

Does your life reflect your faith

This weeks reading is from *Parashat Tetzave* (*Shemot / Exodus 27:20-30:10*), Moshe describes how the priestly garments are to be constructed. We are told that Aaron's garments consecrate him (set him apart) for the purpose of ministering before the Lord (28:3). The clothing being constructed for the Cohen Hagadol consist of various parts, the breast-piece, the ephod, a robe, a turban, and a sash (28:4). The ephod was inlaid with two onyx stones which have engraving of the names of the tribes of Israel (28:9) and we are told that the Cohen Hagadol is to bear the names of the tribes of Israel before God as a memorial. In addition, twelve precious stones are set in the breast-piece one for each tribe (28:17-22). We are told the Urim and Thummim are placed in the breast-piece so that they are over the High Priest's heart continually. The biblical record of the Urim and Thummim are significant when it is understood that Urim (light) and Thummim (innocence) are simply the plural forms of the Hebrew words for light and innocence. Based upon a Hebraic way of thinking, light is synonymous to God's truth, and innocence is synonymous to walking peacefully with God and with men (*e.g. walking in Justice, Truth, and Righteousness*). We read that Moshe consecrates Aaron and his sons as priests using a bull and two rams (29:1). The consecration of the priests for service to the Lord is emphasized in the idea of being a light unto the nations, and living in innocence and truth before God. The putting on of the special garments for service before the Lord (29:5-6) and anointing with oil (29:7) has NT parallels of setting in order our lives before God and being filled with the Spirit of God. Note Aaron and the priests are instructed to consecrate the holy place of God. The purpose is out of respect for the Lord God in heaven. The Parashah concludes with the Lord saying *"I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God."*

All of the words of the Torah are significant meaning that all of God's word, the Scriptures, has an application for our lives today. This week, we read about the ephod being inlaid with two onyx stones which have the engraving of the names of the tribes of Israel. (28:9, יב וְשָׂמַתְּ אֶת-שְׁמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָשָׂא אֹהֲרָן אֶת-שְׂמוֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: הָאֲבָנִים עַל כְּתֹפֶת הָאֶפֶד אֲבָנֵי זָפָרָן לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָשָׂא אֹהֲרָן אֶת-שְׂמוֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: (עַל-שְׁמֵי כְתִפָּיו לְזָפָרָן:)) These names the Cohen Hagadol is to bear upon

himself before God continually. Why do you think this is significant for us today?

ספר שמות פרק כח *Shemot / Exodus 28:9-12*

ט וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי אַבְנֵי-שֹׁהַם
וּפְתַחְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
י שֵׁשׁ מִשְׁמֹתָם עַל הָאֶבֶן
הָאֶחָת וְאֶת-שְׁמוֹת הַשְּׁשֵׁה הַנּוֹתָרִים
עַל-הָאֶבֶן הַשְּׁנִיית כְּתוּלְדוֹתָם:
יא מַעֲשֵׂה חֶרֶשׁ אֶבֶן פְּתוּחֵי חֹתָם
תַּפְתַּח אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים עַל-שְׁמֹת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מְסַבֵּת מְשֻׁבָּצוֹת זָהָב
תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם: יב וְשִׂמְתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי
הָאֲבָנִים עַל כְּתַפְתֵּי הָאֶפֶד אַבְנֵי
זִכָּרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשָּׂא אֹהֲרֹן
אֶת-שְׁמוֹתָם לְפָנָי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁתֵּי
כְּתֻפֵּי לְזִכָּרוֹן:

28:9 'You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, 28:10 six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth. 28:11 'As a jeweler engraves a signet, you shall engrave the two stones according to the names of the sons of Israel; you shall set them in filigree settings of gold. 28:12 'You shall put the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for a memorial. (NASB)

The significance of this week's reading is with regard to the Torah comments concerning the ephod being inlaid with two onyx stones which have the engraving of the names of the tribes of Israel. (28:12 'You shall put the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for a memorial. NASB, יב וְשִׂמְתָּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים, עַל כְּתַפְתֵּי הָאֶפֶד אַבְנֵי זִכָּרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשָּׂא אֹהֲרֹן אֶת-שְׁמוֹתָם לְפָנָי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁתֵּי כְּתֻפֵּי לְזִכָּרוֹן: We are told that Aaron shall bear the names before the Lord (כְּתֻפֵּי לְזִכָּרוֹן: (זִכָּרוֹן) and in the subsequent generations, the Cohen Hagadol will also bear upon himself these names before God always. Why is bearing the name of Israel so significant? Sforno and Rashbam draw out this meaning in the following way.

Sforno on Exodus 28:12, Part 1

עַל שְׁתֵּי כְּתֻפֵּי לְזִכָּרוֹן, *in order to attract the attribute of Mercy to be invoked by their merit. (the merit of wearing the*

shoulder pads)

Sforno states that the reason for bearing the names as a memorial is so the Lord remembers His promises, which attracts the attribute of Mercy, the Lord will have mercy upon His people.

Rashbam states the following:

Rashbam on Exodus 28:36:2

.קדש לה. The names of the tribes of Israel are engraved on both the gemstones of the ephod as well as on the breastplate. These names were to remind G'd of the merits of the founding fathers of these tribes and to facilitate atonement for the sins of their descendants. The specific sins referred to are inadvertent violations involving sacred sites entered in violation of the law, or the consuming of sacred sacrificial meat by people either not entitled to eat them or not in a ritually pure state which would be the prerequisite for eating same. While the High Priest wore the ציץ G'd undertook to forgive such inadvertent violations committed by the people concerned.

Both Sforno and Rashbam draw in the concept of the merit of the fathers. The context of merit is found within the Lord being reminded of the faithfulness of the fathers of the Tribes of Israel, and of the Promises the Lord had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Rashbam says that the names are to facilitate atonement, not in the sense that one's merits earn atonement, but as Sforno states, the names draw in the attribute of Mercy from the Lord, by reminding the Lord of the promises He made to His people. Today, God's people seek the Lord God in heaven, in the Name of Yeshua the Messiah, believing by faith, believing in the Torah, and all of Scripture for the Mercy of God. The various parts of the clothing constructed for the Cohen Hagadol, are meant to be worn in faith believing the word of the Lord. The Cohen Hagadol in the Tabernacle, performs his duties by faith, wearing the garments which has parallels to *Revelation 19:7 'Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.'* 19:8 *It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is*

the righteous acts of the saints. (NASB) Having faith is connected to living in faith before the Lord, and these things draw us back to the Promises of the God of Israel.

According to the Torah, these things, the clothing, and the direct instructions are meant for the Cohenim to preserve holiness as it says in *Vayikra / Leviticus 21:6*.

Vayikra / Leviticus 21:6

21:6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God; for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the bread of their God, they do offer; therefore they shall be holy. (ו) קְדוֹשִׁים יְהִי לֹאֲלֹקֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַחֲלִלּוּ שְׁמֵ אֱלֹקֵיהֶם. (כִּי אֶת־אֲשֵׁי ה' לָחֵם אֱלֹקֵיהֶם הֵם מִקְרִיבֵם וְהָיוּ קְדוֹשׁ:

What is interesting about these Scripture that are referring to the priests, Maimonides (Rambam) applies it universally when he writes in his *Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 5:1*.

משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה ה':א'
(א) כל בית ישראל מצווין על קדוש השם הגדול הזה שנאמר ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל ומוזהרין שלא לחללו שנאמר ולא תחללו את שם קדשי

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 5:1

“All of the House of Israel is commanded concerning the sanctity of the Great Name...and are warned not to profane HaShem...”

Notice how there are two parts to the command, to *“Sanctify God’s name”* (Kiddush HaShem) and *“Do not desecrate God’s name.”* (Hillul HaShem) Rambam elaborates on these concepts saying the following:

משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה ה':י'
(י) כל העובר מדעתו בלא אונס על אחת מכל מצות האמורות בתורה בשאט בנפש להכעיס הרי זה מחלל את השם

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 5:10

“Anyone who consciously desecrates one of the commandments mentioned in the Torah in a derisive manner, desecrates God’s name...”

In His commentary, Rambam cites examples such as late payment for purchases, indulging in food, drink and luxuries in an immoderate way and being rude towards others. Such behaviors constitute Hillul HaShem, because they cause the image of God and His people to be diminished in the eyes of others. On the other hand, the person who leads an upright life and sanctifies God’s name (Kiddush HaShem) such a person is praiseworthy. Rambam continues saying,

משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה ה'י"א
הכל לפי גדלו של חכם צריך שידקדק על עצמו ויעשה לפניו
משורת הדין.

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 5:11

The greater the scholar, the more he needs to be scrupulous and do more than what the strict letter of the law requires.

Note how Yeshua raised the bar regarding the letter of the law (e.g. Adultery, and hating your brother, see *Matthew 5-7*).

משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה ה'י"א
(יא) ויש דברים אחרים שהן בכלל חילול השם והוא שיעשה
אותם אדם גדול בתורה ומפורסם בחסידות דברים שהבריות
מרננים אחריו בשבילם ואף על פי שאינן עבירות הרי זה חילול
את השם.

Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 5:11

There are other deeds that fall under the category of hillul HaShem (desecration of God’s name). When a great Torah scholar who is renowned for piety does things that promote people to discuss this scholar, even if the deeds are not express violations of law [the scholar] has committed

hillul HaShem.

The concept of Kiddush HaShem is described as one who goes beyond the standard expectations and lives to bring glory to God in this world. The point is that the way we live our lives is a reflection of our faith in the Lord God in heaven.

This week, we read about the ephod being inlaid with two onyx stones which have the engraving of the names of the tribes of Israel. (28:9, יב וְשִׁמְתָה אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבֹנִים עַל כְּתֹפֶת הָאֶפֶד אֲבִי וְזָרָן לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשְׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁמוֹתֵי הָעָמִוֹת לְפָנָי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁתֵּי כְתָפָיו לְזָכָרֹן:) These names the Cohen Hagadol is to bear upon himself before God continually. The significance of these Scripture verses is related to bearing the Name of God in our lives. Based upon the Scriptures, the Lord God has a special place in His heart for Israel and Jerusalem. *In Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:6* we read, “*For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*” The Lord calls Jerusalem the “*apple of His eye*” in *Zechariah 2:8*. The Lord chose Israel to be His people, to reflect His glory, and to receive His blessing, and He chose Jerusalem as His dwelling place. It is God’s eternal plan that Israel would be the conduit for His blessing and grace to spread to the entire world.

The significance of this point understood when we study the Psalms. The Septuagint has an interesting interpretation on the MT *Tehillim / Psalms 87:5* *A man shall say, Zion is my mother; and such a man was born in her; and the Highest himself has founded her. (LXX)* This translation seems to suggest the one who joins himself to the Lord saying that Zion is his mother, such a man was born in her. This interpretation is interesting how a man who calls Zion his mother is as if he had been born of her, born in that place. Rightly so, such a man who seeks the Lord God in heaven will the Lord establish because such a man is walking in God’s ways. The rabbis say the following regarding being born במקום (in the place).

Akeidat Yitzchak 75.7

The description of Israel as “the good ones,” has a dual meaning. A) There will always be found some good peo-

ple in Israel, people whose merit will suffice to insure the nation's survival, people such as the prophets whose very existence has made our people unparalleled among all the nations since Abraham. Psalms 87:5-6 clearly reflects this sentiment.

Ein Yaakov Ketubot 7.3

(Fol. 75) (Ps. 87:5) But of Zion it shall be said: "This man and that was born in her; and Most High Himself doth establish her." R. Meyasha, the grandson of R. Joshua, said: "No matter whether he is one who was born in it, or one that looks forward and hopes for its restoration [to both of them refer the passages with its promise.]" "And one of them from the land of Israel," added Abayi, "is better than two of us [of Babylon.]" "Nevertheless," remarked Raba, "if one of ours comes up here (in the land of Israel) he surpasses two of their in wisdom, as the instance of R. Jeremia who, before he came up there, did not understand what the Rabbis would say, but after he had been there he called us 'foolish Babylonians.'"

Akeidat Yitzchak describes the one who is born of Zion, "*the good ones*" as some people whose merits sustain the nations survival, and the prophets whom the Lord sends to call the people back to Him. Ein Yaakov states that this is related to both the one who was born in it, and to the one who looks forward to and hopes for the restoration of המקום (the Place), the promise belongs to both kinds of people. Based upon the rabbinic translations of the Psalm (Targum, Septuagint), and the rabbinic commentary, the psalm appears to describe a transformation of the person who seeks the Lord and seeks to join himself with God's people. Note when one joins himself with the people of God, his live changes, the old life passes away, and new life comes, he stops living in the way that he did before and is transformed, and walks in God's Instruction. Note also what the psalmist writes in *Tehillim / Psalms 87:6*, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֻלְלִים כָּל-מֵעֵינֵי, 87:6 *The Lord will count when He registers the peoples, 'This one was born there.'* Selah. (NASB) This suggests that one is present, or that the one who looks forward to the building of the Temple, and says that

Zion is his mother, counts himself as one among the children of Israel, and so the Lord God in heaven counts him as one who was born there. These Scriptures agree with the Apostolic Writings and interpretation on the non-Jewish person who seeks the Lord God in heaven and does so by joining himself with Israel in the Messiah Yeshua. (see *Romans 11*) The Aramaic Targum states, ו יהוה על סיפרא די מכתבין ביה חושבן כל עלמאי דין 87:6 *O Lord, in the book in which they write the account of all the ages [it is written], "This king was brought up there forever."* (EMC) Note how the rabbis translate the MT to say that men of all ages are accounted for. The Torah describes the age of a man who is to be counted, which was a reference to military service and the strength of the armies of Israel. Here however, we find the one who joins himself with Israel by looking to Zion, looking to המקום (the Place), and seeks to walk in God's ways, even his family is numbered, because his children will grow to know the Lord as a result of his faithful walk before the Lord. The Septuagint states, 87:6 κύριος διηγήσεται ἐν γραφῇ λαῶν καὶ ἀρχόντων τούτων τῶν γεγενημένων ἐν αὐτῇ διάναγμα 87:6 *The Lord shall recount it in the writing of the people, and of these princes that were born in her.* (LXX) So these men who look to Zion will be raised up by the Lord to leadership positions as it says in *Tehillim / Psalms 87:6*, princes that were born in her.

As we study the Apostolic Writings, we again see the significance of the engraved names of the tribes of Israel. (28:9 יב וְשִׁמְתָה אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הָאֲבָנִים, עַל כְּתֹפֶת הָאֶפֶד אֲבָנֵי זָכָרֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשְׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁמוֹתֵם לְפָנַי יְהוָה עַל-שְׁתֵּי : (כְּתַפְּיוֹ לְזָכָרֹן : Paul in his epistle to the Romans and John in Revelation say the following:

Romans 11:13-36

11:13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 11:14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. 11:15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 11:16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. 11:17 But if some of the branch-

es were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 11:18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 11:19 You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' 11:20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 11:21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. 11:22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 11:23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery so that you will not be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; (NASB)

Revelation 21:12-14

21:12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 21:13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (NASB)

The Scriptures describe the central nature of Israel, both for God's future plans and for the present plan of His having grafted us into Israel in the Messiah Yeshua. As God's children, we are called to bear the name of

God and His Messiah each day. This brings us back to the concept of Kid-dush HaShem, that we as God's people are described as those who goes beyond the standard expectations, that we are called to live our lives for the Glory of God in this world. The point is that the way we live our lives is a reflection of our faith in the Lord God in heaven. Does your life reflect your faith in the Lord God in heaven?

