Short Comments on Parashat Tetzaveh Rabbi Eliot Malomet February 12, 2022 11 Adar 1 5782

שמות כ״ז:כ״א בְּאָהֶל מוֹעֵדْ מָחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדָׁת יַעֲרֹךְ אֹתוֹ אַהְרָן וּבָנֵיו מֵעֶרֶב עַד־בָּקֶר לִפְנֵי ה' חַקְּת עוֹלָם לִדֹרֹתִם מָאַת בַּנֵי יִשׂראַל:

Exodus 27:21 Aaron and his sons shall set them up in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain which is over [the Ark of] the Pact, [to burn] from evening to morning before God. It shall be a due from the Israelites for all time, throughout the ages. The menorah is lit in the evening and burns through the night. What does it symbolize? Y. Leibowitz suggests that it represents the light of creation. Just as God "lights" the universe as a first act of creation, the Kohen Gadol "lights" the menorah as the first act of service listed here. Taking this idea further: The light of the menorah is God's light. Israel is the custodian of that light. And the mission of Israel is to bring that light to the world.

כ״ח:ג׳ וְאַפָּׁה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־חַכְמִי־לֵּב אֲשֶׁר מִלְּאתָיו רְוּחַ חַכְמֵה וְעַשׁׁוּ אֵת־בָּגִדִי אָהָרוֹ לְקִדּשׁוֹ לְכַהֵנוֹ־לִי:

28:3 Next you shall instruct all who are skillful, whom I have endowed with the gift of skill, to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as priest. How do we understand

creative talent? Not everyone is endowed with the ability weave, fabricate, stitch. Extraordinary people can see something in their minds and create it with their hands out of raw materials. The thrill of creation is godly. The who created people these items, like all artisans. were extraordinary. They were filled with the spirit of wisdom.

כ״ת:י״ז-כ״א וּמְלֵּאתָ בוֹ מִלְּאַת אֶׁבֶן אַרְבָּעָה טוּרִים אָבֶן טוּר אָדֶם פִּטְדָה וּבָרֶּקֶת הַטְּוּר הָאֶחֶד: וְהַטְּוּר הֹשְׁנֵי לְבֶּהְ ספָּיר וְיָהַלְם: וְהַטְּוּר הַשְּׁלִישֵׁי לֻשָׁם שְׁבָּוֹ וְאַחָלֵמָה: וְהַטוּר הָשְׁרִיעִי לֻשָׁם שַּׁרְשִׁישׁ וְשָׁהַם וְיָשְׁפֵּה מְשַׁבָּצִים מַּרְשִׁישׁ וְשָׁהַם וְיָשְׁפֵּה מְשַׁבָּצִים זָהֶב יִהְיָּוּ בְּמִלּוּאֹתֵם: וְּהָאֲבָנִּים תְּהְיֶּינְ עַל־שְׁמְת בְּגִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמֵּים עָשְׂרָה עַל־שְׁמֹתֵם פָּתּוּחֵי חוֹתָם אִישׁ עַל־שְׁמֹוֹ תְּהְיֵּינְ לִשׁנֵי עשׁר שִׁבַט:

28:17-21 *Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of* stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings. The stones shall correspond sin number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names. They shall be engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes. Twelve precious stones, four rows of three. The translation is a best guess as to what these stones were, based mostly on Onkelos' Aramaic translation. What did the different gemstones symbolize? There is a rich literature on this and no definitive answer. Ibn Ezra: והאמת . שלא נוכל לדעתם - in truth. we cannot know what they are. Some see it as an oracle, a device through which God communicates by flashes. Some see it as a kind of binary yes-and-no

response console. If the answer to a vexing existential auestion "yes," it would light up one way; if it was "no" it would light up a different way. Feel free to add your own interpretations. Here's mine: minerals and gems tell the story of the co-evolution of the earth and life. Rocks and minerals are really the most robust storytellers. They preserve the record of history better than any other type of material that we have available. (Robert Hazen) The Kohen Gadol is not only a representative of Israel, he is also a representation of life itself (and the planet).



כ״ח:כ״ט-ל׳ וְנַשָּׂא ״הַהֹּן אֶת־שְׁמֹוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׁרָאֵׁל בְּחְשֶׁן הַמְּשְׁרָאֵל בְּחְשֶׁן הַמְּשְׁרָבּי וְנָשָׂא ״הַהֹּן שְׁלִדְּכָּין לְפָנֵי־ה' תְּמִיד: וְנָתַתְּּ הָמִיּשְׁן הַמְּשְׁכָּט עַּל־לְבָּוֹ בְּלְבִּי לְזַכֶּרוֹן לְפְנֵי־ה' תְּמִיד: וְנָתַתְּּ שְׁרֹּלֵב שִהְדֹּן אֶל־לַבְנִי ה' וְנָשָׂא ״הָהוֹן אֶת־מִשְׁפַּׁט בְּנֵי־יִשְׁרָאֵל עַל־לְבֶּוֹ לְבְנֵי הִי תִמִיד:

Exodus 28:29-30 So Aharon is to bear the names of the Children of Israel on the Breastpiece of Judgement over his heart whenever he comes intot the Holy-Shrine for reminder, before the presence of God, regularly. And you are to put in the Breastpiece of Judgment the Urim and the Tummim that they may be over Aharon's heart, whenever he comes before the presence of God. So Aharon is to bear the Breastpiece of Judgment for the Children of Israel over his heart before the presence of God regularly. Just as the tablets were placed in the Ark, the *Urim Ve-Tumim* were placed in the breastpiece pouch of the KG. There is remarkable symmetry here. The Ark is the heart of God's sanctuary. The KG has the people (and the planet by extension) upon his heart. The two hearts meet. Perhaps there is also a connection to tefillin here. Tefillin are bound next to the heart. More directly though, in the Sh'ma these words that I command you this day are to be placed upon your heart. Thus, while the High Priest places Israel on his heart, and the covenant words are located in the heart of the Sanctuary, God's words will reside in the heart of every Jew.

כ״ת:ל״ת וְהָיָה על־מֵצַח אַהַרֹֹן וְנָשָּׂא אַהַרֹן אֶת־עֲוֹן הַמֶּדָשִׁים אַהַרֹּל יְנָלְישׁא אַהַרוֹן אֶת־עֲוֹן הַמֶּדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יַקְדִּישׁוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבֶל־מַתְּנָת קַדְשֵׁיהֶם וְהָיָה עַל־מִצְחוֹ הַנֹי לְרַצְוֹן לָהַם לִפְנֵי ה':

28:38 It shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may take away any sin arising from the holy things that the Israelites consecrate, from any of their sacred donations; it shall be on his forehead at all times, to win acceptance for them before God. The Kohen Gadol is like a lightning rod for atonement; the headdress is a symbolic "channel" of God to Israel. It "channels" Israel's supplication to God and God's atonement to Israel. פיש: ליים ליום לְּמֶר וְשֶׁל בְּבֶּלֶר וְאֵל הַבֶּבֶע הָאָחָד תַּעֲשֶׁה בַבָּלֶר וְאֵל הַבֶּבֶע הַלְּים הָּעִרְבִּים: הַשְׁלֵי תַעשָׁה בֵּלְלֵר וְאֵל הַבֶּבֶע הַלֵּים הַעְרַבִּים: הַשְׁלֵי תַעשָׁה בֵּלְלֵר וְאֵל הַבֶּבֶע הַלֵּים:

29:38-39 Now this is what you shall offer upon the altar: two yearling lambs each day, regularly.

You shall offer the one lamb in the morning, and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight. The parasha includes some instructions for the consecration of the sanctuary, an event which will take place in Leviticus. But we point out this verse because it has come to mean something beyond its context. Quoted from time to time, it suggests that our spiritual lives are not defined as much by peak moments of transcendence as much as they are by the quotidian daily discipline of prayer, study, and observance of mitzvot. Like daily physical exercise, the discipline of every day activity is what builds us, intellectually, religiously, spiritually. The text often cited to support this idea is found in a midrash.1 In a discussion about "the most comprehensive verse in the Torah," the teaching reads as follows: Ben Zoma said: We found a verse that is more comprehensive, "Hear O Israel..." Ben Nanas said: We found a verse that is more comprehensive, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Shim'on ben Pazi said: We found a verse that is more comprehensive, "One lamb you should offer in the morning..." Rabbi Ploni stood up and said: The law is like Ben Pazi.(Netivot Olam, Netiv Ahavat Re'a 1:4)

בן זומא אומר מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא שמע ישראל וגו'. בן ננס אומר מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא ואהבת לרעך כמוך. שמעון בן פזי אומר מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא את הכבש האחד שמעון בן פזי אומר מצינו פסוק כולל יותר והוא את הכבש האחד So what is the Torah's most "comprehensive" idea? Declaring faith and love of God? Loving your neighbor? Or daily acts of devotion, study and service? It's a worthy debate. Perhaps the synthesis of all position is this: pronouncements of faith and mutual responsibility are meaningless without a discipline of daily practice. The day-to-day acts of devotion, study, and mitzvah are what matters most.

כ״ט:מ״ו וְיָדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלְהַיהֶּם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מַאָּרָץ מִצְרַיִם לְשָׁכָנִי בְתוֹכֵם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:

29:46 And they shall know that I π am their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt that I might abide among them—I, π their God. The whole purpose of the Exodus was so that God would abide among the people. To paraphrase Jeff Lebowski: "The Lord abides."

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have to do a little more research here to pin it down. Perhaps it was made up altogether. Nevertheless, the wisdom it contains is instructive.

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¹ The provenance of this midrash is not certain. It is apparently located in the introduction to Ein Yaakov, a 16th Century compendium of non-legal material in the Talmud. It is not found in the earlier sources. We