

HOW HUMBLE SHOULD YOU BE?

by Shlomo Katz

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**Tetzaveh: How Humble Should You Be?
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Today's Learning:

Temurah 1:3-4

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Shevuot 22

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Pesachim 49

TO OUR READERS

We are pleased to be back on-line after an extended, involuntary hiatus. For those who inquired, you have not missed any issues. Hard copy recipients have been receiving reruns of back issues, and these are available to e-readers from our archives www.TheTorahSpring.org and www.torah.org. If you used to receive Hamaayan by snail-mail and would like to do so again, please contact us. Our snail-mailing list was partially destroyed by a computer failure. Thank you for your continued readership and support.

A significant portion of this parashah is devoted to the selection of Aharon as the Kohen Gadol and the design of the priestly garments. The Midrash states that when Hashem commanded Moshe to select Aharon, Moshe felt sad. Hashem told him, "I had a Torah and I gave it to you. If not for that Torah, I would destroy My world."

Why did Moshe feel sad? Was he jealous? If so, what consolation did Hashem offer Moshe? R' Meshulam Roth z"l (see biography section) explains that Moshe was not jealous. After all, Moshe was the humblest of all men, and he had previously insisted that Aharon, not he, lead Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt. (See Rashi to Shmot 4:13.) Indeed, the Gemara (Zevachim 102a) says that it was that very act of speaking up for Aharon that caused Moshe to lose the chance to be Kohen Gadol. Why was Moshe penalized for that self-effacement?

R' Roth explains further: The Gemara (Ketubot 103b) teaches that the ideal leader is humble in his heart, but he acts assertively. This is why Shaul was unfit to be king, as the prophet Shmuel rebuked him (Shmuel I 15:17 - the haftarah for Tetzaveh in a non-leap year): "Though you are small in your own eyes, you are the head of the tribes of Yisrael!" In contrast, King David said (Tehilim 22:7), "I am a worm and not a man," but he knew how to behave as a king.

The Gemara (Ta'anit 11b) states that during the week of the Mishkan's inauguration - the one week when Moshe was allowed to act as Kohen Gadol - he wore a white robe with no hem. R' Roth explains that this alludes to Moshe's humility that had no limits. That humility precluded Moshe Rabbeinu from serving as Kohen Gadol, and Moshe thus felt sad, thinking that his service of Hashem was lacking. Hashem assured Moshe that this was not true. Our parashah opens with the commandment to take olive oil for the Temple service, and it then continues with Aharon's appointment. Hashem taught Moshe: For the Temple service, I desire someone who is like oil. Just as oil rises to the top in a mixture, so must the Kohen Gadol be someone capable of rising above his humility. Not so the giver of the Torah. [The Torah is compared to water, which stays beneath the oil.] For the giver of the Torah, humility is the most crucial trait, and the Torah is more important than the Temple service. If not for the Torah, I would destroy My world. (Kol Mevaser)

How is it possible that Moshe, who spoke to G-d face-to-face was the humblest of all men? R' David Moshe Friedman z"l (see biography section) explains that Moshe reasoned as follows: I spoke to G-d face-to-face, so it's no wonder that I am righteous. Other men, however, must work hard to be righteous. Perhaps Hashem appreciates their efforts more than mine. (Quoted in Doresh Tov p.45)

"Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take to you pure olive oil, pressed for illumination . . ." (27:20)

Rashi comments: Only for the menorah did the oil have to be pressed, but not for the menachot / meal offerings. R' Shlomo Yosef Zevin z"l (1888-1978; his biography will appear next week G-d willing) elaborates: The menorah and the menachot represent Torah and food, respectively. There are many metaphors that connect the Torah to the menorah. "For a commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is light," says Mishlei (6:23). When a person understands a difficult concept after toiling in its study, we say that he is enlightened. His face radiates and his eyes shine with happiness. This is

the symbolism in the fact that the Greeks rendered all the oil in the Temple impure. They tried to contaminate the Torah with Greek philosophy.

Both our Torah study and our food must be "pure" of all hints of sin, e.g., theft and dishonest business dealings. (The purity of our food is alluded to by the fact that the menachot had to be made of only the finest flour.) And, both Torah and food are attained through hard work. About Torah, our Sages said (Megillah 6b), "If a person says, 'I did not toil, but I found [Torah],' do not believe him." About food it says (Bereishit 3:19), "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread." However, there is a difference between these two forms of toil. The toil over Torah is never ending, and one is obligated to put all of body and soul into it. Not so the toil for food. King David said (Tehilim 128:2), "When you eat the labor of your hands, you are praiseworthy." This verse also can be read, "If the labor of your hands is equivalent to what you eat [but not more]; then you are praiseworthy."

This is what Rashi alludes to: Only for the menorah did the oil have to be thoroughly pressed, while the oil for the menachot did not require the same pressure. Only for Torah study must a person press himself completely, but not for food. (La'Torah Ve'la'moadim p.111)

Shabbat

One of the actions which is prohibited on Shabbat is "borer" / "selection." Not all selection is prohibited on Shabbat. In halachic terms, one is permitted (under certain circumstances) to select the "ochel" / "food" out of a mixture, but he is not permitted to select the "pesollet" / "rejects" out of the same mixture. For example, if a person has a salad in front of him, but he wants only the tomatoes, he is not permitted to push aside the other vegetables to get to the tomatoes. (In this case, the other vegetables are the "pesollet" even though they are technically food. In the context of this law, anything desirable is called "ochel" and anything undesirable is called "pesolet") On the other hand, if any tomatoes are already uncovered, one may select the tomatoes out of the salad if he meets certain other conditions. [For practical applications, see Shemirat Shabbat Ke'hilchatah Ch.3 or other works on the laws of Shabbat, or consult a rabbi.]

R' Avraham Eiger z"l (1846-1914; the Lubliner Rebbe) offers the following rationale for these laws: Shabbat was given as a time for man to work on self-improvement. How does one improve himself? Deep down within every Jew is a soul which is inherently good. Man's task, especially on Shabbat, is to draw out the goodness which is hidden within him. (Indeed, on Shabbat, that goodness awakens and tries to show itself.) The laws of borer teach that one should not improve himself by peeling away the layers of "pesollet" / undesirable qualities. Rather, one should reach deep inside himself and bring out the "ochel" / desirable qualities within. (Quoted in Noam Ha'Shabbat p.49)

"Our Father, our King, begin for us the days approaching us for peace, free from all sin, cleansed from all iniquity `u'medubakim b'yiratecha' [literally: 'and glued with fear of You'].\" (From the Motzaei shabbat Ata Chonantanu prayer)

What is meant by the last phrase: "u'medubakim b'yiratecha"? Why don't we use the more common expression that the coming days be "filled" with fear of Heaven? R' Zvi Yehuda Kook z"l (1891 - 14 Adar 5742 / 1982; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav in Yerushalayim) explains:

We are asking Hashem that the coming days share a unifying theme. As we begin the new week, in which we will engage in many different types of activities, some spiritual and some mundane, let them all be unified by a common goal - yirat Shamayim / fear of Heaven. (Mi'toch Ha'Torah Ha'goelet Vol. II, p.97)

R' Meshulam Roth z"l

R' Meshulam Roth was born on 14 Elul 5635 / 1875 in Gorodenka, Galicia (now in Ukraine). His parents were R' Shimon and Elka Roth. At the age of nine, young Meshulam was first taken to the Chortkover Rebbe, R' David Moshe Friedman, and from the Rebbe, the boy learned not only specific modes of behavior, but also to love every Jew and to feel responsible for the well-being of all Jews. R' Roth's teachers in Talmud and halachah were R' Yaakov Weidenfeld (rabbi of Grimaylov and father of the Tschebiner Rav, R' Dov Berish W.), R' Avraham Mendel Steinberg (rabbi of Brody) and R' Meir Arik (rabbi of Bucach, and perhaps the leading Galician sage of the period). For a time, R' Roth also studied with R' Yehuda Modern of Sighet, from whom he gained a strong attachment to the works of the Chatam Sofer.

R' Roth gained fame as a prodigy, and he became expert in all aspects of the Torah. He also taught himself mathematics and science. After his marriage, he served unofficially as rabbi of his wife's hometown. Later, he was elected rabbi of Chorostkiv (Ukraine). Although his candidacy was opposed at first by those who did not want a Chortkover chassid as their rabbi, he quickly impressed most of the community with his inaugural derashah, which lasted six hours and was delivered using no more than a Tanach, with no notes or other books.

In Chorostkiv, R' Roth established a yeshiva that became known for its carefully planned program. When R' Meir Shapiro prepared to open his world famous yeshiva in Lublin, he wrote to R' Roth asking: What is the curriculum of your students? What do you consider to be the most important elements of your program? How many years should a student prepare for ordination? How should the day be divided? Later, Israeli Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Herzog also expressed interest in implementing R' Roth's curriculum.

R' Roth's study of kabbalah led him to see the developing Zionist movement as a harbinger of messianic times. He held to this view strongly, and even when he was offered some of Galicia's most prestigious rabbinic positions on the condition he renounce his views (or, at least, keep them to himself), he refused to abandon his beliefs. R' Roth was eventually elected rabbi of Shatz (Suceava, Romania) and later Czernowitz (Ukraine), where he witnessed the community's destruction during the Holocaust. In 1944, R' Roth managed to escape to Eretz Yisrael, and he was soon chosen for

membership in the Chief Rabbinate Council. He also became one of the closest advisors to Chief Rabbi Herzog. R' Roth passed on 26 Kislev 5723 / 1962.

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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.
