

Torah Weekly

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PARSHAT TETZAVEH

9 - 15 Adar 1 5784
18-25 February 2024

Torah: Exodus 27:2- - 30:10
Haftorah: Ezekiel 43:10-27

Psalms Daily

Psalms for our brethren in the Holy Land

Psalms 117

1. Praise the Lord, all nations, laud Him, all peoples.
2. For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of the Lord is eternal. Hallelujah!

(Please say Chapter 20 daily)

Shabbat & Holiday Candles

Shabbat and Holiday Candles are lit by Jewish women and girls (starting at three years old) 18 minutes before sundown ahead of Shabbat and holidays. Upon lighting Shabbat candles, the following blessing is recited:

"Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat."

There are different blessings for Jewish holidays.

A Call to the Priest

In the Parsha of Tetzaveh we read how the Priests ("Kohanim") were consecrated to serve in the Sanctuary. The Priests were selected by G-d to fill a sacred position, requiring them to be on a higher level of holiness than the rest of the people. But over and above them, there was to be the High Priest ("Kohen Gadol") who occupied a position of even greater sanctity. Regarding the High Priest's needs, the Torah specifically commands his brother priests to support and elevate him. This is somewhat surprising; it would seem that the Torah should exhort all Israel, the plain person as well as the kohen, to lend their support to the High Priest. But here a strange phenomenon becomes evident: When it comes to helping the High Priest, the righteous, you would think that our religious functionaries, etc., would be the first to lend their assistance. If anyone would need persuasion — it would surely be the plain folk. In fact, however, the reverse is true. The ordinary person needs no command. The fundraiser approaches him: "Listen, the High Priest is in need of support. Would you like to participate in this mitzvah? Would you see that all your friends and acquaintances also participate?" It will never occur to the ordinary person to run to the rabbi and inquire what is written about this in the Code of Torah-Law.

Quite the contrary; he will be afraid that he might lose the precious opportunity, the mitzvah of participating in aiding the great High Priest.

The simple man knows that G-d does not desert the righteous, so the High Priest will surely receive all his needs from the Almighty ultimately. But G-d might "channel" His benevolence through another and he might lose out on the mitzvah. Consequently, he grasps the opportunity, gives as much as he is able, and influences others to participate — so that the support and elevation of the High Priest should come about through his efforts.

When a "priest" is approached, however, the response might be somewhat different: "Why are you approaching me? I am a kohen, not an ordinary person; I know what my duties are; give this mitzvah opportunity to others." Or he might say: "Are you asking me to get involved with supporting the High Priest? Don't you know that I bear the responsibility for performing the service in the Sanctuary? Ask the High Priest himself, he'll tell you what's more important. If I get involved with supporting the High Priest the entire Sanctuary service might collapse! What the code of Jewish precepts and the Torah-law authorities say about this must be thoroughly investigated. "The Torah forewarns this attitude by expressly commanding the priests, the functionaries, to support and to raise up the High Priest (and sometimes, even the Torah's urging doesn't help!)

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

Initiation Rituals

Society has many ways of demonstrating that someone has reached a new stage in life;

University graduates wear mortar boards, officers get stripes on their uniform and secret societies teach the neophyte their ancient rituals and identifying handshakes and make them go through a wide range of rituals. In most cases the uniforms or rituals have just evolved over time or been selected more for the pageantry value than their true intrinsic significance. Most national costumes are more about ceremony than functionality and most sporting chants and waves are meaningless gibberish, full of sound and fury but not sense.

Our national dress of tefillin and Tzitzis are redolent with meaning and spirituality. But Judaism is not so. Our national dress of tefillin and Tzitzis are redolent with meaning and spirituality. Our initiation rituals, whether circumcision after birth, mikvah before marriage, and confession before dying, are finely calibrated celebrations of faith. Our prayers are not just slogans, our tunes and chants are credos of our belief, and our festivals and holidays are a reflection of our history. Every ritual and ceremony is packed full of purpose. Sometimes we just have to delve a bit deeper to divine the intent behind a particular ritual or ceremony. Take this week's Torah reading for instance. The parshah describes construction of the Tabernacle and its holy vessels, as well as the beautiful uniform which the priests would wear while serving G-d in the Temple. We also learn about their appointment as G-d's priestly class, the Kohanim. We can easily appreciate the symbolism of each stage and



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there is much discussion about what every ritual represents. However, there was one part of the process that I'd never understood. The Torah relates that they took the blood from one of the sacrifices and rubbed it on the ear, thumb and foot of every Cohen. It is hard to see the relevance of this gesture; at first glance it looks like just a meaningless hazing ritual, no more spiritually inclined than any frat party pledge. However, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Peshischa (known as the Yid Hakadosh) explains the relevance of this gesture too. These men were being inaugurated into a lifetime of public service. Sometimes we just have to delve a

bit deeper to divine the intent behind a particular ritual or ceremony service; dedicating themselves to the common cause and swearing to uphold and protect the ways of G-d and Judaism. Too often people embark on their public careers full of dedication and resolve, determined to help people and live their lives for others. However, all too soon, they lose sight of these lofty goals, shut themselves off from the needs of the people and think only about themselves. Many a crusader for justice has degenerated into a nest-featherer when elevated to power, and many a freedom fighter has morphed into a tyrant. By smearing sacrificial blood on

these three locations, Moshe was reminding them of their responsibilities and calling. Keep your ear tuned to the needs of your nation, keep your hand outstretched to give and not to take and make sure that your foot is always ready to run to the aid of others. If you pledge yourself to these ideals at the outset of your career and are publicly initiated into these expressions of faith and intent, then you'll truly become a leader in the G-d's army and bring credit to the uniform in which you serve.

By Elisha Greenbaum

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE PROPHET SHMUEL (SAMUEL) (931 BCE - 877 BCE)

Shmuel HaNavi (the Prophet Samuel) was born to Elkanah and Chana in 2830 (931 BCE). His mother had waited many years for a child and was finally blessed with Shmuel after she promised to give him over, at a young age, to divine service, and following a blessing from Eli, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) of the time. His mother brought Shmuel to Shiloh, where the Mishkan (Tabernacle) stood, at a young age, where he learned under Eli the Kohen Gadol, and began receiving prophecies from Hashem (G-d). Eli passed away during an attack by the Pelishtim (Philistines) against the Jews, and Shmuel became the leading Prophet and Judge of the Jews. He traveled the country, deciding legal cases and inspiring the Jews to better service of Hashem. He also led the Jews in a war against the Pelishtim, reconquering land that had been taken from them.

The Jews soon came, requesting that Shmuel assist them in appointing a King over them, as the Torah (Bible) demands. Hashem told Shmuel to appoint Shaul, from the Tribe of Binyamin (Benjamin) as King. Shaul led the Jews for many years, but soon diverged from Shmuel's instructions as spoken to him by Hashem. Shmuel informed Shaul that Hashem had chosen to replace him with another King, and he secretly anointed David, son of Yishai (Jesse), as the next King. Upon Shaul's death, David was publicly recognized as King, first of the Tribe of Yehuda (Judah), and then as King of all Jews. Shmuel passed away in Ramah, where he was buried, at the age of 52. He would be the last of the Shoiftim (Judges) who led the Jews through to the period of the Kings.

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Thursday, February 22, 2024-13 Adar I, 5784

Passing of R. Yehudah the Pious (1217)

R. Yehudah HaChassid - the pious - was held in high esteem for his piety and saintliness. He authored Sefer Chassidim, a collection of ethical and halachic teachings that is widely studied to this day. The kabbalistic instructions included in his so-called "testament" are accepted and practiced in many communities.

Friday, February 23, 2024, 14 Adar I, 5784
Purim Katan ("Minor Purim")

In regular years, the 14th of Adar is Purim, the festival that celebrates the salvation of the Jewish people from Haman's evil decree

in the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE). In a leap year -- which has two Adars -- Purim is celebrated in Adar II, and the 14th of Adar I is designated as Purim Kattan, the "Little Purim." There are no special observances, however, associated with Purim Kattan, other than the omission of Tachnun ("supplications") from the daily prayers and a prohibition against fasting or holding eulogies on this day. The Code of Jewish Law cites an opinion that one should increase in festivity and joy, but rules that there is no obligation to do so.

Moses' Brit (1393 BCE)

According to tradition, Moses was born on the 7th of Adar I, today was the 8th day of

his life and the day on which he was circumcised in accordance with the Divine command to Abraham.

Shabbat, February 24, 2024-15 Adar I, 5784

The "Minor" Shushan Purim

In regular years, the 15th of Adar is Shushan Purim, the festival that celebrates -- in Jerusalem and other ancient walled cities -- the salvation of the Jewish people from Haman's evil decree in the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE). In a leap year -- which has two Adars - Shushan Purim is observed in Adar II, and the 15th of Adar I is designated as Shushan Purim Kattan, the "Minor Shushan Purim."