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Parshat Tetzaveh

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Mr. Jack Kahn ז"ל יעקב בן ברוך ז"ל

The Bells of the Kohen Gadol

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

You shall make the robe of the ephod of pure blue....On its hem make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all around the hem, with bells of gold between them all around... Aaron shall wear it while officiating, so that the sound of it is heard when he comes into the sanctuary before the Lord and when he goes out—that he may not die. (Shemot 28:31-5, JPS translation)

The corners of Aharon's *me'il* were adorned with golden bells. The sound that emerged from these bells ensured that "he" would not die. Who was this person, and how did the ringing of the bells function to save his life?

A Technical Requirement

Rashi assumes that there was nothing unique about the bells. Rather, the Torah is simply warning that any *kohen gadol* who would enter without all the *bigdei kehunah* (obligatory vestments of the priests), would be deserving of death.

A Warning for Others

Rashbam assumes that the bells would warn all the other *kohanim* from being present when the *kohen gadol* would enter the *Kodesh* on his way to the *Kodesh HaKodashim* on Yom Kippur. He connects this to the prohibition for any *kohen* to be present at that time, as recorded in Vayikra 16:17. But there are several problems with this interpretation. First, the *kohen gadol* did not wear his *me'il* at these times, as he only wore the *begadim levanim*, white garments during these services. Second, it would

be strange for the bells to be an integral part of the garments of the *kohen gadol* all year to ensure that he would be heard at the one time a year he needed to be alone.

A Doorbell

Many commentators assume that the bells were there to protect the *kohen gadol*. They prevented him from deserving death, by ensuring that he performed the service properly. Some, following Vayikra Rabbah (21:8) assume that the function of the bells was that of a doorbell. It is rude for a human being to enter his friend's house without knocking or ringing the doorbell; similarly, the *kohen gadol* needed to announce his entry towards the *kodesh hakodashim*. Ramban adds that the bells alerted the angels to accompany the *kohen gadol* to protect him.

A Personal Alert

However, Ralbag and Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenberg (HaKtav V'haKabbalah) argue differently, within the view that the bells protect the *kohen gadol*. The service in the Temple - on Yom Kippur or anytime - required the highest level of concentration. Anything less would be an affront to G-d. Even the *kohen gadol* needs to be reminded to orient his thoughts towards G-d. Thus, the bells would remind him to focus.

Rabbi Mecklenberg strikingly compares this to *tzitzit*. The Torah commands us to wear *tzitzit*, so that the very sight of the blue on the *tzitzit* will remind us of G-d (by reminding of the sea, sky, and eventually Heaven). The Talmud (Menachot 44a) records the story of a

Torah student who held himself back from succumbing to immoral temptation because his *tzitzit* hit him in the face. Modern psychologists have done numerous studies showing how even thinking about the existence of the Ten Commandments, or any other moral code, is often enough to stop people from sinning. Professor Dan Ariely has noted that the Talmud was one of the first texts to understand the power of such reminders. In another talmudic passage (Avodah Zarah 17a), R' Elazar ben Durdaya was prevented from sinning when he was shaken from his blind desire by a rebuke triggered by a foul smell. Rabbi Mecklenberg assumes that hearing the bells was supposed to do the same for the *kohen gadol*.

This analysis points to two important points. The first, is that often we want to do the proper thing, but we are caught up either by desire, or in the case of the *kohen gadol*, by simple mindlessness. However, all it would take to re-orient ourselves would be a slight reminder. Every sense can be used to focus us on G-d - whether it be our visual, audial, or olfactory senses. The second point is that no matter how great a person might be, he can be swept up in the same distractions as anyone else. Thus, even the *kohen gadol* needs his own reminders.

While the Torah established many such reminders, we need to be open to this message, and if necessary, to set up our own reminders, to ensure that we follow the path that we know, deep down, we really want to pursue.

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Summary

Yehoshua calls to the tribes of Reuven and Gad, and part of the tribe of Menasheh, and commends them for abiding by Moshe's instructions that they assist the rest of the people in taking control of the Land of Israel. He allows them to depart back to their homes on the other side of the Jordan River, but not before he warns and encourages them to serve Hashem wholeheartedly.

After they cross the Jordan River, they build a *mizbeiach* (altar) as a reminder that they are also Jews, lest the descendants of the other tribes declare them foreigners. The tribes who are remaining in Eretz Yisrael hear about the *mizbeiach* and are alarmed; not knowing the true intent behind the *mizbeiach*, they fear that it is intended as a competing *mizbeiach* for the purpose of offering up sacrifices. They prepare for war and send Pinchas, with a delegation of leaders of the tribes, to approach the eastern tribes and investigate the matter. The delegation rebukes the eastern tribes and describes their fear that G-d would punish the entire Jewish People because of this sin.

The eastern tribes explain their rationale. Due to the barrier of the Jordan River separating them from the rest of Israel, there may come a time in the future when the Jewish People will look at them as being a separate people not responsible to serve G-d. This *mizbeiach* is not intended to be used for offerings, but merely to serve as a reminder to their children that they are also members of the Jewish People, and also have a role in serving G-d.

The delegation accepts this explanation. They express relief that now G-d will not punish the entire people. They bless Hashem and refrain from attacking the eastern tribes.

Insight

Were the two and a half tribes unaware of the impression that they were giving off by building a *mizbeiach*? Why weren't they ashamed, knowing that the rest of the people would consider them to be sinners? How come they didn't fear being attacked by the armies of the other tribes, which were almost four times their size?

The Chofetz Chaim quoted a mishnah saying that it would be preferable for one to be considered foolish for one's entire life rather than be considered wicked by Hashem even for one moment. (Sefer Chofetz Chaim 1:7, citing Eduyot 5:6) Our responsibility to impart in our children the feeling that they are members of the Jewish People and important players in our historical mission of serving Hashem and bringing the world to perfection, outweighs any consideration about what anyone else will think. Nobody is perfect, and sometimes out of piercing honesty with ourselves we make the mistake of portraying ourselves to our children as "tier two" players in the service of Hashem. It is essential that we avoid this well-intentioned mistake. Our children must know that they have the privilege to carry the precious torch of the Torah that shares its light with all of humanity.

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Law of the Land: Adopting "Mishpat Ivri" as Israeli Law**Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**

In 1916, Samuel Eizenstat, a Jewish jurist from Russia, published a call to found "a scientific society for research of the Hebraic law (Mishpat Ivri)." A devoted Zionist, Eizenstat wanted to translate and adapt ancient Jewish law for the modern Jewish state he envisioned. Although personally non-observant, it was clear to him that an independent society must rule itself according to its own original and authentic law.

During the 1920's, Eizenstat, who had made aliyah to then-Palestine, tried to organize likeminded friends to begin writing a new code of Jewish law. In an attempt to recruit anyone who might be interested, he even sent a letter to Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna, who in turn sent a letter to Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, asking him to stop the overly energetic reformer.

The next decade brought no shift. Two main groups were interested that the future Jewish state should accept Jewish law as its code – the orthodox and the strong nationalists. Tragically, the gap between these two groups was unbridgeable. While the first group wanted to adopt Halachah wholly and completely, with some of the Rabbis opposing any change, however small and minute, the second group harvested laws and values from the vast body of Halachah without a wholesale commitment.

A few last-minute attempts were made; the most famous of them is Rabbi Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog's attempt to write an Israeli Constitution following the Torah. He was still working on this as late as Adar 5708, two months before the birth of modern Israel.

Eventually, as the secularists could not even fathom adopting religious law, and the rabbis abhorred the possibility of manmade changes to the Divine laws of Halachah, the unthinkable happened: a nation holding to its ancient law, which it had kept throughout millennia of suffering and exile, abandoned this most precious treasure just when it was given the opportunity to be governed by it. Instead of a legal system which countless Jewish sages had invested their lives to protect and develop, we adopted foreign and alien laws – mostly Turkish and British. What a religious, national and cultural shame!

To this day, there is a rabbinic debate regarding how far we should go to incorporate bits and pieces of Halachah into the Israeli code of law. Some hold that a fundamental element of Halachah is its Divine nature; if its adoption is dependent upon the legislators' will, it is not Halachah anymore. Others argue that Halachah can only exist as an integral system, and acceptance of specific parts of it is meaningless.

However, many believe that while far from ideal, we should do our best to use this channel of "Mishpat Ivri" to bring Israel's laws and values as close as possible to the Torah's teaching. Some initial steps have already been taken, with some laws based on Torah and Halachah; much more is to be desired.

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Biography
Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi
Rabbi Adam Friedmann

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, also known by many other titles such as the *Alter* (older) *Rebbe*, *Admor HaZaken* (“old rebbe” in Hebrew) and the *Baal HaTanya* (author of the “Tanya”), was the spiritual father and founder of the Chabad Chassidic dynasty. Born in Liozna in 1745, a descendant of the Maharal of Prague, a young Shneur Zalman bewildered his teachers as a flowering child prodigy. Though he studied under many, he is especially known as one of the foremost students of Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch, the successor of the Baal Shem Tov in the Chassidic world.

After Rabbi Dov Ber’s death, Rabbi Shneur Zalman became one of the two heads, and later the head of Chassidism in Lithuania. He faced strong opposition from the *mitnagdim* (opponents of Chassidism), chief among them the Vilna Gaon who issued a *cherem* (rabbinic ban) against those upholding Chassidic practice. Rabbi Shneur Zalman served as the *Maggid* (preacher) of Liozna for a large part of his career. Later in his life, he moved the base of his operations to Liadi, which became the locus for his Chassidic community until his death in 1812.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman produced an impressive body of writing, which formed the philosophical framework of Chabad thought that his successors would develop for generations. His most famous work is titled *Likkutei Amarim*, though it is more popularly known as the *Tanya*.

This work was groundbreaking as a systematic presentation of Chassidic Kabbalistic thought presented in a topical style. This is as opposed to other contemporary works, which were organized based on the *parshiyot* in the Torah and which therefore discussed topics in a disparate manner.

In addition to his philosophical works, Rabbi Shneur Zalman also produced his own *Shulchan Aruch* in which, demonstrating his Talmudic and Halachic mastery, he codified anew large sections of Halachah reflecting the opinions of decisors who wrote after the original *Shulchan Aruch* as well as Chassidic custom. This work, popularly called *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, is an authoritative text both within the Chassidic world and without.

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Torah and Translation
Don't Rush Through Davening
R' Shneur Zalman, Tanya, Kuntrus Acharon 8
Translated by Rabbi Alex Hecht

הנה לא טובה השמועה שמעתי ותרגו בטני אשר עם ד' מעבירים מלפני התיבה האיש החפץ בחיים ואריכות ימים של כל אנ"ש שבמקדש מעט הזה של אנ"ש, כמארז"ל שלשה דברים מאריכים ימיו של אדם ואחד מהם המאריך בתפלתו. ואף גם מי שהשעה דחוקה לו ביותר וא"א לו בשום אופן להמתין עד אחר עניית קדושה של חזרת הש"ץ הזה הלא טוב טוב לו שלא לשמוע קדושה וברכו, מליד לחייהם של החפצים בחיים ואונס רחמנא פטריה. והש"ץ מוציא ידו חובתו אף שלא שמע כאילו שמע, שהוא כעונה ממש וכדאיתא בגמרא גבי עם שבשדות דאניסי ויוצאים ידי חובת תפלת שמו"ע עצמה בחזרת הש"ץ כאילו שמעו ממש וגם קדושה וברכו בכלל.

והנה זאת חקרנוה כן הוא אף גם בדורות הראשונים של חכמי המשנה והגמרא שהיתה תורתם קבע ועיקר עבודתם ולא תפלתם. ומכש"כ עתה הפעם בעקבות משיחא שאין תורתנו קבע מצוק העתים. ועיקר העבודה בעקבות משיחא היא התפלה כמ"ש הרח"ו ז"ל בע"ה ופע"ה.

מכש"כ וק"ו שראוי ונכון ליתן נפשינו ממש עליה והיא חובה של תורה ממש למביני מדע תועלת ההתבוננות ועומק הדעת קצת כל חד לפום שיעורא דיליה בסדור שבחו של מקום ב"ה בפסוקי דזמרה ושתי ברכות שלפני ק"ש יוצר ואהבה לעורר בהן האהבה המסותרת בלב כל ישראל לבא לבחי' גילוי בהתגלות הלב בשעת ק"ש עצמה.

Behold, the report I have heard is not good, and my stomach was upset (Chavakuk 3:16), that the nation of Hashem removed a person who desires life and length of days for all of our brethren from leading the services in our “miniature *mikdash*” [synagogue]. Our rabbis, of blessed memory, said, “Three things lengthen the days of a person,” and one of them is one who lengthens his prayers. Even if one is very pressed for time, and it is impossible in any way to wait until he can respond to the *Kedushah* of the leader’s repetition - it is much better for him to not hear *Kedushah* and *Barechu* than to bring down those who desire life [by rushing them], since he who is under duress is exempt. And the prayer leader’s [recitation] allows him to fulfill his requirement as if he had heard and responded, even though he did not [actually] hear. It is found in the Talmud regarding people in the fields, who were under duress, that they fulfilled their obligation to pray the *Shemoneh Esreih* through the leader’s repetition, as though they had actually heard it, and *Kedushah* and *Barechu* are included.

And behold, this [ruling] that we have determined was so even in previous generations of the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud, in which their Torah [study] was fixed, and was their primary service - and not their prayers. Certainly [this ruling applies even] now, as the footsteps of Mashiach [approach], when our Torah [study] is not fixed due to the pressure of our times. The primary service as the footsteps of Mashiach [approach] is prayer, as Rabbi Chaim Vital wrote in *Eitz Chaim* and *Pri Eitz Chaim*.

How much more so is it proper and correct to literally sacrifice ourselves for this! It is literally a Torah obligation for those who understand the benefit of self-reflection, and a little bit of the depth - each according to his measure - in organizing the praises of G-d, blessed is He, in *Pesukei d’Zimra* and the two blessings before the recitation of the *Shema* (*Yotzer Or* and *Ahavah Rabbah/Ahavat Olam*). Through them, he can arouse the love hidden in the heart of every Jew to be revealed at the time of the recitation of the *Shema* itself.

Shemot 20:5 warns, “You shall not bow to [sculptures], and you shall not serve them.” This verse was understood by Ramban as expressing a single prohibition against accepting gods other than Hashem. However, Rambam counted these as two prohibitions, because he understood them to prohibit two distinct classes of actions toward a ‘god’, even without accepting its divinity. (Minchat Chinuch 26:1) Sefer haChinuch followed Rambam’s system, and counted these as the Torah’s 28th and 29th mitzvot.

Per Sefer haChinuch, the 28th mitzvah (“You shall not bow”) prohibits all bowing to idols, regardless of purpose. “Bowing” is understood to include all forms of lowering one’s self, whether one bows from the waist or one lies on the floor. Additionally, the biblical juxtaposition of “bowing” and

“serving” teaches that this mitzvah prohibits certain other activities which are normally associated with ritual service: slaughtering a sacrifice, burning an offering, pouring libations or presenting blood from an offering.

On the other hand, the 29th mitzvah (“You shall not serve”) prohibits any act toward an idol which the worshippers of that idol consider a form of “service”. There have been idols worshipped by stone-throwing and defecation, and performing such acts before those idols would constitute prohibited worship.

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Weekly Highlights: Feb. 16 – Feb. 22 / 11 Adar I – 17 Adar I

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Feb. 15-16				
10:30 AM	R’ Alex Hecht	Post-Hashkamah Parshah	Clanton Park	
After minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Room TBD
7:15 PM	R’ Elihu Abbe	Parent-Child Learning	Shaarei Shomayim	
Mon. Feb.18				
9:15 AM Breakfast 9:45 AM Learning 10:30 AM Shiur	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Family Day Yarchei Kallah The Tripartite Agreement: A Prenup Like No Other	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Please RSVP at <i>www.torontotorah.com/ yk</i> <i>or info@torontotorah.com</i>
Tue. Feb. 19				
Purim Katan				
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yeshayah: Chapters 10-11	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua: Chapters 20-21	129 Theodore Pl.	Men
Wed. Feb. 20				
Shushan Purim Katan				
7:30 PM	R’ Alex Hecht	20 th Century Controversies	Shaarei Tefillah	
7:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Ripped from the Headlines	BAYT	
Thu. Feb. 21				
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shemuel: Chapter 8	49 Michael Ct.	Women
7:30 PM	Ezer Diena	Esther, Chapter 7: The Turnaround	KST 2640 Bayview Ave.	
8:45 PM	Ezer Diena	Gemara Beitzah	ediena@torontotorah.com	Men, Advanced
Fri. Feb. 22				
10:30 AM	R’ Elihu Abbe	Kiddushin	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

For University Men, at Yeshivat Or Chaim
10:00 AM Sunday, Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, Gemara Shabbat
11:00 AM Sunday, Beit Midrash Rotation: Contemporary Halachah, Ezer Diena: Ben Pekuah Meat
8:30 AM Tuesday, Ezer Diena, Stories and She’eilot—Purim Themed!
8:30 AM Friday, R’ Mordechai Torczyner, Parshah

WOMEN’S BEIT MIDRASH
For University and Adult Women, at Ulpanat Orot, with Mrs. Eliana Abbe
9:30 AM Tuesdays: Sefer Devarim
9:30 AM Thursdays: Tefillah

Seder Boker for Adult Men
10:00 AM to Noon, Monday - R’ Torczyner Masechet Megilah, R’ Abbe Eim haBanim Semeichah
10:00 AM to Noon, Wednesday - R’ Moshe Yeres: Masechet Megilah and Eim haBanim Semeichah
10:00 AM to Noon, Tuesday/Thursday- R’ Moshe Yeres: Parshanut on Parshah and Pninei Halachah