



Tetzaveh 5775

February 27, 2015

A Taste of Torah

Silence is Golden

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

I'm sure you've heard of bells and whistles. It's the shtick that gets added on to a product to make it more attractive, to add a bit more glitz, and to raise the price tag. But in this week's parsha, we come across bells... and pomegranates.

That's right, pomegranates. One of the vestments worn only by the *Kohein Gadol* (High Priest) was the *me'il*, a robe of sorts, made entirely of *techeiles*-dyed wool. Among the unique features of this garment was its hem; gold bells and pomegranate-shaped tassels of wool were attached to its entirety. According to Rashi, they were arranged, alternating, along the hem; a bell, then a pomegranate, followed by a bell and then another pomegranate and so on. The Torah states that when the *Kohein Gadol* walked into the Sanctuary, the bells could be heard ringing. The Talmud (Erachin 16a) states that the *me'il*, whose bells created sound, atoned for improper sound – that of *lashon hara* (speaking negatively about others). That would explain the significance of the bells, but the Talmud doesn't tell us the need for the pomegranates.

There is yet another interesting observation regarding the bells and pomegranates. The Torah states (Shemos 28:33), "You shall make on its hem pomegranates... on its hem all around, and gold bells between them, all around." Why

does the Torah state that the bells go between the pomegranates, and not the other way around? After all, the pomegranates are just as much between the bells as the bells are between the pomegranates. Better yet, just state that they go next to each other!

Rabbi Moshe Alshich (1508-1593, known as the Alshich), however, offers some very relevant insight into the pomegranates. He explains that the bells, hollow golden shells with clappers inside, represent the mouth with the tongue inside as it produces sound and speaks. The pomegranates, on the other hand, produce no sound – they represent the mouth that keeps quiet. The Torah, says the Alshich, is teaching us a vital lesson: If you'd like to avoid using your tongue improperly, limit how much you talk. Every bell must go between two pomegranates. Every measure of speech must be sandwiched by two measures of silence.

I believe this approach provides a wonderful explanation for a passage in Tractate Megillah (18a). Rav Dimi tells that in Eretz Yisrael, people would say, "If speech costs a *sela* (a type of coin), silence costs two." Based on the aforementioned Alshich, this aphorism is perfectly accurate; the Torah teaches us that silence must be double the amount of speech!

Stories For The Soul

Dressed for the Occasion

Mrs. Lucie Prenzlau, a longtime resident of Denver who was very involved and influential in many communal matters, was known for her focus on dressing properly and not haphazardly. It once happened that she was about to embark to the airport with her granddaughter, a Denver native, to catch a flight. The granddaughter arrived dressed casually, explaining that since they were going to be travelling on an airplane, it was important that she dress comfortably. Mrs. Prenzlau, though, insisted that the young lady return home and change into more suitable garb. The granddaughter complied, and the pair departed for the airport.

As they were checking in, the man working behind the counter said to them, "Two fine, well-dressed ladies such as yourselves are flying in economy? I'm going to move you up to first class!" And so, thanks to Mrs. Prenzlau's resolve to dress appropriately in all circumstances, the two women flew very comfortably.

In this week's parsha, the Torah tells us that the vestments of Aharon the *Kohein Gadol* (High Priest) are to be "for glory and splendor." (Shemos 28:2) Mrs. Lucie Prenzlau understood that, as Jews, we are "a nation of *kohanim*" who must reflect the glory and splendor of Hashem.

Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL'S 17TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MARCH 17TH

The Kollel will hold its 17th Anniversary Celebration on Tuesday, March 17th, 6:30 pm at Aish Denver. The event will feature an exclusive new publication and video presentation, *From Sinai to Denver*. The Kollel will recognize Andy and Rana Kark with the Torah Partners Award. For ads and reservations email journal@denverkollel.org, visit denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL SIMCHAS PURIM

The Kollel invites the entire community to join in Simchas Purim on Purim, Thursday evening, March 5th, at 7 pm. You won't want to miss this special Purim event featuring lively music and spirited dancing. If you'd like to join the Kollel for the Purim seudah, which will take place at approximately 5 pm, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 11:30 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: How is it possible for one to smell an item on two different occasions and make a different bracha each time?

A: On Motzoei Shabbos, when smelling the spices at Havdallah, we recite "boreh minei besomim," ("Who creates types of fragrances"), even if it is an item that would normally require a more specific blessing for fragrance. For example, cinnamon sticks would generally have a "borei atzei

besamim" ("Who creates fragrant wood"), but they get the more general "boreh minei besomim" at Havdallah.

This week's question: When does eating something require one to recite twenty blessings?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org

Ask the Rabbi

Singing His Praises

Yerachmiel Garfield wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What is the deal with the name of Hashem when singing Shabbos songs? I've noticed many don't say the actual name of Hashem; it makes me wonder what the author of the song had in mind? If we are not to say it, why did they use the real names? Or maybe we should?

Dear Yerachmiel Garfield,

We should. Take for example the Shabbos song called "Shimru Shabbos." It has five stanzas, and each stanza ends in a word which rhymes with Hashem's name - "madanai," "mizkenai," "kohana." Surely, the author intended that the chorus be sung using the name of Hashem that rhymes with these words. Another Shabbos song, "Tzur MiShelo," also works the name of Hashem into its rhyme-scheme.

The composers of the Shabbos songs were great Torah scholars, some living over 1000 years ago. They put Hashem's name in their songs, and it's perfectly appropriate to sing them as the authors intended.

True, it's prohibited to say Hashem's

name in vain. This includes making a blessing by mistake or unnecessarily, or any time a person mistakenly mentions Hashem's name thinking he's obligated to do so when in fact he's not.

Shabbos songs, however, don't fall into this category. On the contrary, their melody fills the air with delight, and their lofty poetry lifts our hearts in praise of Hashem for giving us the treasured gift: Shabbos!

Every talent can be used to do a mitzva. So if you have a good voice, use it to sing Shabbos songs or lead the synagogue services. The trick, however, is to focus on the words and not try to impress your audience!

Therefore, it's best to avoid repeating Hashem's name simply because the tune requires a few extra syllables. Rather, stick to the words as written.

Sources:

Berachot 33a

Maimonides Hilchot Berachot 1:15

Chavat Da'at 110

Pele Yoetz: Shira

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