

MOSHE UNMENTIONED

by Shlomo Katz

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Tetzaveh

At the end of each parashah, many chumashim state the number of verses in that parashah and what word or phrase can be used to remember that number. The mnemonic device traditionally used to remember that this parashah has 101 verses is the name of the angel "Micha'el." (The gematria of Micha'el equals 101.) Why?

R' Heschel of Krakow (16th century) explains as follows: We will read in next week's parashah that, after the sin of the golden calf, Hashem wanted to send an angel - according to the midrash, it was Micha'el - to accompany Bnei Yisrael through the desert. Moshe demanded, however, that Hashem lead Bnei Yisrael Himself, without an intermediary.

After Moshe's death, we read that this same angel appeared to Yehoshua, saying that he had been sent to lead Bnei Yisrael in battle. We find, therefore, that wherever Moshe was, the angel could not be, but when the former was gone, the latter reappeared. This is why the angel Micha'el is alluded to by our parashah, for it is the only one in the three middle books of the Torah in which Moshe's name is not mentioned. (Chanukat Hatorah)

R' David Feinstein shlita offers another answer: Most of this parashah relates to the garments of the Kohen Gadol. Micha'el, Chazal teach, is the Kohen Gadol among the angels serving in the heavenly Bet Hamikdash.

(Quoted in The Stone Chumash p.483)

"And you, you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take to you pure, pressed olive oil to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

"And you, you shall bring near to yourself your brother Aharon and his sons . . ." (28:1)

Why, in both of these verses, is the word "you" repeated? ("Tetzaveh" means "You shall command. Therefore, "Attah tetzaveh" means, "You, you shall command.") Ramban explains that Moshe was commanded to carry out these verses himself, without an intermediary - but why? R' Yosef Zvi Salant z"l (20th century; Yerushalayim) explains:

When Hashem first appointed Moshe to lead Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, Moshe resisted the appointment. Eventually, the Torah tells us (Shmot 4:14), "The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe." The gemara explains (based on the continuation of that verse) that at that moment, Hashem informed Moshe that Aharon, and not Moshe himself, would be the progenitor of the priestly clan, the kohanim.

One might mistakenly think that Moshe thereby forfeited his stature as the foremost leader of Bnei Yisrael. The repetition of the word "you" in the verses quoted above teaches that this is not true.

Both of the verses quoted above deal with the priesthood. In the latter verse, Moshe is commanded to appoint Aharon and his sons to their role as kohanim. In the former verse, Moshe is commanded to prepare oil so that the kohanim could light the menorah. The command that Moshe, and only Moshe, carry out the directives of these verses was Hashem's way of showing deference to Moshe. It demonstrates that Aharon was subservient to Moshe.

We read in Pirkei Avot that the world stands on three pillars: Torah, avodah/the sacrificial service, and gemilut chassadim/acts of kindness. Aharon represents avodah, but avodah is secondary to Torah, which Moshe represents.

(Be'er Yosef)

R' David Soloveitchik shlita explains the emphasis in the verse, "And you, you shall bring near to yourself your brother Aharon," in light of the halachah that a kohen gadol must be appointed by the sanhedrin. In his day, Moshe was the sanhedrin

(Quoted in Shai Le'morah)

Megilat Esther

And those who were close to him were Karshina, Sheitar, Admata, Tarshish, Merres, Marsina, Memuchan..." (Esther 1:14)

The midrash writes that corresponding to King Achashveirosh's seven advisors whose names are listed in the above verse were seven angels who stood before G-d and defended Bnei Yisrael. Each angel pleaded with Hashem using words related to the name of one of the seven advisors.

One said, "If Achashveirosh defeats Bnei Yisrael, who will sacrifice before You one year-old calves?" (Referred to in Hebrew as "Par ben shanah" / similar to the name "Karshina")

The second said, "Who will sacrifice before You two doves?" ("Shtei Torim" / "Sheitar")

The third said, "Who will build for You an earthen altar?" ("Mizbach Adamah" / "Admata")

The fourth said, "Who will wear the bigdei kehunah/priestly garments, which contain the gem called 'Tarshish'?"

The fifth said, "Who will stir the blood of the sacrifices?" ("Mimarres" / "Merres")

The sixth said, "Who will stir the flour offerings?" ("Mimarres" / "Marsina")

Finally, the seventh said, "Who will prepare the altar before You?" ("Maicheen" / "Memuchan")

When the angels concluded their pleas, Hashem answered, "Bnei Yisrael are My sons. They are My friends. They are My beloved..."

Why, of all of the mitzvot, did the angels single out these seven? "Why didn't they ask, 'Who will put on tefilin? Who will lift the lulav?'" R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l explains:

Chazal teach that the day on which the Mishkan was completed was as happy in G-d's "eyes" as the day on which He created the world. When Adam was created, G-d had great expectations for his future. Using his G-d given free will, Adam unfortunately "frustrated" those plans (by eating from the Eitz Ha'daat), but mankind was given a second chance when Bnei Yisrael received the Torah and

built the Mishkan. The day on which the Tabernacle was dedicated was therefore as auspicious as the very day on which the world was created.

Achashveirosh knew that. As the gemara notes, the purpose of the party described at the beginning of the Megillah was to celebrate the fact that, according to Achashveirosh's calculations, the appointed time for the end of the exile had come and gone without the Bet Hamikdash - successor to the Mishkan - being rebuilt. He therefore donned the garments of the Kohen Gadol (which had been captured in Nevuchadnetzar's war on Yerushalayim) and defiantly celebrated the apparent victory of evil over good. [The Talmud explains how he miscalculated the date of Bnei Yisrael's redemption.]

The angels said to G-d, "Achashveirosh is celebrating the demise of the Mishkan and its service. Haman says You are sleeping. Tell us: Whose plan for the Mishkan will stand - Achashveirosh's or Yours?"

(Sefer Midrash Talpiot)

R' Yosef ibn Aknin z"l

born approx.1160 - died 1226

R' Yosef ben Yehuda ibn Aknin was the person for whom Rambam wrote his Moreh Nevochim/Guide to the Perplexed. R' Yosef was born in Ceuta, Morocco, but fled from there due to Moslem oppression. He first settled in Alexandria, Egypt, where he began corresponding with Rambam, and later, the great sage invited R' Yosef to Cairo to study with him. When Rambam saw that R' Yosef was troubled by the conflict between philosophy and the teachings of the Prophets, Rambam wrote Moreh Nevochim to resolve his student's doubts.

In 1186, R' Yosef moved to Aleppo, Syria, where he practiced medicine. He continued his correspondence with Rambam, and many of these letters are still extant. (Some of these letters refer to the attacks of other rabbis on Rambam. In them, Rambam explains that he is above caring about his personal reputation, especially when his attackers are unworthy of a response.) In response to the attacks of R' Shmuel ben Eli of Baghdad on Rambam's Mishneh Torah, R' Yosef wanted to move to Baghdad and open a yeshiva where he would defend his teacher's views. However, Rambam dissuaded R' Yosef from giving up his medical practice and trying to earn a living as a rosh yeshiva. After Rambam's death, R' Yosef asked Rambam's son, R' Avraham, to excommunicate R' Daniel Ha'Bavli (the leading student of R' Shmuel be Eli) for his slights to the Rambam's honor, but R' Avraham declined.

R' Yosef wrote a number of works, including a halachic work (in Arabic) and commentaries on Pirkei Avot and Shir Ha'shirim. (Sources: The Artscroll Rishonim, p. 88; Iggeret Ha'Rambam Le'Rav Yosef, pp. 130-133)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at [Project Genesis](#) start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page. Text archives from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.
