have the priestly status." (Zevachim 17b) The priestly garments typify the nature of the priestly service: to sanctify the garment, which is the expresses the external nature, and to endow it with the sanctity of the inner service. This is the seal of "honor" that the Torah grants the priestly garments, since honor is the external expression of the hidden quality, as explained above. "You shall make clothes of sanctity for your brother Aharon, for honor and splendor."

F. The Honor of Torah These garments of honor are the thread that ties the priestly clothes to the honor of Torah. Chazal teach: "G-d would look in the Torah and create the world." (Bereishit Rabbah 1:2) Here our Sages taught us that before G-d designed the format of the world, He set up goals, and according to them He drafted a plan. This is like an architect, who designs the form of his building with pen and paper before beginning to build. The words of Torah; they are the architectural blueprint, according to which the world, with its array, was designed. Therefore, before each act of creation, "He looked in the Torah," and following it he formed His creatures. Thus, the words of Torah are the expression of the initial plan that led to and defined the final creation. This "thought," which found expression in the Torah, expresses the "honor" that is embedded in the Creation.

However, the words of Torah themselves are still covered with a heavy cloak of unclarity and concealment. We do not perceive the "honor" that is woven in its light without the deep toil of the oral Torah. This idea, the light that shines forth from the oral Torah, is found in another passage:

The light that G-d created on the first day, man could see with from one end of the world to the other. When G-d saw the generation of the flood and of the dispersal, and saw that their actions were spoiled, He went and hid it from them. (Chagiga 12a) Our Sages teach us that the hidden light that served during the six days of Creation was an intangible light, a spiritual light, a luminescence that penetrated to the depths of the physical, which lights up and reveals its nature and goals. It was a light that "man could see with from one end of the world to the other." However, people were not worthy of using it, and therefore it was hidden away. Elsewhere, our Sages identify where it was hidden: Where did He hide it? In the oral Torah. (Sefer Habahir) This Midrash enriches us with a new and deep appreciation of the involvement in Torah. Learning the oral Torah is built through a process of revealing. On its surface, the Torah is "entirely dark." (Midrash Tanchuma Noach #3) The sugya seems unclear and "dark," without resolution. The role of a person who toils in Torah is like the role of the priest who serves in the Temple: to uncover the inner light that is hidden in the darkness, and thereby to light the external darkness.

Thus, toil in the oral Torah is the primary means of revealing the light that is hidden in the Torah, which thereby lights up the goal of the entire Creation. Through this, "man sees from one end of the world to the other." The world, without the light of Torah is very dark and sealed. Its thick, physical outer layer covers and darkens, and "hides the Face." The holy Torah reveals the initial intention, the goals, the inherent sanctity; it reveals the blocked light. This is what we say: "Honor is nothing other than Torah," since, as we said, "honor" is the external expression of the hidden quality. However, the radiance of the light of Torah itself requires an act of "raising up," an act of striking stones so that the flame arises. This is, in fact, the goal of involvement in the toil of the oral Torah. This deep and difficult toil is that act of striking stones and igniting the flame. This is also the external form and way of expression of the oral Torah: great waves of thought which clash powerfully one against another; raging movement of thinking from the extremes of various logic – until achieving the spark of understanding that lights up the darkness of the sugya with a shining light. We now understand with a clear light the connection between "Honor is nothing other than Torah" and the holy garments that Aharon merited, "for honor and splendor." The two notions of "honor" serve as a garment for the same spiritual process. They are the two primary ways that break through the covering of the material and reveal the fundamental purpose of Creation. There is certainly no way that a person can stride forward in this service other than through the toil of clarifying the sugya. We now understand very well what we learn in the end of the opening Midrash: You find the same regarding Aharon. What does it say about him? "The teaching of truth was in his mouth." (Malachi 2:6) What did G-d say to Moshe? "You shall make garments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for honor and splendor." (Shemot 28:2) All this is in the merit of the Torah in which he toiled.

G. Yabetz We can now appreciate more the special honor accorded Yabetz, an honor that none of the generations before him achieved – "You do not find honor regarding any one of them, until Yabetz is reached." This is because Yabetz, as Chazal reveal elsewhere, is Otniel b. Knaz. Otniel's toil in Torah stands at the very root of revealing the light of Torah that is missing in the darkness: It is taught, 1700 kal vachomers, gezeirah shavas, and dikdukei sofrim were forgotten during the mourning period of Moshe, until Otniel b. Knaz got up and returned them through his pilpul. (Temurah 16a) This special manner of learning Torah, which was unknown during the days of light and clarity of Moshe, is what gave Otniel the level of "honor" which stands at the root of revealing the hidden treasures. This is also why R. Yochanan, the father of the oral Torah in his generation – called his clothes, "My honor." (Shabbat 103a)

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subject **Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tezaveh**

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tezaveh These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 627 -- Having Your Own Megillah. Good Shabbos!

Twisting The Word of Hashem Until We Believe We Are Righteous On Parshas Zachor, the Haftorah that we read is from Shmuel I Chapter 15. I find this story of Shmuel and Shaul to be one of the most compelling Haftorahs of the year. Shmuel told Shaul, in no uncertain terms, to wipe out

Amalek – man, woman, children, and animals, eradicating any memory of Amalek, in accordance with the Biblical command, as we read in the Maftir of Parshas Zachor.

Shaul returned to Shmuel and said: "Blessed are you to Hashem. I fulfilled the word of Hashem." [Pasuk 13] This is very perplexing statement given the fact that Shaul did not entirely fulfill Shmuel's explicit instructions. Shmuel immediately inquired about the sound of the sheep (indicating that Shaul did not fulfill the instructions to kill all the animals).

Shmuel further asks: "Why did you not obey the voice of Hashem? You rushed to the loot and did what was evil in the eyes of Hasehm." [Pasuk 19] Shaul then strangely responds: "But I heeded the voice of Hashem and I walked the path on which Hashem sent me..." [Pasuk 20] How do we understand this communication? Someone does not understand something over here. Shaul is not at all remorseful. He repetitively maintains his righteousness.

There are two approaches that we may take to answer this question. I saw one approach in the name of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik. This is a classic halachic response to the question. When Shmuel gave Shaul the orders regarding Amalek he said: "Destroy everything he has" (v'hacharamtem es kol asher lo) [Pasuk 3]. V'hacharamtem is a technical term meaning everything belonging to Amalek should be made into 'cherem' [forbidden property].

Rav Chaim explains that the only way property can be made 'cherem' is to first own it. One must first acquire the property before one can proclaim it 'cherem'. Shaul did not want to destroy all the property so he tried to circumvent the order. His method of circumvention was to be makdish [dedicate] the cattle to the Almighty. Once the cattle was hekdesh [sanctified to G-d], it no longer belonged to the people and therefore they could not make it 'cherem'.

This, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik explains, is the explanation of the dialog between Shmuel and Shaul. Shmuel said everything should be made into 'cherem'. Shaul explained that they saw the animals and thought it was a good idea to offer them as sacrifices, so they immediately sanctified them. Once they were the property of Heaven, they could no longer be destroyed. This is the "Brisker approach" to this issue.

The Baalei Mussar take another approach. The Navi says about Shaul "And he made war in the valley (va'yarev banachal) [Pasuk 5]. The Talmud says that Shaul argued based on the law of Eglah Arufah [the calf decapitated in a valley in the aftermath of an unsolved murder] -- that it was not in the spirit of Torah to wipe out man, woman, and child [Yoma 22b]. If the Torah is so concerned about a single person who is killed (as we see from the ritual of Eglah Arufah) -- that an offering must be brought, certainly it would not be the Will of G-d for me to wipe out Amalek including all their animals. It must be that the Will of G-d was to use the animals of Amalek to bring sacrifices.

This is a classic example of how we twist and turn the Word of Hashem into what suits us. The Dvar Hashem becomes what we think the Dvar Hashem is or what we expect the Dvar Hashem should be. That is why we can find such a disparate dialog between Shmuel and Shaul. This is how Shaul can, in the face of open evidence to the contrary, brazenly claim: "I have fulfilled the Word of G-d." According to the way he twisted things, this is precisely what he was doing.

We do it all the time. "This is what the Almighty really wants." We have the uncanny ability when debating what Torah law demands of us to come to the conclusion that the law is in fact what we want it to be. We twist and turn the Torah to our satisfaction until everything we do is not sin-free, but is actually a righteous fulfillment of the Word of Hashem.

Overcoming One's Good Inclination

I have always felt this Haftorah is a study of two personalities – that of Shmuel and that of Shaul. If we read the chapters leading up to this incident, we get a sense of the personality of Shaul. Shaul was the first king of Israel and he was a Tzadik the likes of which we will never become and

the likes of which we will never see. But in spite of that, he took actions, which for him were called mistakes.

When we are first introduced to Shaul, he is described as a "nechba el hakelim" [hidden among the baggage] [Shmuel I 10:22]. His most prominent characteristic is his modesty (anivus).

Samuel praised Shaul in front of the people: "Have you seen the one whom Hashem has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" The people shouted: "May the King Live!" But there were some base men who said "How can this person save us!" Scripture relates that they ridiculed him and did not bring him a tribute. But, nevertheless, Shaul remained mute (va'yehi k'macharish) [Shmuel I 10:27].

Under normal circumstances this would be admirable. Normally, it is praiseworthy to be amongst those who hear themselves being shamed but do not respond [Yoma 23a]. However, that is not the case for the King of Israel. Regarding the King of Israel, the law is that someone who acts rebellious towards, disobeys, or insults the king must be executed. Shaul was, first and foremost, a humble person and as such was not particular about his honor. However, he should have been particular about that honor.

Next, the people are gathered together about to go into battle. Shmuel HaNavi tells Shaul, "Wait for me. I will return in seven days and then together we will offer sacrifices." In an incident similar to Moshe not returning when the people were expecting him, which led to the making of the Golden Calf, Shmuel did not return exactly when he was expected. The people became impatient and urged Shaul to proceed without Shmuel. Shaul gives in to the pressure of the people. He offers the sacrifices without the presence of the prophet. Shmuel chastised him: "What have you done?" Shaul blames his action on the impatience of the people. Again it was his attribute of being overly modest that did not allow him to exert authority and dictate to the people the proper course of action.

Finally, our Haftorah contains a third example of this concept. When Shaul finally realized his sin, Shaul explains that the reason he spared the Amalek animals is because that is what the people wanted. Shmuel responds harshly to Shaul, "Even if you are small in your own eyes, you are the leader of the Tribes of Israel." This is not the time or place for modesty. True, that is your natural inclination and normally it is a good inclination, but your particular mission in life at this time is to rise above that. This mission was something Shaul failed to accomplish and as a result he was stripped of the monarchy.

On the other hand, at the end of the chapter, Shmuel asks that the King of Amalek be brought before him. Shaul had spared Agag King of Amalek and now he is brought in front of Shmuel. Agag, when brought before Shmuel proclaimed: "Truly the bitterness of death has passed" (Achen sar mar hamaves) [Pasuk 32].

Most commentaries interpret Agag's ambiguous remark to be a resignation to the fact that his time was now up. He no longer has to fear the bitterness of death because death was now upon him. However, the Ralbag interprets differently. The Ralbag says that Agag was saying the reverse. When he saw the Shmuel HaNavi, he proclaimed: "Now, I am spared. This is my lucky day. I am not going to be killed!"

The Ralbag explains that in encountering Shmuel's countenance, Agag was impressed with his great compassion and mercy. He said to himself "This man is the epitome of gentleness and kindness. Such a person will never kill me."

If one is old enough to remember how Rav Moshe Feinstein looked... Rav Moshe was a short man, less than five feet tall. He was the epitome of gentleness. Can one imagine that Rav Moshe Feinstein could ever pick up a sword and kill somebody? Think of Rav Pam – a short gentle man who exuded mercy. Picture this big brute Agag brought before Rav Pam and he Rav Pam supposed to be the executioner. Upon seeing his supposed executioner, the big brute might proclaim: "This is my lucky day." This is how Shmuel looked to Agag.

But Shmuel looked straight at Agag and proclaimed: "Just as your sword made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among the

women." "And Samuel split (vayeshasef) Agag before Hashem in Gilgal" [Pasuk 33]. The verb vayeshasef means he cut up Agag in four pieces. This gentle and frail prophet first cut Agag in half with a sword and then cut him again down the middle into four pieces.

What happened to Shmuel's gentleness? What happened to his compassion? This was the occasion in his life when his mission called for him to overcome his natural inclination. He had to act in a way that was different than he would normally be inclined to act. He had to go beyond who he was to satisfy G-d's Will.

Our purpose in this world is to do what we need to do, despite who we are. Shmuel met his challenge to do that. Shaul did not.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Shma Koleinu
Parshas Terumah-Tetzaveh Volume 10, Issue 16 11 Adar 5766 March 11, 2006

The Light of Torah Moshe Shulman

Parshas Tetzaveh begins "V'Yikchu Eilechah Shemen Zayis Zach..." "And they shall take for you pure olive oil."

The Gemara in Meseches Menachos (ד"ט) says "Amar Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nachmeini: 'Eilechah' V'Lo Li - Lo L'Orah Ani Tzarich". The pasuk says V'Yikchu Eilechah, take for yourself, but not V'Yikchu Li, take for me, as it does in the beginning of Parshas Terumah ("V'Yikchu Li Terumah") because Hashem does not need the light for himself.

It would seem that if the Menorah is not for the purpose of giving light to Hashem, it is for the purpose of giving light to the Kohanim in the Bais Hamikdash. If that is the case, why does Rashi in Beha'aloscha say that the Neiros all face inward? If the purpose of the menorah is to give light to the Kohanim the lights should face outward!

I would suggest an answer based on a thought by Harav Yechiel Michel Kossowsky that he wrote in his sefer Tosafos Harim. He suggests that V'Yikchu Eilechah is actually a command to apply the lessons of the Menorah to ourselves. B'nei Yisrael are compared to olive oil: Just like olive oil does not get absorbed into other liquids, B'nei Yisrael should not become absorbed into the other nations. The Torah is also compared to olive oil: Just like olive oil is the optimal source of physical light, the Torah is the greatest source of spiritual light. It is no coincidence that both the Torah and B'nei Yisrael are compared to olive oil. Only through the light of Torah can B'nei Yisrael remain separate from the general populace. Thus, the Menorah teaches us that we must remain a unique and separate nation by keeping the Torah.

from **Rabbi Josh Flug** <yutorah@yutorah.org> reply-to
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date Thu, Mar 5, 2009 at 9:06 AM subject B'Mesillat HaHalacha
#3 - **The Mitzvah of Megillah: Reading or Listening?**

The Mitzvah of Megillah: Reading or Listening?
Megillat Esther is read twice on Purim, once in the evening and once in the morning. While we often refer to this mitzvah as "the megillah reading," in reality, there are two possible ways to formulate this mitzvah. One possibility is to formulate it as a mitzvah to read the megillah. Although

only one person actually reads the megillah and everyone else listens, the principle of *shomei'a k'oneh* (the listener is like the responder) states that when one who listens to another person's recitation, the listener can be viewed as if he too is performing the recitation. In the case of megillah, one can potentially employ the principle of *shomei'a k'oneh* to achieve the result that everyone listening has read the megillah. Alternatively, one can formulate the mitzvah as a mitzvah to listen to the reading of the megillah. The *shomei'a k'oneh* principle is not necessary to fulfill the mitzvah. In this issue, we will explore both possibilities and provide some practical differences.

Applying *Shomei'a K'Oneh* to Reading the Megillah

The notion that the mitzvah is to read the megillah presents a fundamental conundrum. The Mishna, Megillah 17a, states that one can only fulfill the mitzvah by reading from a valid megillah. If there is a requirement for every person to actually read the megillah, how is it that the listeners fulfill the mitzvah through *shomei'a k'oneh*? Even if one grants that listeners the right to assume that it is as if they also recited the megillah, they nevertheless did not use a megillah for this recitation. How then can they fulfill the mitzvah in this manner?

R. Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz (1878-1953), Chazon Ish, Orach Chaim 29:3, deduces from this question that the principle of *shomei'a k'oneh* does not merely consider the listener as if he recited what he heard. Rather, the principle of *shomei'a k'oneh* allows the listener to receive the same benefits as the one performing the recitation. When the *ba'al korei* (recitor) reads the megillah, all of the listeners receive the same benefits and it is as if they too read from an actual megillah.

R. Ya'akov Y. Kanievsky (1899-1985), Kehillot Ya'akov, Pesachim no. 45, notes that if one doesn't want to accept R. Karelitz's expansive explanation of the concept of *shomei'a k'oneh*, one can simply conclude that the mitzvah of megillah doesn't necessitate *shomei'a k'oneh* and the mitzvah can be fulfilled simply by hearing someone else read the megillah. However, R. Kanievsky notes that even if the mitzvah is to read the megillah, one can employ *shomei'a k'oneh* without using R. Karelitz's expansion. He suggests that the mitzvah is not necessarily to read the megillah, but rather to recite the words as they are written in the megillah. As long as the recitation is not performed using an invalid scroll or one's memory as the conduit, one can fulfill the mitzvah. Therefore, when one hears the words as they are read from the megillah, one can fulfill the mitzvah of reading the megillah without having an actual megillah. [R. Kanievsky develops this idea in Kitvei Kehillot Ya'akov, Rosh HaShanah no. 130. He admits that this concept is difficult to explain in writing.]

Do Men and Women Have Different Obligations?

There is a comment of R. Yehudai Gaon (8th century) that sheds light on the question of the nature of the mitzvah of megillah. R. Yehudai Gaon, Halachot Gedolot, Hilchot Megillah, writes that women and children are not required to read the megillah, but they are required to listen to the megillah. Tosafot, Megillah 4a, s.v. *Nashim*, note that according to R. Yehudai Gaon, a woman cannot read on behalf of a man because a man's obligation is to read the megillah and a woman's obligation is to listen to the megillah. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 689:2, cites the opinion that a woman cannot read on behalf of a man. [Shulchan Aruch implies that that we follow the opinion of Rashi, Erchin 3a, s.v. *L'Atuyei* that a woman may read the megillah on behalf of a man (see *Be'er HaGolah ad loc.*). Nevertheless, some of the sources cited in this section imply that R. Yehudai Gaon's position is the accepted position.]

R. Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter (1847-1905), Sefat Emet, Megillah 4a, s.v. *Af*, explains the opinion of R. Yehudai Gaon that in principle, women should be exempt from megillah because it is a time bound positive commandment, which women are generally exempt from. However, because women were beneficiaries of the miracle of Purim, the rabbis instituted for them an independent obligation to listen to the megillah. Because the impetus for the obligation is different, the nature of the obligation is different as well.

There are a number of practical differences between a man's obligation to read the megillah and a woman's obligation to listen to the megillah. First, Rama, Orach Chaim 689:2, (based on Mordechai, Megillah no. 779) writes that if a woman reads the megillah for herself, she does not recite the standard beracha of "*al mikra megillah*" (on reading the megillah), but rather she recites "*lishmo'a megillah*" (to listen to the megillah).

Second, Mordechai op. cit., cites R. Eliezer ben Yoel (Ra'aviah, 13th century) who questions whether a child can read on behalf of a woman. R. Shmuel Rozofsky (20th century), (printed in *Zichron Shmuel* no. 20) explains that normally a child is not inherently obligated to perform mitzvot and his obligation is only a function of his father's obligation to train him. Therefore, a child cannot perform any recitations on behalf of adults. Nevertheless, regarding the mitzvah of megillah, it is arguable that the child's obligation is not merely a result of his father's obligation to train him, but rather as a result of the fact that children were direct beneficiaries of the miracle of Purim. For this reason, Ra'aviah questions the nature of the child's obligation. If the child's obligation is merely for training purposes, he cannot read on behalf of an adult. However, if the child's obligation is an inherent obligation due to the fact that children were beneficiaries of the miracle, he would be able to read on behalf of adults. Since an obligation based on the fact that they were beneficiaries of the miracle would only produce an obligation to listen to the megillah and not to read the megillah, a child can only read on behalf of an adult woman who also has an obligation to listen to the megillah. He cannot read on behalf of an adult man who has an obligation to read the megillah.

Third, R. Yosef Y. Ostreicher (a 15th century student of R. Yisrael Isserlin), *Leket Yosher* pp. 155-156, writes that if a woman listening to the megillah misses a few words of the reading, she nevertheless fulfills the mitzvah. He explains that if the obligation is to read the megillah, one must read every word and those who fulfill the mitzvah through *shomei'a k'oneh* must hear every word. However, a woman's obligation is only to listen to the reading of the megillah and therefore, she fulfills the mitzvah even if she doesn't hear every word. This suggestion doesn't seem to be codified by Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries. (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 690:12 and Mishna Berurah 689:1)

Can a Deaf Person Read the Megillah?

The Gemara, Megillah 19b, raises the question of whether a deaf person may read the megillah. The Gemara notes R. Yosi's opinion that one can only fulfill a mitzvah that requires recitation if he hears the words that he is saying. The Gemara states that according to R. Yosi, a deaf person is exempt from the mitzvah of megillah and therefore, cannot read it on behalf of other people. The Gemara also notes the opinion of R. Yehuda that the reading is valid even if the words are not heard by the reader and questions whether one can fulfill the mitzvah in the ideal state (*l'chatchilah*) in this situation according to R. Yehuda.

R. Yosef Karo's version of Rambam, Hilchot Megillah 1:2, as cited in Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim no. 689, states that a deaf person is exempt from reading the megillah and he cannot read on behalf of others. This implies that he follows the opinion of R. Yosi. [Our version of Hilchot Megillah does not mention a deaf person.] Yet, Rambam, Hilchot K'riat Sh'ma 2:8, rules that one can fulfill the mitzvah of K'riat Sh'ma even if one does not hear the words that he is saying. This implies that he does not follow the opinion of R. Yosi.

Beit Yosef resolves the apparent contradiction by suggesting that the mitzvah of megillah has a higher standard because one of the components of the mitzvah is to publicize the miracle (*pirsumei nisa*). Therefore, one must actually hear the words of the megillah and reading the megillah is not sufficient. R. Kanievsky, Kehillot Ya'akov, Megillah no. 4, explains that according to Beit Yosef, one must conclude that men have two obligations: to read the megillah and to hear the reading of the megillah. If one reads the megillah but doesn't hear what he is reading, he does not fulfill part of the obligation and therefore, cannot read on behalf of others. B'Mesilat HaHalacha, authored by Rabbi Josh Flug, is a project of YUTorah.org, in

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Thu, Mar 5, 2009 at 10:59 AM subject [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah-- Titzaveh/Zachor 5769

Prologue: It is a most personal Mitzva. Remember what Amalek did to YOU. Recall it, experience it and be prepared to obliterate the Amalekite name from the world. And, as such, we read Parshat Zachor once a year. But why is the command given to the individual? Why does the Torah not recall what Amalek did to the collective (Lachem) Jewish nation and choose to focus on the personal attack (Asher Asa Lecha)? After all, wasn't Amalek's deed one that affected the entire nation?

Rav Yitzchak Meir of Gur once noted that the difference between Lecha and Lachem is the group you find yourself in. When a person is in a strong group committed to strong Jewish values, then it is difficult to pull him out and attack him. When threats to the Jewish soul have lingered, they have begun by attacking the fringe, those members of the community who feel that they do not belong. When a person was within the Israelite camp, he was protected from Amalek by the Ananim and by the people he was with. When he was alone, he was open to attack.

The lesson of Amalek is one that cuts to the heart of the Jewish community. When we reach in and unite with our people then our whole is greater than the sum of its parts and we are indestructible. However, when we use an exclusionary policy of relating, we lose those on the fringe. Hence, the antidote to Amalek is Purim. When Amalek attacks, we declare, as Esther did, Leich Knos Et KOL HaYehudim, gather all Jews together, even the ones who do not normally come to Shul. We respond with gifts to one another and to the poor in order to bring our community closer together. When we stand united we are strong. When divided, we might not be able to withstand the fall.

Women and Zachor

In one of the most interesting debates in Jewish law, the Rabbis differed as to whether women have an obligation to hear the Parsha of Zachor or not. As this week is Shabbos Zachor, it would be appropriate to review the mixed opinions.

The Sefer Hachinuch (Mitzva 603) notes that women are not obligated in the Mitzva of Zachor as they are not the ones who regularly go to war. Thus, if they are not obligated to obliterate Amalek, their role in Zechira, in remembering is unnecessary. The Minchas Chinuch challenges the comparison of the Mitzva of Zachor to the issue of wiping out Amalek. As he exclaims: "who revealed (to the Sefer Hachinuch) the secret of Hashem that the whole purpose of the Mitzva of Zachor is due to the command to obliterate Amalek?" Perhaps these are two separate distinct Mitzvos with different obligations. (In truth though, the Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos, 189) notes that the Mitzva of Zechira is to arouse the people through words in order to fight the battle with Amalek.)

The Minchas Chinuch further questions whether women would not fight the Amalek battle. After all, the battle with Amalek is a Mitzva and when it comes to a Milchemes Mitzva (a war predicated on a Mitzva) even a Kalla must leave the Chuppah, implying that women too, have a role in such a war (See Rambam Hil. Melachim, 7:4; Shut Avnei Nezer, O.C. 509) thus obligating them in the Zachor part as well?

The Radvaz (Hil. Melachim 7:4) notes that women are also exempt from Milchemes Mitzva. When the Talmud tells us that the Kalla also leaves the Chuppah for a Milchemes Mitzva what the Gemara wants us to know is that the Chosson is not exempt from the war. Once he leaves to battle, why should a Kalla stay under the Chuppah? Moreover, Rashash (Sotah 44b) suggests that even a Kalla would work KP duty to feed her husband even if he went to war during the Sheva Berachos. However, one still has no proof that women are obligated to obliterate Amalek.

Shut Toras Chessed (37) examines whether women should be exempt from Parshas Zachor for a different reason. Namely, Zachor is a time-bound positive commandment (Mitzvas Aseh SheHaZman Gramma) and perhaps women should be exempt on those grounds. He entertains this possibility and concludes that for whatever reason, "we never heard or have seen women come to Shul to hear Parshas Zachor."

The Torah sage, Maran HaGaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita (Taama D'kra) notes that according to the Chazon Ish, women are exempt from the commandment. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Kovetz Kol Torah, Nissan 5763) too, is quoted as being of the opinion that women were not obligated to hear Zachor.

At the same time, the Minchas Chinuch obligates women to hear Parshas Zachor. The Aruch LaNer (Shut Binyan Tzion II: 8) too, quotes Rabbi Nossan Adler who held that the women in his home had to go to Shul to hear Parshas Zachor. Dayan Weiss (Shut Minchas Yitzchak IX:68) notes that the majority of Poskim feel women should hear the reading. (It remains unclear how he came to the definition of majority in this matter.)

Maharil Diskin (Shut Maharil Diskin Kuntrus Acharon, note 102) felt that there were two reasons why women should be obligated in Zachor. The first reason was that the Mitzva of remembering is NOT time bound. The Rabbis merely established this Shabbos as the one within which to fulfill the obligation. Additionally, he argued that women were included in the Amalek attack. Therefore they should be included in the obligating obligation. Maran Hagaon Harav Asher Weiss Shlita (Kuntres Minchas Asher, Titzaveh, 5769) challenges both arguments: To the point about the timing of the obligation, Rav Weiss argues that although the women might be obligated in Zachor (the act of remembering) they should be exempt from hearing this parsha this week in shul because that aspect is a Mitzvas Aseh SheHazman Gramma. To the second point, he notes that although women were included in the intent of Amalek, this does not obligate them in Zachor. After all, women also benefited from the Ananei HaKavod yet they are exempt from the obligation of sitting in the Sukkah. Still, Rav Weiss concedes, the Minhag in Yirushalayim is that women do go to Shul to hear Zachor probably as a tribute to the Psak of Maharil Diskin who was one of Yirushalayim's Poskim.

Rav Weiss adds that in his opinion, it is better for women to come to Shul to hear Zachor together with the men since there are many Poskim who hold that they are not obligated and if so, it is better not to remove a Sefer Torah without purpose. To be Chosheish for both sides of this debate, the women's hearing the Kriya in Shul assists in not obligating the removal of a Sefer Torah an additional time.

Shabbat Shalom Purim Sameach

from **Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein**

<info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to info@jewishdestiny.com to internetparshasheet@gmail.com date Tue, Mar 3, 2009 at 4:08 PM subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein - Parshas Tetzaveh

Rabbi Wein

Tetzave In the times of the Mishkan (four centuries worth) and then in the times of the First Temple (another four centuries) the High Priest of Israel was installed by being anointed with the holy oil prepared by Moshe in the desert as described in this week's parsha.

The kings of Judah were also anointed and inducted into office in the times

of Samuel and later prophets by the use of this holy oil. In Psalms, King David makes reference to this means of induction into holy office in his reference to the visage of Aharon and his countenance and beard. In Second Temple times this container of holy oil prepared by Moshe was no longer available. No substitute was ever prepared. So the Talmud teaches us that the induction of the priests in those Second Temple times (also approximately four centuries) was by the means of officially dressing the priests in their vestments and garments. Also it was observed that their service in the Temple also served as an official induction to their tasks. So to speak, doing the job made one worthy of being appointed to fulfill that role. Thus, even though the holy oil of Moshe was no longer present the Torah tradition had provided for alternate methods of consecrating the priests to their official tasks in the Temple. The people of Israel certainly longed for the return of the oil of Moshe but it was not in itself – indeed as the Temple itself was also not - critical for Jewish survival and vitality. Every person has something to contribute to human life and civilization. There are those who are fortunate enough that this becomes a holy calling, anointed so to speak by the oil of Moshe. In First Temple times these people were identifiable by their relationship to the prophets of Israel and to the experience of prophecy itself. In Second Temple times this gift of prophecy was no longer present in Jewish society. So, people were called to higher service in the Temple by donning the special and holy uniform, if you will, of the priesthood. Yet the Talmud teaches us that one also became consecrated to the holy task of service in the Temple by basically and actually working at the task of service and holiness in the Temple. To paraphrase a gross commercial advertisement of current times, the Torah taught us that the way to do it was to just do it. The Torah is therefore a series of laws – commandments and activities that require performance and behavior on our part. We no longer have supernatural means of sanctifying ourselves to God's service. The oil of Moshe has been hidden away from us. Nor do we have any official garb or vestments that grant us the mark of holiness and service to G-d and man, all reports and mores to the contrary notwithstanding. But we retain the ability to just do it – to behave in a holy and exalted fashion and to adopt the yoke of service to G-d and man upon ourselves. The ability to consecrate ourselves to that service has never been diminished or taken away from us. The results are up to us. Shabat shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum – Parshas Tetzaveh

PARSHAS TETZAVEH You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory/honor and splendor/beauty. (28:2) Our parsha addresses: the preparation of the Kohanim to serve in the Mishkan; their vestments; the initiation process they would have to undergo prior to serving; and the unique sacrifices they were to offer. The artisans that crafted the vestments of the Kohanim were commanded to prepare garments that would lend both honor and beauty to its wearers. Indeed, honor and beauty seem to be extremely valued ingredients as far as the Divine service is concerned. One wonders about this. It is almost incongruous with the spirit of the Torah. The duality of honor and glory are qualities which can, and often do, catalyze one's downfall. Does the Tanna

in Pirkei Avos 4:21 not declare, "Jealousy, desire and honor, remove a person from the world"? Torah achievement requires humility. One who thinks of his own significance leaves no room for the Torah. Indeed, when the Torah lauds Moshe Rabbeinu - Klal Yisrael's quintessential leader - the one through whom Hashem gave the Torah, the individual whose wisdom was beyond our ken to describe, it focuses on his humility. He is praised not for all of his other remarkable qualities, but, rather, for his humility. "And the man, Moshe, was exceedingly humble among all other men on the face of the earth" (Bamidbar 12:3).

Beauty is also a quality which seems alien to Torah. After all, Torah concerns itself with content, while beauty venerates form. Torah focuses on the penimius, internal, essence of a subject, while beauty is external. This does not preclude the positive significance of form or external beauty, but it clearly is not a priority in prioritizing Jewish values.

Horav Aharon Soloveitchik, zl, explains that by emphasizing that the Priestly vestments feature the two qualities of honor and beauty, the Torah is teaching us that they do, in fact, have a place in our lives. It all depends on their source and how they are used. Honor is a destructive force if its source is selfishness, if it prevents one from giving honor and recognition to others. On the other hand, honor which is derived because one is created in Hashem's image is not only good - it is vital. Indeed, a life replete in dignity is dependent upon the principle that we are all created in the image of G-d. This form of honor engenders self-esteem. When a person has self-respect, dignity and pride, he responds to others in the same manner. Mutual respect is the mortar that keeps relationships going. This is especially true among husband and wife and extremely important in the parent-child relationship.

Beauty plays an equally significant role in Jewish life. The Bais Hamikdash was an edifice in which beauty was manifest in its every aspect and detail. The Torah was well aware that eye appeal has a dominant role in generating heart appeal. In addition, as the Gaon, zl, m'Vilna notes, the Torah sees fit to relate that the Imahos, Matriarchs, were physically attractive. When Shlomo Hamelech writes in Sefer Mishlei (31:30) that hevel ha'yofi, "beauty is vain," he is referring to beauty devoid of morality, something which contemporary society has blatantly ignored.

The Torah's attitude toward beauty is expressed in the Shirah (Shemos 15:2): Zeh Keili v'anveihu, "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him." Chazal have broken the word v'anveihu in two and derived ani v'Hu, I and He. This means that we are enjoined to emulate Hashem; just as He is merciful and compassionate, so must I be likewise merciful and compassionate. Real beauty is comprised of following in Hashem's ways and, thus, goes hand in hand with sanctity.

The Bigdei Kehunah incorporated both honor and beauty. They inspired both their wearer and their spectator with a harmonious blend of honor and beauty, representing the intrinsic and extrinsic values integral toward a life of sanctity, a life dedicated to the spirit.

It must be on Aharon in order to minister. Its sound should be heard when he enters the Sanctuary before Hashem and when he leaves. (28:35)

Each of the Bigdei Kehunah, Priestly vestments, atoned for sin. The Talmud Yerushalmi Yoma 87:3 tells us that the Paamonim, Bells, of the Me'il, Robe, atoned for rotzeach b'shogeig, unintentional murderer. What do bells have in common with murder that they would grant them atonement power?

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, explains that it all depends upon one's perspective on life and the various situations he confronts on a regular basis. Whereas man is given to rationalize, to justify and validate every occurrence as falling under the realm of "coincidence," "chance," "luck," or in modern-day vernacular - "it just happens." Thus, the Torah's perspective on inadvertent murder-- or inadvertent "anything," for that matter-- differs from the prevailing perception adopted by society.

An inadvertent killing-- although clearly unintentional and with no malice aforethought-- in the Torah's perspective still reflects a lack of concern for a fellow man. There is some form of taint, a deficiency in some miniscule manner, which is evident to Hashem. It must be corrected. It must be

purged. Regrettably, the lesson has severe consequences for everybody involved. Man was created b'tzelem Elokim, "in the image of G-d," and, thus, justly demands a certain element of respect and consideration for no other reason than the fact that he respects the image of Hashem. Any act that indicates a lack of concern for another human is the result of our own deficiency in recognizing what man represents.

In atoning for this absence of concern, one must increase his own concern for his fellow man. The bells gave forth a sound that heralded the coming and going of the Kohen Gadol. This was an expression of respect for a fellow being. By wearing the Me'il during the service, the Kohen Gadol was reminding the people of the importance of respecting a fellow tzelem Elokim. Through this, he added recognition and achieved atonement.

The Rosh Yeshivah exhorts us to delve into what each human being represents. Apparently, Hashem felt him worthy of being created. Who are we to ignore Hashem's representative, especially when our own claim to fame is also based on the fact that we are created b'tzelem Elokim? While murder of any sort is the farthest thing from the minds of most people, respect and concern for our fellow man regrettably may also be an alien idea. How often does our lack of concern impinge upon someone else's self-image? When we realize what every member of the human race represents, our respect for them and, consequently, ourselves, will increase to no end.

For Bnei Aharon you shall make Tunics...make them for glory and splendor. (28:40)

Chazal speak of the spiritual symbolism of the individual vestments of both the Kohen Gadol, High Priest, and the ordinary Kohanim. In addition, in the Talmud Arachin 16A, Chazal explain the juxtaposition of the Bigdei Kehunah, Priestly Vestments, on the korbanos, animal offerings. This teaches us that just as the Korbanos atoned for the sins of Klal Yisrael, so, too, do the vestments achieve atonement. How do the vestments achieve atonement? What about the vestments carries the power of atonement?

Horav Tuvia Lisitzen, zl, puts it very simply: They increase kavod Shomayim, the honor of Heaven. Therefore, they have the power to atone. When one creates or increases kavod Shomayim, he merits great things. Eglon, the king of Moav, was a pagan. Yet, when Ahud told him, "Hashem spoke to me concerning you," Eglon rose from his throne out of respect for Hashem's Name. As a result, he merited to be the progenitor of Rus and, consequently, the Davidic dynasty. Nevuchadnezer, who was far from being a saint, jumped four steps out of respect for Hashem.. Because of this display of kavod Shomayim, he merited to become King of Bavel and the most powerful ruler in the world at the time.

Through the wearing of the Bigdei Kehunah, people will be inspired and kavod Shomayim will be increased. Thus, the vestments are vehicles for kavod Shomayim. Therefore, they are like korbanos and have the power to atone. This should serve as a powerful lesson for us. We look for segulos, remedies, and z'chusim, merits. Why not try increasing kavod Shomayim? Surely, creating a decline in kavod Shomayim will not earn us any positive remuneration.

This is the thing which you shall do for them to sanctify them to minister for Me. (29:1)

Regarding the various offerings that were brought to inaugurate the Kohanim and the Mishkan, the Torah writes, "This is the thing which you shall do for them." The Midrash cites a pasuk from Tehillim 119:89, L'Olam Hashem devarcha nitzav baShomayim, "Forever, G-d, Your words stand in the Heavens." This is interpreted as: Just as You are the truth, so is Your word. Just as Hashem originally "spoke" and, as a result, the Heavens were created, likewise the "word" which He spoke to sanctify Aharon and his sons remains everlasting. This is the meaning of, "This is the thing," indicating permanence. What is the Midrash attempting to explain? It seems to be going to great lengths to explain what appears to be an innocuous phrase, V'zeh ha'davar, "This is the thing."

The Shem MiShmuel cites the pasuk at the beginning of Parashas Mattos concerning nedarim, vows. The Torah uses a similar phrase as it does here. "Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael, saying, Zeh ha'davar, "This is the thing which Hashem has commanded" (Bamidbar 30:2). Rashi explains the use of the phrase, "This is the thing." Moshe Rabbeinu prophesied with the introductory phrase, Koh amar Hashem, "Thus says G-d," as did the other prophets. Moshe, however, added to the prophecy, "This is the thing." In other words, Moshe's use of the phrase, "This is the thing," adds something to his prophecy which distinguishes it from the prophecy of other Neviim, prophets. What is it?

The Maharal m'Prague explains that Moshe's level of prophecy was unlike that of other Neviim, in that he experienced the ultimate level of prophecy which enabled him to be the medium through which the Torah was given to Klal Yisrael. Qualitatively, Moshe's prophecy was perpetual; the laws of the Torah are permanent and unalterable, whereas the other prophets saw visions pertaining to the moment at hand or to a specific time frame. This contrast is reflected in the phrase, "This is the thing," unlike, "Thus says G-d," which denotes something essential, but impermanent, it refers to something that is immutable and enduring.

With the Maharal's exposition in mind, the Shem MiShmuel explains the difficulty experienced by our original Midrash. The instructions regarding the Kohanim's investiture is introduced with the phrase, "This is the thing," which indicates permanence. The Kohanim's inauguration, however, was a one-time event never to be repeated by future generations. Why is this phrase used? Therefore, the Midrash teaches us that while the actual investiture was a one time deal, the phrase, "this is the thing," is a reference instead to the kedushah of Aharon and his descendants. The kedushah of the Kehunah, Priesthood, is something permanent which continues on today. It is part of the fiber of Klal Yisrael.

In what seems to be an unrelated Midrash, Chazal once again expound on the pasuk, "This is the thing." The Navi Hoshea (14:3) says, Kechu imachem devarim, v'shuvu el Hashem, "Take with you words and return to G-d." This seminal pasuk serves as the paradigm for teshuvah, repentance/return to Hashem. The Midrash explains: What is it that Hashem really wants? "Words" - the pasuk replies. And what are the "words," if not Torah? Klal Yisrael responds to Hashem, "But we do not know how to learn the Torah." Hashem says to them, "Cry and pray before Me, and I will accept you."

Here again there is apparently no connection between the Midrash with the pasuk it is supposed to elucidate. The Midrash is addressing teshuvah, while the pasuk is directed towards the Kohanim's investiture. Once again, the Shem MiShmuel feels that the connection between teshuvah and the Kohanim's inauguration revolves around the phrase, "This is the thing," in Parashas Mattos which we mentioned earlier. This time, however, the Midrash asserts a totally different type of answer. It suggests that while the Kohanim's investiture was a one-time event, the underlying concept which permitted it to occur is everlasting. In order to take Aharon and his sons whom heretofore had been "ordinary" Jews and transform them into Kohanim, investing them with the holiness inherent in serving in the Bais Hamikdash, it was necessary that they begin anew, with a fresh, untrod focus and aim to their lives. Their past was abrogated; it no longer existed. This was new, unspoiled ground.

This underscores the idea of teshuvah: a person, however distant from where he should be, can at anytime review his lifestyle and make a new commitment to begin afresh on the correct road to spiritual achievement. This is the meaning of, "This is the thing," in the pasuk - that a new start is always possible, just as it was for the Kohanim in the wilderness.

Teshuvah is an experience in which the individual is transformed into a new person - with no ties to his past. The Shem MiShmuel cites Horav Bunim, zl, m'Peshischa who describes teshuvah as not being a patch that seals or conceals his spiritual defect, but rather, as a person who falls off a roof smashing all of his bones. When a person makes a tear in his garment, which he subsequently patches, the garment continues to retain its original

identity, except that now it has a patch. With teshuvah one does not just patch over the problems, gloss over the issues and error of his ways. One actually confronts his inconsistencies in observance, his lack of faith, his deficiency in commitment and decides to make a fresh start. The word "you" is gone. It is a time for a fresh start, an opportunity for rebirth and rejuvenation, after which we disregard our past experiences. This is like a man who has fallen off a roof, shattered his entire body, and has nothing useful remaining. Given that teshuvah functions as a regeneration, similar to the experience sustained by Aharon and his sons, who, in midlife, began anew a life of Divine service. This denovo experience carries with it the same properties that give function to teshuvah.

This is the meaning of the Navi Hoshea's enjoinder to, "Take with you words and return to G-d." "These words" refer to the words of Torah, because Torah has the capacity to empower its students with renewed energy and vigor and the possibility of rebirth. Torah is a constant gift which keeps on giving as it helps the individual renew his spiritual self. Now that this has been established - that teshuvah has the power to transform a person, to sever his relationship with the past, we wonder why it functions this way. What is there about teshuvah that catalyzes such a transformation?

Apparently, this is the unique power of teshuvah. Unlike any other concept, it maintains the power of change. It wipes clean the slate of the past. Veritably, it really has to be this way. If a person were relegated to worrying constantly about his past, his errors and sins, both inadvertent and intentional, teshuvah would be a difficult step to take. He would never really feel cleansed.

Perhaps another aspect to this transformation eludes us. Each and every person is created with enormous potential. Regrettably, most of us never realize the enormity of our potential and, thus, live a life which, in comparison to the reality of what we could have been, is mediocre and, in some cases, radically inferior. Therefore, when we take advantage of the medium of teshuvah, we are actually returning to our real selves, realizing our G-d given capacity. It is not as if we are being transformed to a new person. We are becoming ourselves - the real creation that Hashem intends us to be.

Hashem has an image of what He expects each of us to be. Our goal must be to strive to attain that goal. While we probably will not achieve it, we certainly will not if we do not even try. At every juncture, we must ask ourselves a serious question: Are we going in the direction that Hashem has ordained for us, or are we just trying to satisfy ourselves, our parents, our spouses? In his youth, the great gaon and Rosh Yeshivah of Volozhin, Horav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, zl, the venerable Netziv, was anything but a gaon. He related the remarkable transformation that took place in his life at a seudah, festive meal, in honor of the completion of his magnum opus, his commentary on the Sheiltos V'Rav Achai Gaon, the Haamek Shaalah. He explained the reason for his universal display of joy: "When I was a young boy of nine years, I overheard my father and mother speaking about me. 'What will be with our Naftali?' my father asked. 'We have provided him with a number of the finest rebbeim, truly skilled Torah scholars, to no avail. He just does not seem to be interested. I think the time has come to teach him a trade. We should apprentice him either to the shoemaker or the tailor!'"

"When I heard this," the Netziv continued, "I was heartbroken. My father was giving up on me. How could this happen to me? I began to cry bitterly. I then made up my mind that nothing - absolutely nothing - would stand in my way of achieving my maximum. I was prepared to study diligently with the goal of becoming a talmid chacham, Torah scholar. This sefer is the fruit of my labor, the realization of my goal."

"Imagine," continued the Netziv, "had I not reacted promptly and positively, had I not wept, what would have become of me? I would have become a frum baal ha'bays, an observant layman. So, what is wrong with that? I would go to shul, earn an honest living, and study Torah at night. I would remain true to my heritage. What could be so bad?"

"Veritably, there is nothing wrong with such a scenario. When I would stand before the Heavenly Tribunal, however, they would say to me, 'Naftali, Naftali, you were a good Jew. But, what about your purpose in life? Were you sent down to become a craftsman? Do you realize that you could have authored the Haamek Shaalah? Yes, you lived a fine, decent life, but did you realize your potential?'"

"Now you understand why this siyum means so much to me."

Each of us is judged accordingly: according to what we are - and according to what we should and could have become. The Alter, zl, m'Slabodka was once standing by his study window looking out at the street. He motioned his student, Horav Yitzchak Aizik Sher, zl, to come over and look out of the window. "Look outside and see the large cemetery before your eyes," the Alter said. "You might think that the cemetery is situated on the outskirts of town. What can a public thoroughfare have to do with a cemetery? There are people moving back and forth, people with incredible potential for distinction in Torah. Alas, they were "inspired" to choose another field of endeavor. As a result, do you know what is written above this person? 'Here lies the great saint and scholar; here lies the great rosh yeshivah; the great rav!' His epitaph accompanies him through the street, throughout his life! There is, however, one difference between the cemetery on the outskirts of the city and the one in front of our eyes. There, they bury only dead people. Here, they bury live ones!" The above story is powerful. I know that there might be those who might feel that perhaps I went too far, that I am expecting too much. If it will enable one parent to make a more cogent decision concerning his son's future - it will have been well worth it.

Va'ani Tefillah Tehillas Hashem yedaber pi, v'yevarech kol basar shem Kadsho May my mouth declare the praise of Hashem, and may all flesh bless His Name.

The Jew's purpose in life is to increase kavod Shomayim, the honor of Heaven. The gentile world's level of virtue and the depth of their perception of Hashem's guidance of this world are commensurate with the Jew's fulfillment of his global purpose in life. The Sefas Emes, thus, explains the pasuk. According to the level of Tehillas Hashem yedaber pi, commensurate with how much we declare the praise of Hashem will be the v'yavereich kol basar shem kadsho; all other people of the world bless His name. In other words, it is up to us to engender Hashem's praise in the world.

The Sefas Emes interprets this idea into the pasuk in Yirmiyahu 10:25, "Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that know You not, and upon the families that do not call out in Your Name, for they have consumed Yaakov - they have consumed and annihilated him - and have devastated his abode." As long as we had a Bais Hamikdash, even the gentile nations understood the concept of calling out in Hashem's Name. The Revelation of His glory was evident and palpable. Now, that they have destroyed everything that Klal Yisrael once had, they no longer understand Who Hashem is. Due to their own actions in destroying our Bais Hamikdash, they no longer merit to acknowledge Hashem. Therefore, they deserve Hashem's wrath.

I'zechar nishmas ha'isha ha'chashuva Glicka bas R' Avraham Alter a"h nifteres 8 Adar II 5760 In loving memory of MRS. GLIKA SCHEINBAUM BOGEN by her family