

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Tetzaveh 5784

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Hashem instructs Moshe regarding the kohanim and their avodah.

וְהָיָה עַל־אַהֲרֹן לְשָׂרֵת וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ בְּבֵאוֹ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְפָנָי יְהוָה וּבִצְאוֹתָיו וְלֹא יָמוּת:

“And it will be upon Aharon to officiate, and its sound will be heard when he comes to the Holies before Hashem and when he exits; and he shall not die.” (Shmos 28:35).

Of all the vestments that Aharon had to wear, why were there little bells and pomegranates that adorned the hem of his me'il (robe)? Also, what is meant that its sound or voice will be heard? Also, what is the significance of it being heard going in and going out?

The entire parshas (segment) teaching about the kohanim is a slight diversion from how the Torah normally teaches. Surely after teaching Moshe about the Mishkan Hashem would then teach Moshe about the avodah in the Mishkan. The next instruction after making the coverings for the Mishkan should be, these are the people who will be officiating in the Mishkan, Aharon and his sons. (Shmos 28:1). These are the vestments they have to wear. (Ibid 28:2). And this is how you inaugurate them. (Ibid 29:1). However, the Torah adds one bit before all of this. וְאַתָּה תְּצַוֶּה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת גָּד כְּתִית לַמָּאֹר. “And you will command Bnei Yisroel the following: Take for yourselves pure pressed olive oil, beaten for the purpose of lighting, for lighting eternal lamps.” (Ibid 27:20).

This instruction is not directed at Aharon or his sons. It makes sense to instruct Bnei Yisroel to bring the olive oil because Bnei Yisroel were also instructed on bringing all other items needed to construct the Mishkan. However, what is unique about this instruction is that it is not instruction to bring material for the bigei kahuna, but it is one part of one of the avodas. The Torah does not expound further into the materials and animals needed for the other avodos. The Torah also does write what avodah this oil will be used for. While it may be implied that the olive oil is for the Menorah, the Torah does not specifically say so, here. Further, Hashem also tells Moshe, וְאַתָּה תְּצַוֶּה “You will eventually command” Bnei Yisroel. This is something that will be done later, but Moshe had to know about it before learning about the bigdei kahuna. It was also an instruction for Bnei Yisroel to bring “for themselves.”

The significance of this preamble come a little clearer when scrutinizing the instructions regarding the bigdei kahuna. וְאַלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶרֶת וְיָמְעִיל וּכְתֹנֶת תְּשֻׁבֵץ מְצֻנָּפֶת. “And these are the vestments that the artisans shall make: a chest-plate, an ephod (shoulder straps), and a robe, a woven tunic, headpiece, and a belt. They shall make these holy vestments for Aharon, your brother, and his sons, to be my priests.” (Ibid 28:4). Again, this is out of order. Why talk about the Kohen Gadol's vestments that are worn only on special occasions before mentioning the

basic four begadim (ibid 28:40) worn by all kohanim? The pasuk ended off it was for Aharon...and his sons. His only wore the four basic begadim.

The instruction for the Mishkan is all about the Torah talking about the major significance – the purpose and most holy – and then going down to the basics. This is a diversion from its normal “go up in holiness.” The Torah first instructs about the Aron. (Ibid 25:10). Afterwards the Torah mentions the Shulchan, Menorah, and so forth. In the current parsha, the Torah instructs on the kohen gadol first and then the basic vestments, in the same manner. Therefore, to understand which Hashem optimizes, look at the first pesukim and then move further from there. Avodah is important in the outside mizbeach. That is the most common and most used. However, more precious is the inside mizbeach, then the menorah, then the show bread. Finally, Aharon coming into the Kodsh before Hashem is the most substantial.

The same can be applied for how one Jew shows love for another. Aharon's avodah is not just to run around in some ritual that appears exalted. The pasuk introducing the bigdei kohen gadol lists the choshen first but the Torah's specific instructions commences with the ephod. The Torah uses the term pairs a lot in creating the ephod. Two shoulder pieces, two ends, two straps, two stones, and two golden chains. Each stone should have half the names of Bnei Yisroel. (Ibid 28:10). The purpose of the stones is that Aharon should mention Bnei Yisroel as he carries their names on his shoulders. (Ibid 28:12).

The choshen chest-plate should be made “like the work of the ephod.” (Ibid 28:15). Not only are they physically connected but they are connected in their construction and purpose as well. It is a square but “doubled.” (Ibid 28:16). It also has stones that also bear the names of Bnei Yisroel. The choshen also has two rings, two ends, two golden cords; two on top to connect to ephod and two on bottom to connect to the waistband. “It shall not come loose from the ephod.” (Ibid 28:28). The names on the stones are for mention before Hashem. (Ibid 28:29). Then there is Urim v'Tumim (the special amulet or kamiah tucked inside the choshen), also two, which are consulted at times. (Bamidbar 27:21). Finally, the Torah talks about the me'il with its pomegranates and gold bells (pairs).

The significance of two is Aharon thinking about others. He should know he is not alone. He may be the kohen “gadol” but, eventually, his sons will take over his position and wear those vestments. He cannot even become kohen until Bnei Yisroel prepare his oil and clothes for him. The bond of thinking of others is the true “eternal light.” Aharon represents twelve shevatim who are in pairs, they are all brothers. It is “Aharon, Moshe's brother” that wears the bigadim to remember he is a brother. Initially, he needs only to keep the names close to his heart and to have their engraving mention themselves to Hashem. A secondary form of tefillah is asking for things specifically, like the asking the Urim. Finally, there is the sound of tefillah that is vocal. The bells signal the kohen gadol coming in and going out. The avodah is not meant to be quiet and sublime. At its basic form it is meant to be vocal and have the Kohen be heard by Hashem on the way in and when leaving, leaving an impression for brochos and good life. The highest level is entering the holies where the mere “remembrance” of their names is a vocal call that is heard.