

Torah Weekly

ת"סג

February 6-12, 2022
5-11 Adar 1, 5782

Torah Reading:
Tetzaveh: Exodus 27:20 - 30:10
Haftarah: Ezekiel 43:10-27

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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ALEPH INSTITUTE
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

The Missing Moses

A seemingly dubious distinction belongs to this week's Parshah, Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10). It is the only reading in the Torah—from the first Parshah of the book of Exodus (in which he is born) until the end of the book of Numbers—where the name of Moses is not mentioned.¹ Tetzaveh's opening words are *V'atah tetzaveh*—"And you shall command." The "you" is Moses, and G-d is telling him what to instruct the Jewish people. But the verse only says "you"—no name, no "Moses."

Why?

Some explain that the day of Moses' passing, 7 Adar, almost always occurs in this week, and the absence of his name is an appropriate symbol of his demise. Others suggest that it is as a result of Moses' own words. Remember the golden calf episode? The people had sinned, and G-d was going to wipe them out and start over again with Moses and his own dynasty. Moses defended his errant flock before the Almighty, arguing for their forgiveness. And if not? Well, Moses used some very strong words there. "*Mecheini na misifrecha*—erase me from Your book that You have written!" Moses himself said that his name should be erased from the Torah if G-d would not forgive His people. So, even

though G-d did forgive them, the words of our greatest spiritual leader.

What would we imagine to be Moses' finest hour? Receiving the Torah? Leading the Jews to the Exodus? Splitting the sea? Would you be shocked if I told you it is none of the above? Indeed, Moses' finest, most glorious, absolutely greatest moment on earth was when he stood his ground before G-d, pleading for his people, fighting for their forgiveness. His most brilliant, shining hour was when he put his own life and future on the line and said: "G-d, if they go, I go! If You refuse to forgive these sinners, then erase my name from Your holy Torah!" It was through Moses' total commitment towards his people that the faithful shepherd saved his flock from extinction. And G-d Himself was pleased with His chosen shepherd's words, and acceded to his request.

So say a variety of commentaries. But, characteristically, the chassidic commentaries, reflecting the inner dimension of Torah, go a step further—and deeper. What's in a name? they ask. Who needs a name? Does a person require a name for himself? Not really; he knows who he is. So, a name is essentially for other people to be able to attract his attention, so they can call him, address him, etc. In other words, a name is only an external handle, a vehicle for others to identify or describe a person; but it is all outside of the person himself and peripheral to his own true, inner identity. Names are secondary to the essence of an individual. The essence of every person, who he or she really is, is beyond any name, beyond any title.

So, why is Moses' name not mentioned? Because he said "Erase me" after the golden calf? Because he spoke with *chutzpah* before the Almighty? You think it is a punishment? Not at all, says the Rebbe. On the contrary, this was perhaps the greatest

moment in the life of our greatest spiritual leader. What would we imagine to be Moses' finest hour? Receiving the Torah? Leading the Jews to the Exodus? Splitting the sea? Would you be shocked if I told you it is none of the above? Indeed, Moses' finest, most glorious, absolutely greatest moment on earth was when he stood his ground before G-d, pleading for his people, fighting for their forgiveness. His most brilliant, shining hour was when he put his own life and future on the line and said: "G-d, if they go, I go! If You refuse to forgive these sinners, then erase my name from Your holy Torah!" It was through Moses' total commitment towards his people that the faithful shepherd saved his flock from extinction. And G-d Himself was pleased with His chosen shepherd's words, and acceded to his request.

So the absence of Moses' name this week, far from being a negative, carries with it a profound blessing. It does not say the name Moses, but *v'atah*—"and you." A name is only a name, but here G-d talks to Moses in the second person directly. *You*. And the *you* represents

something far deeper than a mere name; it is the *you* symbolizing the spiritual essence of Moses. And what is that essence? His unflinching commitment to his people, come what may—even if it be at his own expense.

This is the very soul of Moses, the faithful shepherd. The *you* that goes beyond the superficial, and beyond what any name could possibly encapsulate. It represents the deepest core of his *neshamah*, deeper than any appellation or detailed description could hope to portray.

Moses' name may be missing, but his spiritual presence is felt in a way that no name could ever do justice to. May all our leaders take note and be inspired.

By Rabbi Yossi Goldman

Underrated Earth

Souls wait up in heaven for thousands of years, longing for their moment upon this earth to do another soul a favor.

Angels burn with jealousy each time a human being turns himself around and creates beauty in this world.

Heaven is nice, but on the best things, earth has exclusive rights.

Sanctification of the Moon

Once a month, as the moon waxes in the sky, we recite a special blessing called *Kiddush Levanah*, "the sanctification of the moon," praising the Creator for His wondrous work we call astronomy.

Kiddush Levanah is recited after nightfall, usually on Saturday night. The blessing is concluded with songs and dancing, because our nation is likened to the moon—as it waxes and wanes, so have we throughout history. When we bless the moon, we renew our trust that very soon, the light of G-d's presence will fill all the earth and our people will be redeemed from exile.

Though *Kiddush Levanah* can be recited as early as three days after the moon's rebirth, the kabbalah tells us it is best to wait a full week, till the seventh of the month. Once 15 days have passed, the moon begins to wane once more and the season for saying the blessing has passed.

Infinite Light

A strong light is hostile to the eyes. An intense light will burn and destroy. An immense body of light will vaporize anything, turning molecules to atoms, atoms to particles, particles to energy.

An infinite light, however, knows no bounds. It can go anywhere and enter any place. Nothing can say to infinity, "I cannot bear you! You are too powerful for me!"—for, if so, that would be a limitation on the infinite.

That is the name the Kabbalists call G-d—the Infinite Light. No place is too small, no moment too insignificant, for the Infinite Light to belong.

Sunday, February 6, 2022 --- 5 Adar 1, 5782

Passing of R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro of Slavuta (1864)

R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro and his brother R. Pinchas managed the famed printing press of Slavuta, in what is now Ukraine. In 1835, they were falsely accused of arranging the murder of one of their workers (who had committed suicide). As a result, the government ordered the closing of all Russian Jewish printing presses (save for one press in Vilnius), and the brothers were incarcerated and flogged.

The brothers' tremendous piety and fear of Heaven followed them to their cells. It is related that while walking through the two rows of soldiers who were administering the flogging, R. Shmuel Abba's *kippah* (skullcap) fell off of his head, and he refused to proceed until it was returned, although he received additional blows as a result.

A miniature Torah scroll was smuggled into their cell during their incarceration to enable the brothers to study. This unique scroll later gifted to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who would dance with it every year on Simchat Torah.

R. Shmuel Abba passed away on 5 Adar in the year 5624 from Creation (1864). Books printed in the Slavuta press remain prized collectors' items to this day.

Monday, February 7, 2022 --- 6 Adar 1, 5782

Passing of R. Shmaryahu Gurary (1989)

Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary ("Rashag") was born in 1898; his father, a wealthy businessman and erudite scholar, was a leading chassid of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneersohn (1860-1920). In 1921, Rabbi Shmaryahu married Chanah Schneersohn (1899-1991), the oldest daughter of the 6th Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef

Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950). When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak passed away in 1950, there were those who saw Rabbi Shmaryahu -- an accomplished Chassidic scholar and elder of the Rebbe's two surviving sons-in-law -- as the natural candidate to head the movement; but when the younger son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, was chosen as rebbe, Rabbi Shmaryahu became his devoted chassid. Rabbi Shmaryahu served as the executive director of Tomchei Temimim, the world-wide Lubavitch yeshiva system -- a task entrusted to him by his father-in-law -- until his passing on the 6th of Adar I in 1989.

Tuesday, February 8, 2022 --- 7 Adar 1, 5782

Moses' Birth & Passing (1393 and 1273 BCE)

Moses was born in Egypt on the 7th of Adar of the year 2368 from creation (1393 BCE). According to one opinion, the year of Moses' birth was a "leap year", and he was born in the first Adar.

Moses passed away on his 120th birthday -- Adar 7, 2488 (1273 BCE)

Wednesday, February 9, 2022 --- 8 Adar 1, 5782

Oath on Torah Permitted (1674)

In the 1660's the Jewish community of Barbados gained considerable importance. However, they had a decided disadvantage in that their testimony was not admissible in court due to their refusal to take an oath on a Christian Bible. In October 1669, the Jewish community presented a petition requesting permission to take oaths on the Five Books of Moses, the Jewish Bible.

Several years later, on Wednesday, February 14, 1674, Barbados passed a law granting the Jewish community the permission they requested.

Passing of R. Eliyahu HaKohen (1729)

R. Eliyahu HaKohen was a preacher and author who lived in Izmir, Turkey. He was known for his weekly sermons which inspired many people to repentance, and for his efforts in collecting and distributing charity to the poor. His ethical work *Shevet Mussar*—only one of the thirty-plus works he authored—is widely studied and has been translated into multiple languages. He passed away on 8 Adar.