

# GROWTH

At The

# SHABBAT TABLE

## PARSHAT TETZAVEH

8<sup>th</sup> Edition  
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BS"D

### Missing!

R' Eliyahu Maksumov shared something fascinating. Since recording the birth of Moshe until the end of the Torah, Parshat Tetzaveh is the only Parshah in which Moshe Rabbenu is not mentioned. As Chazal explain, since Moshe pleaded with G-d not to destroy *Am Yisrael* after sinning with the golden calf, even "threatening" מחניי נא מספרך אשר כתבת ("erase me from the book You have written" – the Torah), although he was successful and the Jews were saved, since the words came out of the *tzaddik's* mouth, they were fulfilled in some sense, and his name was taken out of Parshat Tetzaveh.

The obvious question is: why this Parshah specifically, out of all others?

The Ben Ish Hai offered a beautiful answer. Moshe's words were: *Erase me from the book* מספרך (from Your book) that You have written. The word מספרך can be split up to read מספר כ" – which means "from the book of [the letter] *chaf* / כ." The *gematria* (numerical value) of the letter *chaf* is 20, and if you count from Bereshit, Tetzaveh is the 20<sup>th</sup> Parshah in the Torah. Thus, Moshe's "absence" in Tetzaveh was actually divinely alluded to in his own words...

An added intriguing explanation shared by R' Maksumov is the following. Moshe's statement was: *Erase me from the book* אשר כתבת (that You have written). The *gematria* of the word "אשר" is  $(1+300+200 =) 501$ , and the only Parshah in the Torah with the numeric value of 501 is none other than Tetzaveh/תצוה  $(400+90+6+5 = 501)$ .

### Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida    Rahamim Ben Shifra  
Frida Bat Yaffa    Miriam Bat Bakol  
Yitzchak Ben Naama    Chana Bat Malka  
Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel  
Noah Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffah

"Well done is better than well said."

## Integration

Trivia query: What is mitzvah #100 in the count of 613? It is a rather interesting one: the prohibition to remove the *kohen gadol's* breastplate from the apron. The *pasuk* says (Shemot 28:28): "The *choshen* (breastplate) shall be held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the *ephod* (apron), to be on the belt of the *ephod*, and the *choshen* shall not be detached from upon the *ephod*." The breastplate was always to be tightly attached to and aligned with the apron of the *kohen gadol*, and one who intentionally detached or misaligned them would violate one of the 613 *mitzvot* and even incur lashes.

The question begs: Why is this such a serious violation, and what lies behind this concept?

R' YY Jacobson shared a profound insight. Interestingly, the Torah enumerates a few things that the *ephod* and *choshen* share in common. The Torah describes that the *choshen* should be made "like the *ephod*," i.e. from the same materials. Both the breastplate and apron hosted the names of all the *shevatim*, unlike any of the other garments (the apron had two stones, each with six names, and the breastplate had twelve stones, one for each name). And, of course, these two were also connected to each other, to the point where it's an *aveira* to remove one from the other. Yet, the breastplate and apron are very different from one another as well. Physically, each of them was situated in opposite parts of the body. The *choshen* was on the *kohen gadol's* chest, in the higher part of his body. The *ephod*, though, was on the lower part of his body; it began by the waist and extended all the way down to his feet. Furthermore, the breastplate was worn in the front, while the apron was in the back. The clothing of the *kohen gadol* wasn't just for beauty; each vestment carried a unique and powerful theme. The *choshen* and *ephod* actually represented a paradox: the "higher" and "lower" parts of life. For every individual, there will be the more refined, spiritual, exalted, and sublimated portions of life; yet everyone also experiences the baser components of life that may be darker, more challenging, and even lowly. No one can be defined as exclusively living the life of a wholesome *choshen* with only ups or that of a full *ephod* with only downs. Most of us vacillate between the two, having ideal and lofty ambitions while sometimes battling darkness and difficulties. Not always is life a journey of serenity; sometimes we need to navigate through storms in a tumultuous sea of overwhelming, confusing, and startling thoughts or experiences, whether they be moments of guilt, shame, anxiety, tension, addiction, or wounds that seem impossible to heal. Many people find themselves with two options: either escape to their world of the sublime *choshen*, or gravitate towards the *ephod*. But, the Torah has its own alternative: "the *choshen* shall not be detached from upon the *ephod*." Not just as it related to the physical garments, but also as a spiritual concept in life. Hashem created us all with both "higher" and "lower" aspects as part of a Divine plan, and while they each have their own design and purpose, the ultimate goal is to align them together. Even the lowest and darkest parts in one's life are ideally meant for one to connect them with the highest, most sublime and spiritual dimensions of oneself. We are each meant to learn to integrate both parts of our being, without fleeing to one of the elements. One isn't meant to completely forget, repress, or deny one's "lower" self, because even if one manages to escape it for a while, when it eventually comes back, one is left without the tools to handle it, and may then stumble in a serious way. On the flipside, reverting totally to the side of the *ephod* completely fails to acknowledge the inherent glory, beauty and G-dliness that exists in oneself, leaving him thirsty for a life of meaning and devoid of his true essence. Mitzvah #100 is a powerful allusion to the necessity of mastering the art of integration, making peace with the two pieces inside every individual and the idea that both the *choshen* and *ephod* constitute the fabric and purpose of one's existence – to confront one's darkness and transform it into light, and create harmony from the divisiveness of the human psyche.

But this goes even a step further. The Torah doesn't just say that we need both the *choshen* and *ephod*; it prohibits one from separating the two. In other words, there is no *choshen* without an *ephod*, and vice versa. The lower parts of one's life aren't to be viewed as a tragedy. The darkness we encounter in life are the pathways in which we discover our mission in this world. They allow us to become aware of who we are and what our purpose here is. Don't be afraid or emotionally amputate any part of yourself, because any part that comes up has a spark of meaning and purpose. Connect it to your *choshen*, and find your internal redemption.