

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Tetzave, 5782
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shgalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
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 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

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 ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** 'תחיל
Shgalov

DEDICATED BY
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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Tetzaveh

BEING NAMELESS

The absence of Moses's name from the Torah portion indicates his essential nature. The essence of Moses is Torah. But so united is Moses with the Jewish people that he is willing to sacrifice his very essence and being to save a single soul, even one involved in building the Golden Calf. This level of mesirus nefesh, of self-sacrifice, is characteristic of Moshiach, as well. Each individual must strive to reveal this 'spark of Moshiach' within himself.

Torah is the “blueprint of creation,” teaching not only general principles, but also illuminating the details and “hidden corners” of existence. If this is true of the commonplace and everyday, how much more so does it clarify the attitudes that define us and illustrate the moments that transform us.

The most transformative event in history will be the coming of Moshiach. The era of Redemption is the goal and purpose of creation. This period of universal prosperity and spiritual awareness will be initiated by the achievements of Moshiach.

This being the case, Torah outlines not only what Moshiach will do, but the kind of person he must be. Torah provides a specific ‘personality profile’ of Moshiach. And this week’s Torah portion gives us a picture of the most critical attribute of Moshiach. In analyzing the Torah reading, we must remember that there’s a ‘spark of Moshiach’ within every Jew. The Divine soul which every Jew possesses links him or her to every other Jew, including Moshiach. The actions of Moshiach we must duplicate within ourselves.

The prototype for Moshiach is Moses. Indeed, our Sages go to

great length to compare Moses to Moshiach, the first redeemer with the last. The 'spark of Moshiach' within every Jew echoes and reflects the 'spark of Moses' within every Jew. The leader of a generation is called both the Moses of the generation and the Moshiach of the generation.

With this background, we can now look at the unique features of this week's Torah reading. First, its name, "*Ve'atah Tetzaveh*" means "You shall command." G-d tells Moses to command the Jewish people concerning several activities in the Tabernacle which relate to Aaron and the priestly service: first, G-d instructs Moses in the procedure for lighting the menorah, then tells him about the priestly garments. The Torah reading also includes the dedication of Aaron and his sons and construction of the incense altar.

However, the most unusual feature of this week's Torah reading is that it is the only one from the birth of Moses until his 'farewell speech' that does not mention Moses by name. Of course Moses is not mentioned in Genesis, since he wasn't born yet; Deuteronomy is essentially a first-person address from Moses to the Jewish people, so there's no need for him to name himself. But every Torah reading in Exodus, *Leviticus* and Numbers explicitly mentions Moses by name – except this one, *Tetzaveh*, "You shall command."

So there are three questions: why is there a Torah reading without the name of Moses? Why in this Torah reading specifically is it not mentioned? That is, what is the connection between the absence of Moses's name and the contents of the portion? And finally, what does this teach us about the nature of Moshiach, in general, and the 'spark of Moshiach' within each of us, in particular?

To answer the first question: When Moses pleads with G-d to spare the Jewish people after the sin of the Golden Calf, he declares that if G-d will not forgive the people, then "erase me from Your book that You have written." If G-d will not pardon the children of Israel, Moses demands to be removed from the Torah. Although

this ultimatum was conditional, since it was made by a *tzaddik* and sage – by Moses – it must be fulfilled in some form. Hence, Moses's name was 'blotted out' from a Torah reading. But why this portion?

To answer that question, we have to look more closely at the Torah reading itself. Although Moses is not mentioned by name, his presence is felt throughout. Many verses speak about Moses, beginning with the first: "You shall command." Actually, the word "*tetzaveh*" means both "command" and "attach." So here G-d is telling Moses to not only command the Jewish people, but by so doing, attach them to G-d.

G-d doesn't use Moses's name, because a name is external, used as a reference for someone else. But we don't need a name when addressing ourselves. When the essence is revealed, a name is irrelevant. So G-d instructs Moses: with your essence, the very nature of who you are, command the Jewish people and attach them to Me.

What is the essence and nature of Moses? Torah. His very being was bound up with Torah. Still, Moses was willing to risk his very essence and being to save those whose act – building the Golden Calf – was the ultimate denial and rejection of Torah. The Torah says, "Thou shalt have no other gods" – and they built a god!

How can Moses be willing to sacrifice his very essence and being, to forego Torah which defines who he is, for the sake of Jews who deny and willfully violate Torah? The answer is that "Moses is Israel and Israel is Moses." The unity of Moses with the Jewish people is deeper and more fundamental than his unity with Torah. So quintessential is the union of Moses and the Jewish people that their descent becomes his descent. Although Moses had absolutely no involvement in the Golden Calf, when it was built, G-d told him, "go down." His greatness was one and the same thing as theirs.

Moses could not remain on the mountain with Torah when the Jewish people sinned. Not even Torah could sunder Moses from Israel.

This explains the essential characteristic of the leader of every generation, who is the Moses of his generation. Although the greatness of our rabbis and leaders lies in their scholarship, their mastery of Torah, still “the leader of the generation is like the whole generation.” The leader is one entity with the people. A true leader, the true Moses, the true Moshiach of the generation, will not and can not abandon any Jew. His very essence and being are totally united and bound with even the greatest sinner, the Jew who builds a Golden Calf and, G-d forbid, becomes an idolater.

The critical attribute of Moses is self-sacrifice, *mesirus nefesh*. This is the critical attribute of a true leader of the generation, of Moshiach himself. Although Moses is willing to give up everything for Torah, he is willing to give up even Torah itself for any Jew, even and especially the worst transgressor. For, although a Jew may sin, he remains a Jew. The true, inner essence of Moses – and of Moshiach – is revealed by an uncompromising self-sacrifice for a single Jewish soul, even the most distant one.

Further, because the essence and being of Moses – and Moshiach – is one with the essence and being of every Jewish soul, the self-sacrifice of Moses – and therefore Moshiach – reveals the quintessential unity and oneness of the Jewish people with G-d. That oneness transcends even the sin of the Golden Calf, evoking forgiveness and atonement.

This *mesirus nefesh* is the first stage, the beginning of Redemption.

This Torah reading concerns the activities of Aaron and his sons. All of these activities – the lighting of the menorah, the design and manufacture of the priestly garments, the dedication of Aaron and

his sons, the construction of the incense altar – all of them occur through the agency and direction of Moses. Since Aaron and his sons are sanctified, without Moses their service in the Tabernacle applies only to those Jews who observe the Torah's commandments. But because the dedication of Aaron came through Moses, Aaron's offerings bring atonement to **all** the Jewish people.

And since every Jew possesses a 'spark of Moses,' a 'spark of Moshiach,' we must also proceed with self-sacrifice, "putting aside our Torah," our personal interests, to help another Jew, to bring them to Torah with *Ahavas Yisroel*, love for a fellow Jew. Through our Moses-like self-sacrifice, we will merit the coming of Moshiach.

(Likkutei Sichos 21, pp. 173-180)

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Mrs. Chana (Carrie) bas Reb Meir עי"ה Greenberg
Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781
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