



תורת חיים Torat Chayim

בס"ד

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Eitz Chayim of Dogwood Park

Tetzaveh

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This issue of Torat Chayim is dedicated anonymously in honor of Claire and Brian Daniel for being incredibly amazing human beings

Ramban on Our Parshah: The Beautiful Uniform

When introducing the uniform of the kohen gadol (28:2), and again when introducing the uniform worn by regular kohanim (28:40), the Torah stresses that their special clothing is “for honor and for splendor.” The clothing was certainly colorful, and it included gems and precious metals – but why does Hashem emphasize to Moshe that the clothing should be splendid?

Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 99) suggests that the beauty was important for its effect upon the kohanim: “People are impacted by their deeds, which influence their thoughts and intentions.” Their beautiful clothing will remind them of the beautiful Being they serve.

The Rambam, on the other hand, plays down any effect of the splendor on the kohanim. He contends, “Although the garments are the height of beauty... the kohen should not focus on the beauty. The goal is only to fulfill the command which Hashem gave to Moshe, to wear these garments perpetually in the Sanctuary (Sefer HaMitzvot, Aseh 33, and see Sifra Acharei Mot 5:8:1).” The kohanim wear the clothing just because Hashem said to wear it.

Ramban agrees with the Rambam regarding the purpose

of these clothes, but his formulation is stronger. Where the Rambam sees in the uniform a mitzvah, Ramban says this is not a mitzvah at all; the clothing is just “an enabler [*hechsher*] of the service.” The kohanim wear these garments only “to fulfill the command of the King who decreed to serve with them. There was no pleasure in wearing them, to look splendid and to be crowned with their beauty, etc. (Hasagot to Aseh 33)” Why do Rambam and Ramban emphasize that the kohanim did not focus on the beauty, and gained nothing from the beauty?

Perhaps Rambam and Ramban view the beauty of the kohen’s clothing not as something to **experience**, but as something to **project**, like the beauty of the etrog, or of the menorah’s light. We beautify those mitzvot not in order to shape **our** mitzvah experience, but in order to **demonstrate** that we value the mitzvah itself. As a gemara teaches (Shabbat 133b), we beautify mitzvot to emulate what the Jews said at the Sea, “This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him.” The beauty demonstrates our appreciation for Hashem and for Hashem’s mitzvah.

May we merit to appreciate Hashem, and to be inspired to beautify the mitzvot we perform.

Parshah Riddles for Kids (answers on the back)

Age 4-8: The kohen gadol wore the *choshen*, a plate with gems for each tribe. How many gems were there?

Age 8-12: What was the name of the kohen’s belt? A) Moshava ba’r B) Avnet C) Gan Israel

Age 12+: According to Rashi, what was the *urim v’tummim*?

Journey Through Tanach: Yehoshua, Perek 19

In Chapter 18 Yehoshua commissioned a survey to determine the lots available for the last seven tribes; in Chapter 19 we find out who received which lot. [The city names do not quite match up with the lists in Divrei haYamim I 4; Malbim attempts to harmonize the lists.]

We begin with Shimon, who received cities within Yehudah’s portion. (19:1-9) Shimon’s lack of an independent portion fulfilled Bereishit 49:7, in which Yaakov cursed the violent temperament of Shimon and Levi, and decreed, “I will split them up in Yaakov, and scatter them in Israel.” But the choice of Yehudah, specifically, as host for Shimon may reflect a unique dynamic between their ancestors. Twice, Yehudah protected Shimon: First, Shimon sought to kill Yosef, and Yehudah suggested that they sell him instead (Rashi to Bereishit 42:24). Second, Yehudah freed Shimon from his Egyptian prison, by bringing Binjamin to Egypt. Now, as well, the largest tribe, Yehudah, sheltered Shimon, the smallest tribe.

We continue with Zevulun and Yissachar, who occupied a block of land north of Menasheh and Ephraim. (19:10-23)

Zevulun is listed first, supporting a midrash which suggests that Zevulun has priority over Yissachar because Zevulun supported Yissachar’s Torah study (Bereishit Rabbah 72:5). Zevulun is described as a seafaring tribe, but this chapter (19:11, 19:29) sounds like he did not actually reach the shore; the Vilna Gaon suggests that a thin sliver of shoreline went to Zevulun.

We conclude the list of tribes with three families who camped together in the wilderness: Asher, Naftali and Dan. (19:24-48) Asher and Naftali received the northernmost sections in Israel, west of the Jordan. Dan started out with land on the Mediterranean coast, just north of Yehudah, but Shoftim 18 records that they later expanded to take land in the northeast, in Bashan, as predicted by Moshe in Devarim 33:22.

Finally, Yehoshua received a portion on Har Ephraim. (19:49-50) The chapter concludes with a valedictory declaration that the distribution of land was complete.

The 613 Mitzvot: #19, 20 - Eating and Possessing Chametz

Mitzvot 9 and 11 (as described in Torat Chayim for Vayishlach and Vayeshev 5784) obligate us to **destroy** chametz before Pesach, and to ensure that we **own** no chametz during Pesach. To this Shemot 13:3 adds, "And chametz shall not be eaten," prohibiting **eating** chametz during Pesach; Sefer HaChinuch counts this as the Torah's 19th mitzvah. Shemot 13:7 adds that chametz **shall not be seen** in our property during Pesach, either; Sefer HaChinuch counts this as the Torah's 20th mitzvah.

The Talmud (Pesachim 6b) asks why we search for chametz and eliminate it before Pesach; we already declare the chametz ownerless and of no interest to us in our *bitul*, so we do not possess chametz! The Talmud responds that we are concerned lest we find attractive chametz during Pesach and decide that we do want it. Tosafot (Pesachim 2a *or*) explains that because we have an added mitzvah prohibiting consumption of chametz, the Sages added a layer of protection, requiring that we search for chametz and eliminate it.

Israel's Chief Rabbis: Jewish Self-Defense, Rabbi Yaakov M. Toledano

Born in 1880, Rav Yaakov Moshe Toledano studied in his father's yeshiva in Tiberias. He joined the city council, headed the local Mizrahi branch, and corresponded with Theodor Herzl and Nachum Sokolov. He moved to Pekiin for four years, strengthening Jewish life and founding a school. During World War I, the Ottomans exiled the Toledanos among 800 Jewish Galileans who held French citizenship. Taking refuge in Corsica, Rabbi Toledano helped establish local Jewish institutions before returning to Israel.

Rav Toledano joined the Chief Rabbinical Council of Tangiers in 1926, and there he established a Rabbinical Court and a yeshiva. In 1928 he became head of the Rabbinical Court in Cairo, then Deputy Chief Rabbi of Cairo, and then Chief Rabbi in Alexandria. From 1942 to 1958, Rav Toledano served as Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo; then he became Minister of Religion. He was awarded the Rav Kook Prize in 1956-1957. Today, the Religious Council of Tel Aviv awards "The Rabbi Toledano Prize" for outstanding Torah literature, in his name.

Rav Toledano was asked whether the mitzvah of settling Israel includes fighting for the land, and whether Jews may undergo weapons training and learn self-defense. He replied in responsum #57 of his *Yam haGadol* collection:

Many of our great Rabbis of previous generations and our own generation erred and misled our nation, the simple masses, into thinking that as long as we are in this national exile, we may not raise our head, but we are commanded to bend ourselves to every tyrant...

I say without fear, with their honor's forgiveness, they have caused the loss of many lives and many Jewish communities, which often could have saved themselves from murder and destruction, had their leaders and the rabbis of the generation ruled that they must defend their lives against those who rise against them, as in, "When one comes to kill you, rise early to kill him. (Berachot 62b)" They did not do thus; rather, they justified the Divine verdict and gave themselves like sheep led to the slaughter. And all of this was caused by the aforementioned erroneous idea and Diaspora habit of thinking of themselves like a silent stone, a dirt-crawler, nothing and null, without understanding that all such things recorded in Torah, Prophets and the Talmud, like "And your enemies will rule over you"... are only curses and temporary punishments, not duties and decrees...

This is what our Sages said, "Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said: What are the three oaths mentioned in Song of Songs? One that Israel may not ascend as a wall, one that Hashem made Israel swear not to rebel against the nations, and one that Hashem made the nations swear not to enslave them too much." The oath was only not to rebel, but not to be lowly and degraded before the nations... Moshe Rabbeinu, when he saw an Egyptian beating his Jewish brother for nothing, killed him – for he knew that this was not included in the subjugation... There is a mitzvah and duty for all leaders of Israel to establish such studies in the schools of Torah and yeshivot, a set hour each day, so that the students and youths will be ready for battle for any trouble, that should not happen...

Upcoming Learning!

All classes are open to men and women and free of charge, unless otherwise noted

5:35 PM Shabbat February 24

The Impact of Archaeology on Halacha: Tefillin, Tzitzit, Mezuzah, with Rabbi Efrem Schwalb, at Eitz Chayim

8:30 AM to 9:15 AM Sunday February 25

Fourteen Centuries: Rav Saadia Gaon, Part 4, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, in the lobby at Eitz Chayim

7:30-8:30 PM Monday February 19 at Eitz Chayim and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/medhal>
Halachah in Healthcare Settings: Davening for Patients with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

8:15-9:00 PM Tuesday February 27

Gemara Makkot with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, for men - this week at 572 Colonade

Age 4-8 12
Age 8-12 B: Avnet
Age 12+ C: The name of Hashem, written and put inside the kohen gadol's choshen; see Rashi Shemot 28:30

Answers to Parshah Riddles

Torat Chayim does not include the Name of Hashem but should be disposed of respectfully, such as in paper recycling.

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