

## 5783 – Exodus 27-30 – Tetzaveh (You shall command)

<sup>1</sup>"Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests.

1. (v. 1) וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אָתָּוּ—*And his sons with him. Unlike Torah learning,*

**which is not hereditary** (see Avos 2:17), the priesthood is a hereditary right that passes from father to son. Hence Moses, the law-giver, was not privileged to see his sons replace him, as was his brother Aaron. According to *Ramban*, **Aaron merited this honor because he showed strength of character and loyalty to God under very harsh conditions** (Deu 33:8). The Kabbalists, however, stress that Aaron personified the ... *principle of love*. (See Deu 33:8 where he is referred to as ... *Your devout [loving] one*. His legendary goodness, his inexhaustible love of others, his talents as conciliator and peacemaker, particularly in regard to marital problems, are highly praised in the Midrash. These virtues qualified Aaron for the duties of *Kohen Gadol*, **whose principal mission is to bring men closer to their Creator**, building a bond of love that can stand the test of time.<sup>1</sup>

Aaron's descendants inherited these qualities from him: loving peace and pursuing peace (Avos 1:12).

a. Peah [Corner] 1:1

MISHNAH 1. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE THINGS FOR WHICH NO DEFINITE QUANTITY IS PRESCRIBED<sup>(1)</sup> THE CORNERS [OF THE FIELD].<sup>(2)</sup> FIRST-FRUIT<sup>(3)</sup>, [THE OFFERINGS BROUGHT] ON APPEARING [BEFORE THE LORD AT THE THREE PILGRIM FESTIVALS].<sup>(4)</sup> THE PRACTICE OF LOVINGKINDNESS,<sup>(5)</sup> AND THE STUDY OF THE TORAH.<sup>(6)</sup> THE FOLLOWING ARE THE THINGS FOR WHICH A MAN ENJOYS THE FRUITS IN THIS WORLD WHILE THE PRINCIPAL REMAINS FOR HIM IN THE WORLD TO COME: THE HONOURING OF FATHER AND MOTHER,<sup>(7)</sup> THE PRACTICE OF CHARITY, AND THE MAKING OF PEACE BETWEEN A MAN AND HIS FRIEND; BUT **THE STUDY OF THE TORAH IS EQUAL TO THEM ALL**.

- (1) In the Torah; but see the next Mishnah where Rabbinic tradition fixes the minimum at one-sixtieth.
- (2) Lev. XIX, and XXIII, 22 enjoin the owner to leave unreaped the former for the poor and the stranger to gather.
- (3) Bikkurim; v. Ex. XXIII, 19; Deut. XXVI, 1-11. These were presented to the priests in the Temple.
- (4) Re'ayon; v. Ex. XXIII, 17; Deut. XVI, 16. Biblically, every man according to the gift of his hand (Deut. XVI, 17), but Rabbinic halachah prescribes a

ma'ah (a silver coin) as the minimum value of the burnt-offering and two silver coins that of the festival offering, v. Hag. 1a. According to Ber-tinoro, Re'ayon denoted appearing in the Temple, i.e., there is no limit as to the number of times the Israelite may enter the Temple during the three festivals.

- (5) *Gemilluth hasadim*, a term implying more than mere charity and denoting personal service to all men of all classes.
- (6) Josh. 1, 8.
- (7) Fifth Commandment; Ex. XX, 12, Deut. V, 16.

1) Avot 2:8

MISHNAH 8. RABBAH JOHANAN B. ZAKKAI RECEIVED [THE ORAL TRADITION] FROM HILLEL AND SHAMMAI. HE USED TO SAY: IF THOU HAST LEARNT MUCH TORAH, DO NOT CLAIM CREDIT UNTO THYSELF, BECAUSE **FOR SUCH [PURPOSE] WAST THOU CREATED**.<sup>(61)</sup>

- (61) **The idea that man, and especially an Israelite, is created for the purpose of giving himself to the study of the Word of God and obedience thereto, is deeply rooted in Biblical and Rabbinic literature**, cf. Micah VI, 8: It hath been told thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee: only to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God. Cf. Deut. X, 12. L.: If you have acquired more than the average knowledge of the Torah, do not attribute it to your own superior abilities, for it is God who has endowed you with special talents in that direction.

2) Maimonides, Talmud Torah 3:1<sup>2</sup>

The crown of Torah, behold, it lies and is available for every Israelite. As the verse says: 'Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob' (Deu 33:4). **All who wish may come and take it up**.

3) Yoma 72b

R. Johanan said: There were three crowns: that of the altar, that of the ark, and that of the table. The one of the altar Aaron deserved and he received it. The one of the ark, David deserved and received. **The one of the table is still lying and whosoever wants to take it, may come and take it**.<sup>(14)</sup>

- (14) Aaron, the first high priest, obtained the crown of priesthood, symbolized by the altar; David, the crown of kingdom; but **there is no hereditary crown of learning, it must be acquired by each individual**. The aspirants, however, are not many, hence it is still lying unclaimed.

b. Deuteronomy 33:8-11

<sup>8</sup>About Levi he said: "Your Thummim and Urim belong to your faithful servant. **You tested him at Massah (testing); you con-**

1 Rabbi Elie Munk, *The Call of the Torah, Shemos*, (Mesorah Publications, Ltd., pp. 395-409.

2 [www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/910975/jewish/Talmud-Torah-Chapter-Three.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/910975/jewish/Talmud-Torah-Chapter-Three.htm)

tended with him at the waters of Meribah (quarreling). <sup>9</sup>He said of his father and mother, 'I have no regard for them.' He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant. <sup>10</sup>He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel. He offers incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. <sup>11</sup>Bless all his skills, LORD, and be pleased with the work of his hands. Strike down those who rise against him, his foes till they rise no more."

1) Exodus 17:1-7

<sup>1</sup>The whole Israelite community ... travel(ed) from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" <sup>3</sup>But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" <sup>4</sup>Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he called the place Massah (testing) and Meribah (quarreling) because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

2) Exodus 32:25-29

<sup>25</sup>Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. <sup>26</sup>So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And **all the Levites rallied to him.** <sup>27</sup>Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing **his brother and friend and neighbor.**'" <sup>28</sup>The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. <sup>29</sup>Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day."

3) Matthew 10:37-39

<sup>37</sup>"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

a) **"Take up your cross and follow Me"** means being willing to die in order to follow (Yeshua). This is called "dying to self." It's a call to absolute surrender.

b) Baba Metzia (The Middle Gate) 2:11

When one is searching for the lost property both of his father and of his teacher, his teacher's loss takes precedence over that of his father since his father brought him only into the life of this world, whereas **his teacher, who taught him wisdom [i.e., Torah], has brought him into the life of the World to Come.** But if his father is no less a scholar than his teacher, then his father's loss takes precedence ...

If his father and his teacher are in captivity, he must first ransom his teacher, and only afterwards his father—unless his father is himself a scholar and then he must first ransom his father.

1] **It seems shocking to us that someone would ransom his teacher before his own father, but it only because we do not understand the tremendous love and respect that disciples, and the community at large, had for their sages.**

2] A disciple was expected to put Torah, and his teacher, from whom he learned Torah, before his family. Apparently, **it was this attitude to Torah that characterized Levi.** Moses blessed Levi with these words, "He [Levi] said of his father and mother, 'I have no regard for them.' He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant" (Deu 33:9).<sup>3</sup>

c. Exodus 19:5-6

<sup>5</sup>Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, **"you will be for me a kingdom of priests"** and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, (KTAV Publishing House/Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith), p. 159.

1) Revelation 1:4-7

<sup>4</sup>John, To the seven *kehilot* in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

<sup>5</sup>and from Yeshua the Messiah, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, **and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father**—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. <sup>7</sup>"Look, he is coming with the clouds" (Dan 7:13), and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and **all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him"** (Zech 12:10). So shall it be! Amen.

a) Zechariah 12:10

<sup>10</sup>"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and **they will mourn for him** as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

d. Malachi 2:4-7

<sup>4</sup>And you (i.e., the priests) will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty. <sup>5</sup>"My covenant was with him, **a covenant of life and peace**, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. **True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.** <sup>7</sup>"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth.

<sup>29</sup>"Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the LORD. <sup>30</sup>Also put **the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece**, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.

1. (v. 30) **אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתֻּמִּיִּם**—*The Urim and the Tumim*. The *Choshen* was a folded piece of elaborately woven cloth which the *Kohen Gadol* wore on his chest. On the outer side were the four rows of precious stones upon which the names of the Children of Israel were etched. *Rashi* explains that into the fold itself was placed a parchment on which was written the Divine Name. This was the *Urim and Tumim*. It

was so named because it clearly revealed its words of truth (**מְאִיר**, *clarifies*; **מִתְמַם**, *perfect*) The *Urim and Tumim* displayed its message by causing the appropriate letters on the precious stones to light up in response to a question (*Yoma* 735).

*Ramban* comments that the *Urim and Tumim* was a mystery revealed to Moses by God. Moses alone wrote and prepared it with the help of Heaven. Thus, there is no mention whatsoever of having it made by the craftsmen designated to construct the Tabernacle. The command to add it to the *Choshen* is addressed to Moses personally, and the fact that the *Urim and Tumim* is spoken of with the definite article *the* **אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתֻּמִּיִּם**, *the Urim and the Tumim* implies that Moses was already aware both of the existence and of the very deep significance of this holy object.

The *Urim and Tumim* communicated its answers to questions using a power of **רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ**, *holy spirit*. This was inferior to the power of prophecy, but greater than the supernatural power of the **בַּת קוֹל**, *Heavenly voice*, which manifested itself during the Second Temple era when other forms of communication from God, including prophecy and the *Urim and Tumim* had ceased to exist. On the other hand, a judgment emanating from the *Urim and Tumim* could never be revoked, unlike the pronouncements of a prophet. Consultation involving the *Urim and Tumim* was reserved for the leading official representatives of the people: a king, a head of the court of justice, and a key national leader [such as the ... *Kohen anointed for war*]. These consultations dealt solely with emergencies and cases of national peril. Only a *Kohen* through whom the Holy Spirit spoke, and upon whom the *Shechinah* rested, was to be consulted in this emergency, and he would turn to the *Urim and Tumim* to receive the answer (*Yoma* 73b).

The *Urim and Tumim* thus was an instrument for Divine revelation, placed permanently at the disposal of the people, for use when its higher interests were at stake. But the Children of Israel enjoyed the blessing of such a miraculous instrument only as long as they lived in an atmosphere of holiness. Then the *Kohen Gadol* would bear the judgment of the Children of Israel upon his heart before Hashem.

- a. According to most traditions, the *Urim and Thummim* (Lights and Perfections) were a piece of parchment with G-d's four-letter name written on it.<sup>(2)</sup> Its function was to serve as an oracle, (and used to determine) whether or not the Jewish people should take a certain course of action,<sup>(3)</sup> and was to be used only by the king, the Jewish

high court, or a person needed by the whole community<sup>(4)</sup> such as a general.<sup>(5)</sup><sup>4</sup>

When its services were needed, the Kohen Gadol would stand facing the Holy Ark with the questioner behind him. The individual desiring an answer would ask a simple yes-or-no question such as, "Shall we go to war?" The Kohen Gadol would meditate until he reached Divine inspiration. Then, certain letters on the breastplate (upon which the names of the twelve tribes were written) would appear to protrude<sup>(6)</sup> or light up,<sup>(7)</sup> producing an answer.<sup>(8)</sup>

The *Urim and Thummim* were lost after the destruction of the First Temple.<sup>(9)</sup>

(2) Rashi, Ramban, Ralbag ibid.; Ritva to Yoma 73b et al.

(3) Numbers 27:21; see also I Samuel 5:23, 10:22 and 14:4.

(4) Mishnah Yoma 7:5.

(5) Tiferet Yisrael ibid.

(6) Rabbi Yochanan's opinion.

(7) Reish Lakish's opinion.

(8) Yoma 73a; Mishneh Torah (Repetition of the Torah), Klei Hamikdash (Temple Vessels) 10:11.

(9) Yoma 21b; Sotah 48b; Rashi to Exodus 28:30.

b. Exodus 28:29-30 (cf., Lev 8:8)

<sup>29</sup>"Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the LORD. <sup>30</sup>Also **put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece**, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. **Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.**

c. Numbers 27:16-23

<sup>16</sup>"May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community <sup>17</sup>to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd." <sup>18</sup>So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man **in whom is the spirit of leadership**, and lay your hand on him. <sup>19</sup>Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. <sup>20</sup>Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. <sup>21</sup>**He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD.** At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in." <sup>22</sup>Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took

Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. <sup>23</sup>Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

d. 1 Samuel 14:36-42

<sup>36</sup>Saul said, "Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive." "Do whatever seems best to you," they replied. But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here." <sup>37</sup>So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day. <sup>38</sup>Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and **let us find out what sin has been committed today.** <sup>39</sup>As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if the guilt lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of them said a word. <sup>40</sup>Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here." "Do what seems best to you," they replied. <sup>41</sup>Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with **Urim**, but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with **Thummim.**" Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. <sup>42</sup>Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

1) 1 Samuel 14:24-30

<sup>24</sup>Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "**Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!**" So none of the troops tasted food.

<sup>25</sup>The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground ... <sup>26</sup>yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. <sup>27</sup>But **Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath**, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. <sup>28</sup>Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint." <sup>29</sup>Jonathan said, "**My father has made trouble for the country.** See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. <sup>30</sup>How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the

plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

e. 1Samuel 28:3-7

<sup>3</sup>Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. <sup>4</sup>The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup>When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. <sup>6</sup>He inquired of the LORD, but **the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets**. <sup>7</sup>Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said.

<sup>29:1</sup>"This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect ... <sup>4</sup>Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

1. (v. 1) **פֶּרֶךְ אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר**—*One young bull*. This served to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf which was also a young bull (*Rashi*). The Midrash states that Aaron's part in the sin of the Golden Calf was not an obstacle to awarding the *kehunah* to him. It was clear to God that **Aaron had yielded only out of fear of the people** (*Tanchuma*). But even a sin committed involuntarily requires an act of atonement. Accordingly, the very first **חֲטָאת**, *sin-offering*, to be brought by Aaron was to atone for that sin. Hence, it had to be burned totally in the fire. In fact, *Rashi* (to v. 14) observes that we find **no other sin-offering to be totally burned, except for this one**.

a. Hebrews 9:24-28

<sup>24</sup>For Messiah did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was ... a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. <sup>25</sup>Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. <sup>26</sup>Otherwise Messiah would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup>Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, <sup>28</sup>so **Messiah was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many**; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

2. (v. 4) **וַיִּרְחֹצְתָם בַּמַּיִם**—*And you shall immerse them in the water*.

*Rashi* explains that the whole body was immersed in water. This is the first instance of such purification. Since the dawn of time, **immersion has been the symbol of regeneration**. Indeed, the *mikveh* (ritual bath) not only effects a physical cleansing but **it also implicitly provides a purification of the moral being**. The act of immersion signifies **the shedding of one's physical nature and thereby brings about a true moral change in the person**. This renewal is equivalent to **a spiritual rebirth**, and that is why immersion takes place at the start of important new stages in the lives of Jewish men and women. For that same reason the consecration of the *Kohanim* for their new duties is distinguished by the act of immersion.

a. Romans 6:4

<sup>4</sup>We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, just as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too **may live a new life**.

b. 2Corinthians 5:17

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, **the new creation has come**: The old has gone, the new is here!

c. Colossians 2:12

<sup>12</sup>having been **buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him** through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.