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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Where's The Bus?!

"Holy to Hashem" (28:36)

The 402 bus was 50 minutes late.

An increasingly large number of people gathered at the bus stop becoming increasingly frustrated and angry. Finally, a bus came - but not the 402; it was the 450.

The doors opened and everybody crowded into the bus, demanding that the driver call the bus company and send them a 402 immediately, and threatening that they would not leave the bus until the 402 arrived. The driver said, "Okay, I'll call them, but I want everybody off the bus first." They all got off the bus, the doors closed, and the bus driver climbed up in his seat, took the number 450 down and replaced it with the number 402.

Everyone smiled in disbelief. What a nice guy! Everyone got back on the bus. They were so happy with the bus driver that he had changed his route. This was a first in the history of Israeli buses!

Well, it wasn't quite like that.

What actually happened was that the original 402 bus had a flat tire and was running so late that no other driver at the depot fancied greeting a crowd of such irate passengers who had been waiting for fifty minutes. Finally one of the drivers said, "Okay. I'll go."

And so, the 402 finally left the depot.

Just before arriving at the stop, the driver changed the number of the bus from 402 to 450, and then he drove up to the bus stop.

The only thing that changed was the number.

Very often in life, we're waiting for the "402". We feel — *"It's coming to me."* I deserve it. When things go wrong, we burn with frustration in direct proportion to our sense of entitlement.

Chazal explain that the *tzitz* – the golden headplate worn by the High Kohen - the Kohen HaGadol - atones for brazenness — for a person who acts as though the world revolves around him.

The Kohen Gadol wears “*Kodesh LaShem*” on his forehead — the place of ego, identity, expectation. The message is clear: this is not about you. Everything is from Hashem. When a person internalizes this — that every bus, every delay, every outcome is sent precisely by Divine Providence — then even a “450” bus is a gift.

The event doesn’t change.

The number changes.

Tetzaveh teaches us to engrave “*Kodesh LaShem*” onto the forehead of our expectations.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to bring Him pure olive oil for the Menorah in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). Mose is also told to organize the making of the *Bigdei Kehuna* (priestly garments), some of which include a mixture of wool and linen: A breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate, and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil.

Hashem commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the Altar in the Mishkan. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. Hashem commands that another Altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this Golden Altar each day.

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Q & A

Questions

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of the oil for the *menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

Answers

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen, ephod, me'il, ketonet, mitznefet, avnet, tzitz, and michnasayim.*
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 -
 - (a) The claims of the litigants
 - (b) The court's ruling
 - (c) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* -- the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 -
 - (a) It always atones, even when not being worn.
 - (b) The Kohen Gadol must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet, avnet, migba'at* and *michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 – the crown of *kehuna*.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

Sheva Brachot (Part 2)

A husband and wife are one soul, separated only through their descent to this world. When they are married, they are reunited again.

Zohar HaKadosh

The Jerusalem Talmud (*Ketubot* 1:1) teaches that the custom of extending the wedding celebrations for seven days (parenthetically: and the custom for mourners to sit *Shivah* for seven days) was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu.

Some, however, suggest that the seven days of celebration date all the way back to the time of Ya'akov Avinu. The Torah describes how Ya'akov Avinu, on arriving in Charan, was intent on marrying his cousin Rachel. Lavan, however, who was Ya'akov Avinu's uncle and father-in-law to-be, wanted Yaakov first to marry Leah, Rachel's older sister. At the wedding Lavan surreptitiously substituted Leah for Rachel, and Ya'akov realized the deception only the following day. When Yaakov confronted Lavan, the new father-in-law responded with self-righteous indignation, claiming that in his community it was unacceptable for a younger sister to marry before the older sister. He then added that he would "graciously" allow Ya'akov to marry Rachel after the week's celebrations for the wedding to Leah were over (*Bereshit* 29:22-27 with Rashi). Some cite this as proof that it was the norm for wedding celebrations to last for a week even in the days of Yaakov Avinu.

And throughout these seven days of celebration, at each festive meal that the *Chattan* and *Kallah* attend, the same *Sheva* [seven] *Brachot* recited under the *chuppah* are recited again, at the end of *Birkat HaMazon*. The only difference is the order: Under the *chuppah* the blessing over the wine is the first blessing recited; thereafter, at the end of *Birkat HaMazon*, the blessing over the wine is the last blessing recited.

In any case, the custom to recite *Sheva Brachot* at the wedding and during the week following it dates back at least to the times of the Talmud.

So foundational is the establishment of a new Jewish home that, according to Rabbeinu Bachye, it is like the creation of the world. Just as the world was created in purity and sanctity over seven days, so too should the newly established home be founded on purity and sanctity; and that -- writes Rabbeinu Bachaye -- is why the wedding celebration lasts for seven days, to mirror the Seven Days of Creation. Additionally, as our Sages teach that

Hashem brought the world into existence with ten statements, so too does the final blessing under the *chuppah* comprise ten corresponding expressions of joy.

The Jewish home is the “secret” of our eternity: As we stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah from Hashem, we were privy to the most exalted and intensely spiritual encounter ever experienced. And, as it drew to a close, Hashem instructs Moshe Rabbeinu to tell the Jewish People to return to their tents (*Devarim* 5:27). In his characteristically sharp style, the Kotzker Rebbe explains that Hashem is telling the Jewish Nation to go back to their dwellings and *live* the purity and the sanctity of Har Sinai *in their tents!* Because there is nothing more consequential to Jewish continuity than the Jewish home.

To be continued...

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

THE GARMENTS OF THE KOHEN GADOL

Mitzvos #99, #100, and #101 in *Sefer HaChinuch*

The Kohanim are commanded to wear eight majestic garments of the type worn by royalty at the time of the Giving of the Torah (*Ramban*). The garments accord honor to the service and also remind the Kohanim of its great importance. Glancing upward, a Kohen would see his turban; he would constantly feel his thick sash with his arms. This would help keep his mind focused on serving Hashem, in the same way *tefillin* help a person focus on Hashem (*Sefer HaChinuch*). Some garments, such as the tunic, were made of pure white linen, suggesting purity (*Rav Hirsch*). Lightly dressed and walking without shoes on cold marble stones, the Kohanim would serve Hashem with humility, sanctity, and alacrity. Each garment atoned for a different sin: The tunic atoned for bloodshed, the sash atoned for sinful thoughts, the pants atoned for immoral acts, the turban atoned for haughtiness, the *ephod*-apron atoned for idolatry, the breastplate atoned for perversion of justice, the *me'il*-cloak atoned for *lashon hara*, and the headplate atoned for brazenness (*Zevachim* 88b). In this article, we will focus on the latter four garments, which were worn only by the Kohen Gadol.

APRON (EPHOD)

The *Ephod* was suspended by shoulder straps, upon which were affixed a pair of black gems called *shoham* stones, and inscribed on each gem were six names of the twelve sons of Yaakov. When Yaakov was on his deathbed, his sons affirmed their belief in Hashem's unity by proclaiming the first verse of *Shema*, and Yaakov blessed Hashem with the words: *Baruch shem k'vod malchuso l'olam va'ed*. In commemoration of this event, there are twenty-five letters on each *shoham* stone, representing the twenty-five letters in the first verse of *Shema* and the twenty-five letters in the accompanying phrase "*Baruch shem k'vod...*" (*Malbim*). As the Sages teach that the *Ephod* atones for idol worship because idolaters commonly wore such an apron. Wearing an apron to serve Hashem atones for wearing an apron to serve idols. Based on what we have explained above, we may add that the *Ephod* atones for idolatry also because the *shoham* stones represent the unity of Hashem and our subjugation to Him.

There was a third *shoham* stone on the breastplate itself that represented Yosef. Accordingly, the two *shoham* stones on the apron straps represent Yosef's two sons, Menasheh and Ephraim, who were raised amongst Egyptians but did not learn from their sinful ways (*Pesikta D'Rabbi Kahana*). The *shoham* stones allude to Egypt either because they can be excavated from the Nile River that runs through Egypt (*Radal*, citing *Bereishis* 2:12) or because the Egyptians were black-skinned (*Rabbi Meir Shapiro*), or because the Egyptians were "black" with sin and impurity.

We may explain the significance of this allusion based on Rabbi Avigdor Miller's observation that the Jewish people never invented an idol but rather copied the practices of neighboring nations. Thus, whenever Hashem sees the *shoham* stones, He is reminded of the Jewish people's origin in idolatrous Egypt, where they were exposed to the idolatry of the Egyptians. He recalls that this sin does not represent the true essence of the Jewish people, and He atones for them. Moreover, Hashem recalls those in every generation who, like Menasheh and Ephraim, retain their holiness despite anti-religious social surroundings.

BREASTPLATE (CHOSHEN)

The Kohen Gadol would wear an ornamental breastplate studded with twelve different precious stones, upon which are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes, the names of the Patriarchs, and the words "*Shivtei Yeshurun* - tribes of Yeshurun, i.e., the Jewish People. The breastplate is set upon a folded piece of fabric that contains Hashem's seventy-two-letter Name.

The Torah commands us to attach the breastplate to the Ephod and never to separate them. We may suggest that the idea behind this mitzvah is that the glory of the twelve tribes symbolized by the breastplate must never be seen as a value in its own right. Our glory is nothing more than an extension of Hashem's glory, by virtue of our being His servants. The breastplate must therefore always remain attached to the Ephod, which symbolizes our service to Hashem, as explained above.

CLOAK (ME'IL)

The cloak atones for *lashon hara* (evil speech/malicious gossip). There are seventy-two types of skin impurities, *tzaraas*, that a person might contract as a punishment for speaking *lashon hara*. Correspondingly, seventy-two articles hang from the hem of the cloak: thirty-six bells, in between which are thirty-six balls of fabric resembling pomegranates. Pomegranates allude to the Torah, because a pomegranate is filled with numerous seeds in the same way the Torah is filled with 613 Mitzvos; the noise produced by the bells clanging against the pomegranates suggests that a person should use his mouth to speak meritorious words and not malicious ones.

We may suggest that the clanging of a bell against the *two* adjacent pomegranates reminds us of this idea because the numerical value of *rimon* (רִמּוֹן pomegranate) is 306, so two pomegranates have the value of 612, which is 613 including the bell (based on *Lechem Rav* to *Perek Shirah, Rimon*).

The cloak is made of wool dyed pure blue, the color of the sky, which signifies that one's speech should be as pure as the heavens. It is forbidden to tear the "lip" (neckline) of the cloak, signifying that one should not "tear" the holiness of the lips with improper speech (*Malbim*).

HEADPLATE (TZITZ)

Upon the headplate is inscribed the phrase *Kodesh La'Shem* - sacred to Hashem. Wearing the headplate atones for brazenness because brazenness is associated with the brow, as in the term *azus metzach* (a brazen brow). The Kohen Gadol must constantly keep in mind the fact that he displays Hashem's Name on his brow (*Yoma* 8a); this instills within him a deep reverence for his service. The Sages (*ibid.*) infer from this that one who is wearing *tefillin*, which has not one but many Divine Names written within it, should certainly bear in mind that he carries Hashem's Name upon him.