

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!

by Shlomo Katz

Parshas Tetzaveh

Make Yourself at Home!

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This week's Hamaayan is dedicated by Patrick Carrera in memory of his son, Mattisyahu, who recently passed away in a car accident on December 8, 2010. May his family have a speedy recovery.

Today's Learning: Tanach: Yechezkel 1-2 Mishnah: Ma'asrot 1:1-2 Halachah: O.C. 627:4-628:2 Daf Yomi (Bavli): Zevachim 94 Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Shabbat 1

This week's parashah begins with the mitzvah to take pure olive oil for use in the menorah in the mishkan and Bet Hamikdash. R' Moshe Isserles z"l ("Rema"; 1530-1572; rabbi of Cracow, Poland, and author of the glosses on Shulchan Aruch that adapted that work for Ashkenazim) writes that the oil and the menorah are symbols of Torah scholars and the Torah, respectively. This is illustrated by the verses (Zechariah 4:2-3, 11-12, 14), "I said, 'I see, and behold--there is a menorah made entirely of gold with its bowl on its top; its seven lamps are upon it, and there are seven ducts for each of the lamps on its top. There are two olive trees over it, one at the right of the bowl and one on its left.' . . . I then spoke up and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees, on the right of the menorah and on its left?' I spoke up a second time and said to him, 'What are the two clusters of olives that are next to the two golden presses, which are pouring golden oil from themselves?' . . . He said to me, 'These are the two anointed men who are standing near the Lord of the Land'." The Gemara (Sanhedrin 24a) comments: "'The two anointed men who are standing near the Lord of the Land' allude to Torah scholars in Eretz Yisrael, whose Torah study is pleasant one to the other. 'The two olive trees' allude to Torah scholars in Bavel, whose Torah study is bitter one to the other [as raw olives are bitter]." [This is a reference to the different styles of the Talmud Bavli / Babylonian Talmud and the Talmud Yerushalmi / Palestinian Talmud, the former of which contains significantly more debate and give-and-take than the latter.] We see, Rema writes, that the olive trees and the oil allude to Torah scholars. The menorah itself, he writes, alludes to the seven branches of Torah and also to the seven general wisdoms, all of which are incorporated into the Torah. (Torah Ha'olah I ch.16)

"You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor." (28:2)

What "glory and splendor" was demonstrated by the bigdei kehunah / the uniforms of the kohanim? R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz z"l (Germany; died 1764) explains:

Halachah requires the garments of the Kohen Gadol to fit him exactly. How was this possible? The Torah (Vayikra 21:10) refers to the Kohen Gadol as "the kohen who is gadol [literally "bigger"] than his brethren." Our Sages say that when a kohen was anointed as High Priest, he actually grew until he was taller than the other kohanim. If so, how could the Kohen Gadol's clothing fit him exactly? After all, he had to be fitted for his new "uniform" before he was anointed, and after he was anointed, he grew taller!

The answer, says R' Eyebchutz, is that the Kohen Gadol's garments grew with him. This was the "glory and splendor" of the bigdei kehunah.

Why did Hashem arrange things such that this miracle became necessary? Was there not enough "glory and splendor" in the fact that the Kohen Gadol grew taller?

R' Eyebchutz answers: We read in Mishlei (15:30), "Enlightened eyes will gladden the heart; good news will fatten the bone." In effect, one who receives good tidings stands taller. Thus, if only the body of the Kohen Gadol "grew," we might have thought that it was a natural consequence of his promotion. Therefore, to make clear that a miracle had occurred, the Kohen Gadol's clothes grew with him. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

"A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe all around. It must be on Aharon in order to minister. Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary and when he leaves, so that he not die." (28:34-35)

The Talmud Yerushalmi relates: "The sage Shmuel used to count little chickens during prayer / davening. The sage Rabbi Bun ben Chiya used to count the beams of the house during davening." Why did they do that? Certainly they were not so distracted as to be looking at chickens or beams!

R' Yissachar Dov Rokeach z"l (the Belzer Rebbe; died 1927) explained: It is related that the Rebbe R' Elimelech (great chassidic leader; died 1787) used to hold a watch in his hand during the Shabbat mussaf (known as "Kedushat Ketter" in the Sephardic liturgy which chassidim follow). R' Elimelech said that he felt so uplifted during that particular prayer that he was afraid his soul would leave him. Therefore, he held a reminder of this temporal world in his hand in order to keep himself on earth.

If a relatively contemporary sage (R' Elimelech) prayed thus, certainly the sages of old did, explained

the Belzer Rebbe. That is why Shmuel counted chickens in the middle of davening and Rabbi Bun counted the beams of the house. They needed to do so in order to remain attached to this world.

In this light we can understand the purpose of the bells attached to the Kohen Gadol's robe. If the sages of the Talmud could lose their connections to this world during moments of spiritual ascent, certainly Aharon was at such risk also when he entered the Holy of Holies. Therefore, "Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary and when he leaves, so that he not die." The sound of the bells kept him on earth. (Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)

"I shall sanctify the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting and the mizbeach / altar; and Aharon and his sons I shall sanctify to serve Me. I shall rest My Presence among Bnei Yisrael, and I shall be their G-d. They shall know that I am Hashem, their Elokim, Who took them out of the land of Egypt to rest My Presence among them. I am Hashem, their Elokim." (29:44-46)

Rashi z"l comments: "For the purpose of dwelling in their midst."

R' Yitzchak Yerucham Borodiansky shlita (mashgiach ruchani of Yeshivat Kol Torah in Yerushalayim) writes: This comment of Rashi sheds new light on the purpose for which the Exodus took place. He explains:

There are different levels of emunah. There is emunah which is a belief system, but which has no impact on a person's day-to-day behavior. Then there is emunah which does impact a person's behavior. Even this is not the ideal, however, for a person who possesses such emunah may still feel that "G-d's place is above, and down here is my place."

Ideal emunah, R' Borodiansky writes, is the feeling that one is walking side-by-side with G-d. In that vein, R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l (1895-1974; mashgiach ruchani of the Mir and Ponovezh yeshivot) used to comment on the verse (Devarim 18:13), "You shall be tamim / wholehearted with Hashem, your Elokim"--"You shall be teomim / twins with Hashem, your Elokim," i.e., like twins who are inseparable.

This, concludes R' Borodiansky, is what Rashi is teaching us. Hashem did not take our ancestors out of Egypt merely to be our G-d, but for the purpose of dwelling in our midst. (Siach Yitzchak p.327)

"Aharon shall bring atonement upon [the altar's] horns once a year, from the blood of the sin-offering of the atonements, once a year, he shall bring atonement upon it for your generations; it is holy of holies to Hashem." (30:10)

Why does the verse say twice that Aharon shall "bring atonement" on the altar "once a year"? R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (rabbi of Brody, Galicia; died 1869) explains:

There are two aspects of our sins. The first is personal; man is responsible for his own sins. The second is communal; if one of us sins, all of us bear some blame because "Kol Yisrael areivim zeh b'zeh" / "All Jews are responsible for each other." Thus, the first atonement is for the personal aspect of the sin, while the second atonement is for the communal aspect. That is why the second phrase refers to atonement "for your generations." When one person sins, the entire generation needs atonement. (Kohelet Yaakov: Shekalim, Drush 14)

Make Yourself at Home

"For the conductor, on the gittit [an instrument], by the sons of Korach, a psalm: How beloved are Your dwelling places, Hashem, Master of Legions! My soul yearns, indeed it pines, for the courtyards of Hashem; my heart and my flesh pray fervently to the Living G-d. Even the bird finds its home, and the tzipor dror [a species of wild bird] her nest where she laid her young. O, to be at Your altars, Hashem, Master of Legions, my King and my Elokah. Ashrei yoshvei veitecha / Fortunate are those who dwell in Your house, od yehalelucha / continually they will praise You, selah." (Tehilim 84:1-5)

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik z"l (1903-1993) observed: Every person wants a home, and even animals prepare homes for themselves. Birds build nests; even the tzipor dror, a species of wild bird which our Sages say cannot be domesticated, build a nest. How much more so does a human pine for a home! What is a person's true home? It is the house of Hashem, the place of the altar. One who does not have a Bet Hamikdash or a bet ha'midrash where he can spend several hours a day, does not have a true home. Even if he has a mansion with fancy furniture and fine art, he has no home if he does not have a firm connection to Hashem's house. In contrast, when one has a bet ha'midrash or bet ha'knesset, then he has a home--a house with a spiritual roof over his head. Without a "house of Hashem," one is worse off than a bird, which at least has a nest. Therefore, "Ashrei yoshvei veitecha!" / "Fortunate are those who dwell in Your house." Notably, the verse does not say, "Ashrei ha'yoshvim b'veitecha!" / "Fortunate are those who are sitting in Your house." Rather, the verse is speaking only of those who dwell in--who have an ongoing connection to--"Hashem's house."

R' Soloveitchik continues: In order to study Torah and to be productive in that study, one must feel at home in the place where he studies. Furthermore, one cannot learn or teach unless he feels joy, as the prophet Elisha said (Melachim II 3:15), "And now bring me a musician." That verse relates: "It happened that as the musician played, the hand of Hashem came upon [Elisha]." Only when a person feels at home can he be happy. Fortunate is the person whose home is "Hashem's house" for then he is in a state of "od yehalelucha / continually they will praise You."

In order for a person to feel at home in G-d's house, R' Soloveitchik concludes, it is essential to come to shul early and to linger there, and only then to begin praying. Likewise, one who has his tefilin off and his coat on and is standing at the door before services are over does not appear to feel at home. (R' Soloveitchik adds: Although talking during davening is strictly prohibited, there is a positive aspect to its prevalence, i.e., it shows that we feel at home in shul, in contrast to the cold formality that prevails in some places of worship.) (Al Ha'tefilah p.31)

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 **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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