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DAF KESHER

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DVAR TORAH ZACHOR VS. ZECHOR

“זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק” should not be translated as “Remember what Amalek did to you.” If that were the case, the word זָכוֹר would have been formulated as “זְכוֹר” (with the vowel שווא under the Zayin, pronounced “zechor”), the standard command (צווי) form of the verb זָכַר. Instead, Hashem commanded “זָכוֹר” (with the vowel קמץ under the Zayin, pronounced “zachor”). What is the difference in meaning between “zachor” and “zechor,” and why did Hashem choose to say “zachor”?

“Zachor,” in Hebrew grammar terminology, is referred to as the מקור הפועל, the “source” of the verb, and indicates constant action. “Zechor,” on the other hand, is in the simple command form. There is a difference in meaning between them. “Zachor” means “constantly remember,” whereas “zechor” means, simply, “remember,” as in the verse, “זָכֹר יָמֹת עוֹלָם” – Remember the days of old” (Devarim 32:7).

Rashi, in his comments on “זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ” (Shemot 20:8), explains what “zachor” means in the Divine command to remember Shabbat. ‘Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it’ is not a precise translation; “Constantly remember Shabbat” is more accurate. As Rashi explains, Hashem here tells us, “תָּנוּ לָב לְזִכּוֹר תְּמִיד אֵת” – Pay attention to constantly remember the Shabbat day, so that if a nice item comes your way (during the week), set it aside for Shabbat.” “Zachor” indicates the need for constant consciousness.

“Zachor” appears in only four contexts in the Chumash: remembering the Exodus; remembering Shabbat; remembering what Hashem did to Miriam; and remembering Amalek. Just as, according to Rashi, we must constantly remember Shabbat, the same must be true of the other three in the list. It is clear why we must constantly remember the Exodus, for the Exodus serves as the foundation of so much of Jewish belief. We can also understand the need to constantly remember what Hashem did to Miriam, because it serves as a constant reminder not to speak negatively about others (for Miriam’s leprosy was a Divine response to her subtly negative speech about Moshe Rabbeinu). The same must be true for Amalek, but why? Isn’t the war against Amalek a one-time national event? Why must every Jew constantly remember Amalek?

There are, perhaps, three aspects of the mitzvah of “zachor,” to constantly remember Amalek: awareness of Amalek; avoiding becoming Amalek-like; and avoiding becoming vulnerable to Amalek. The mitzvah of remembering Amalek reminds us not to be naïve about evil and to be aware that there are those who truly want to destroy the Jewish People. The mitzvah also reminds us to weed out the Amalek within, to recognize subtle similarities between our own behavior and that of the Amalekites. Amalek was extremely cruel; they preyed upon the weak and weary. They were also extremely unaffected by the wondrous supernatural events of the Exodus, like the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea – “He (Amalek) did not fear G-d” (Devarim 25:18). Remembering Amalek means cultivating deep sensitivity and allowing ourselves to be influenced by the Divine. Lastly, we are reminded that Amalek “cut off all those who were weak [and straggling] after you, when you were faint and weary” (Devarim 25:18). We must live so energetically that Amalek would never have attacked us.

SOURCE GUIDE: DIRECTED BRAZENNESS

The Kohen Gadol wore a ציץ, a gold headband, inscribed with the words, “קודש לה” – holy to Hashem.” As the person with the highest level of kedushah in the Jewish People, those words are certainly appropriate to the Kohen Gadol. But why were they inscribed on his headband? This source guide is built on the answer that appears in the Chatam Sofer on the Chumash.

A. The Function of the Tzitz

The mitzvah of the tzitz, the gold headband that the Kohen Gadol wore on his forehead, is detailed in our Parshah:

<p>1. Shemot Rabbah 33:4 (36) You should make a headband (literally, a show-plate) of pure gold and engrave upon it “Holy to Hashem.” (37) And you should place it on a cord of blue wool and it should be on the mitznefet (cap); it should be opposite the front of the mitznefet. (38) And it should be on Aharon’s forehead. And Aharon should bear the sin of the holy things that the Children of Israel sanctify, for all of their holy gifts. And it should be on his forehead always, to [create] favor for you before Hashem.</p>	<p>שמות רבה כח:לו-לח (לו) וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיץ זָהָב וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו פְּתוּחֵי חֹתֶם קֹדֶשׁ לָהּ. (לז) וְשָׂמְתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת וְהָיָה עַל הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל מוּל פְּנֵי הַמִּצְנֶפֶת יְהִיָּה. (לח) וְהָיָה עַל מִצְחַח אַהֲרֹן וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת עוֹן הַקֹּדְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יִקְדִּישׁוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכָל מִתְּנַת קֹדְשֵׁיהֶם וְהָיָה עַל מִצְחוֹ תָּמִיד לְרִצּוֹן לָהֶם לְפָנָי ה'.</p>
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In order to explain the significance of the tzitz being placed on the Kohen Gadol’s forehead and why it is engraved with the words “Holy to Hashem,” the author of the Chatam Sofer (Harav Moshe Sofer, זצ”ל – Pressburg, 1762–1839), in his commentary on our Parshah, turns to a passage in Masechet Erchin. That passage describes how various items of the Kohen Gadol’s clothing atone for various sins and character flaws:

<p>2. Erchin 16a The tzitz atones for acts of brazenness. Here is written, “It will be on Aharon’s forehead” (Shemot 28:38), and elsewhere it is written, “You had a harlot’s forehead” (Yirmiyah 3:3).</p>	<p>ערכין טז. ציץ מכפר על מעשה עזי פנים. כתיב הכא “והיה על מצח אהרן” (שמות כח:לח), וכתיב התם “ומצח אשה זונה היה לך” (ירמיה ג:ג).</p>
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According to the Ramban, the word מצח is connected with the word ניצוח:

<p>3. Ramban’s Commentary on Shemot 28:28 The noun מצח is, in its grammatical form, similar to ניצוח, for both are derived from a root with a Nun (that is dropped). For מצח is related to ניצוח, overpowering, becoming victorious, for the head’s strength is in the forehead.</p>	<p>פירוש הרמב”ן על שמות כח:כח: “מצח” בשקל “מצח”, שניהם בעלי הנו”ן, כי הוא מלשון ניצוח, כי חזוק הראש במצח.</p>
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B. Brazenness and Bashfulness

One of the words for brazenness is עזות, derived from one of the words for strength – עוז:

<p>4. Beitzah 25b We learn, in the name of Rabbi Meir: Why was the Torah given to Israel? It is because they are powerful, brazen. The yeshiva of Rabbi Yishmael learns: “From His right is a fiery law to them” (Devarim 33:2). Said the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘These are fitting that the fiery law should be given to them’ ... This is in line with what Rabbi Shimon son of Lakish said: There are three brazen ones – Israel among the nations, the dog among animals, and the rooster among birds ...</p>	<p>ביצה כה: תנא משמיה דרבי מאיר: מפני מה נתנה תורה לישראל? מפני שהן עזין. תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: “מימינו אש דת למו” (דברים לג:ב) – אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא, ראוין הללו שתנתן להם דת אש’ ... והיינו דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: שלשה עזין הן – ישראל באומות, כלב בחיות, תרנגול בעופות ...</p>
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Is this quality of brazenness, עזות, positive or negative? The following Mishnah implies that it is both:

<p>4. Avot 5:20 Yehudah son of Teima says: Be as brazen as a leopard, light as an eagle, run like a deer, and as mighty as a lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven. He would say: The brazen-faced – to Gehinnam, and the bashful ones – to Gan Eden.</p>	<p>אבות ה:כ יהודה בן תימא אומר: הוי עז פנמך, וקל פנשר, ורץ פצבי, וגבור פארי לעשות רצון אביך שבשמים. הוא היה אומר: עז פנים לגיהנם, ובשפת פנים לגן עדן.</p>
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There is a positive side to Jewish brazenness – it enables the Jew to stand up to opposition and persist in his belief despite the mocking voices from without and within – but bashfulness is a hallmark of the Jewish People:

<p>5. Yevamot 79a There are three signs of this Nation: [They are] merciful, bashful, and kind.</p>	<p>יבמות עט. שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו: הרחמנים והביישנים וגומלי חסדים.</p>
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Bashfulness should be the dominant trait, and brazenness must be used sparingly, taking care to use it only for the sake of Heaven. Brazenness can lead to arrogance. This is why “Holy to Hashem” is engraved on the tzitz:

<p>6. Chatam Sofer on Parshat Tetzaveh Therefore he should write on the forehead “Holy to Hashem,” for we dedicate our brazenness as holy to Hashem and nothing else, G-d forbid. For, on the contrary, the trait of Israel is bashfulness. But brazenness is holy to Hashem, against the seventy nations. This is the tefillin of the head: “All the nations of the world will see that the Name of Hashem is called upon you and they will fear you” (Devarim 28:10).</p>	<p>חתם סופר על פרשת תצוה ע"כ יכתוב על המצח "קודש לה", שאנו מקדישים העזות שלנו קודש לה' ולא לדבר אחר ח"ו. כי, אדרבא, מדת ישראל ביישנים, רק העזות קודש לה' נגד ע' אומות. והיינו תפילין שבראש: "וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך" (דברים כח:י).</p>
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MOSHE'S ABSENCE BY RABBI AVRAHAM FISCHER

It is a well-known observation that from the beginning of Shemot until the beginning of Devarim there is not a Parashah in which Moses is not mentioned – except for Parashat Tetzaveh, which is always read close to the seventh day of Adar, the anniversary of Moshe’s death.

The Torah even seems to go out of its way to avoid calling Moshe by name. Instead, three times he is addressed with the word “ואתה - and you”: “ואתה תצוה – And you shall command the Children of Israel that they take for you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. (Shemot 27:20). “ואתה תקרב – And you shall bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him from among the Children of Israel, that he may minister to Me: Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar, the sons of Aaron. (Shemot 28:1). “ואתה תדבר – And you shall speak to all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they will make Aaron’s garments to sanctify him that he may minister to Me (Shemot 28:3).

The repetition of “ואתה” is puzzling: Why eschew Moshe’s name, and why now? Also, what is the connection to the 7th of Adar?

To answer it will be helpful for us to examine the purpose of the Mishkan, the main subject of the second half of the Book of Shemot. While it was always Hashem’s intention to command the building of this Sanctuary in order to bring His Presence into the midst of the People, the actual command was issued after the sin of the golden calf (see Rashi’s comment on Shemot 31:18). Thereby, the Mishkan became atonement for that sin.

Hashem informs Moshe about the sin, proclaiming: “Go, descend, because your People that you brought up from the Land of Egypt have [become] corrupted (Shemot 32:7). The Talmud (Berachot 32a) comments on this verse: Said Rabbi Elazar: “Descend from your greatness: I granted you greatness only for the sake of Israel. Now that Israel sinned, why do I need you?”

Moshe’s leadership is inextricably bound up with the people of Israel. Accordingly, the Children of Israel feel lost without Moshe. The spark that initially ignited the sin was the people’s panic that Moshe might be dead:

“And the people saw that Moshe delayed in descending from the mountain, and the people assembled against Aharon and they said to him, ‘Arise, make for us gods that will go before us, for this man Moshe who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what became of him” (Shemot 32:1).

When Hashem declares that He will destroy the people and rebuild the nation from Moshe, the leader prays: “And now, if You will but forgive their sin—but if not, erase me, please, from Your book that You have written” (Shemot 32:32).

Moshe accepts his responsibility fully.

However, the People have shown that they are overly, even unhealthy, dependent upon Moshe and his role in connecting them to Hashem. In an unhealthy leader-follower relationship, which is analogous to an unhealthy parent-child relationship, the parent-figure does not allow the child-figure to develop independently, so the “child” cannot cope with separation.

Therefore, as explained by Harav Yehudah Leon Ashkenazi [Manitou], זצ”ל (1922-1996, a rabbinic leader of French-speaking Jewry), Moshe practices self-abnegation to the extent that when listening to the Torah from him, the Children of Israel know that, even while they are receiving “the Torah of Moshe” (Malachi 3:22), they are hearing the “Torah of Hashem” (Tehillim 19:8).

This requires a delicate balance. By the 7th of Adar, the day he departs this world, Moshe has achieved the title, the “man of G-d” (Devarim 33:1; also, Yehoshua 14:6, Tehillim 90:1) – the prophet who sublimates his identity to teach the word of Hashem.

Thus, in Parashat Tetzaveh, which focuses on the operation of the Mishkan that will unite the people with Hashem, and which is read close to the 7th of Adar, Moshe’s name is submerged. In the 40 years since the sin of the golden calf, Moshe Rabbeinu (Moshe our Teacher) will have succeeded in imparting to the People of Israel the great lesson – how to survive his death. Then, the Children of Israel will be sufficiently adult that they will be able to accept the separation, and mourn, and move on.


Parashat Tetzaveh, where “Moshe” becomes “וַאֲתָהּ”, foreshadows the time when the quintessential leader named Moshe will no longer be, but his essence will always persist.

Moshe serves as a role model for all teachers of Torah. In the Talmud, Rabbi Zeira was known as “the little man with the singed thighs,” ever since he was burned by an oven. We are told (Sanhedrin 37a) that Rabbi Zeira would pray for the salvation of some ruffians who lived in his neighborhood. He prayed for them constantly, even though the other Sages had long given up on them.

After Rabbi Zeira, the ruffians said: “Until now, the little man with the singed thighs would ask Hashem to have mercy on us. Now, who will pray on our behalf?” So, they made up their own minds and repented. Rabbi Zeira’s death provided them with their greatest lesson, and they finally learned to take responsibility for themselves.

When we listen to our Torah teachers, we hear beyond their own voices – we hear the voice of Hashem.

שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hatakitior Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, Hebrewbooks.org, and the Tanach section of Chabad.org.

We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.