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On the Parsha

Parshas Tetzaveh is the only Parsha in the Torah after the birth of Moshe that does not mention his name. Why does Moshe's name not appear in this week's Parsha?

To help us answer the question, let us discuss an interesting Midrash. The Pasuk tells us (Exodus 28:1), "And you, bring close Aharon, your brother, and his sons... to serve as priests for me." The Midrash Rabbah explains that when Hashem told Moshe to appoint Aharon as the High Priest (Kohein Gadol), he was displeased to a certain degree. Hashem saw his displeasure and responded, "The Torah is Mine, and I have given it to you." What is Hashem trying to tell Moshe with this response and why was Moshe displeased to begin with? Was Moshe jealous that Aharon was chosen to be the Kohein Gadol instead of him?

Rav Nissan Alpert ZT"l, one of the foremost students of Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"l, provides us with a remarkable explanation in his commentary, "Limudei Nissan." Rav Alpert explains that Aharon's defining character trait was that of absolute kindness (Chessed). As an example, regarding the Golden Calf, Aharon did not protest Bnei Yisrael's desire to fashion an idol, because he knew that if he would have protested, they would have killed him like they killed his nephew Chur. If he would have been killed, there would have been severe consequences for Bnei Yisrael which Aharon sought to avoid in his great kindness and love for them. He chose kindness over truth and strict justice, which would have dictated that he protested the fashioning of the idol and if Bnei Yisrael killed him, then they would have deserved whatever punishments they were to receive.

Moshe Rabbeinu's defining character trait, however, was that of truth and strict justice and he felt that, at least in regards to worshiping Hashem (Avodas Hashem), the proper method of conduct is only with the path of strict justice and absolute truth. Accordingly, he believed that one who has sinned and has not done complete repentance (Teshuva), should not be deemed to be fit to serve in the Bais HaMikdash and bring an offering to Hashem to repent for others when he himself has not fully repented for his own sins. Doing so would not be just and appear to be insincere and hypocritical.

Once Moshe saw that Hashem chose Aharon to be the Kohen Gadol, he saw that it was the Divine Will that even Avodas Hashem (e.g. the service in the Beis HaMikdash) should be done with the method of Aharon rather than the method of Moshe (i.e. kindness over truth and strict justice) and therefore, even someone who has not completely repented for his own sins may bring offerings to Hashem to repent on behalf of others.

Moshe was not jealous of Aharon. The degree of displeasure that he felt came from realizing that he was wrong in his belief that his defining characteristic of truth and strict justice is not correct when it comes to servicing Hashem.

And this is what Hashem is responding to when He says as the Midrash states above, "The Torah is Mine, and I have given it to you." This means that "The Torah is Heavenly" – fit for the angels themselves who function through truth and strict justice, but "I have given it to you" – mankind, and it is made to be kept through kindness, to accommodate the frailties of man. In other words, for man to keep the Torah as it is intended, one needs to balance between its Heavenly nature – truth and strict justice, and kindness – to accommodate the frailties of man.

It is for this reason that Hashem asks Moshe to "bring Aharon close" in the Pasuk referenced above. Now that Hashem has chosen the path of Aharon (kindness), it requires careful oversight – by Moshe (truth and justice) and that is why Aharon needs to be brought close to him. In a similar vein, the Sages of the Torah who, like Moshe, value the principles of truth and justice are to oversee the use of kindness and be the arbiters of when we may compromise and deviate from truth and strict justice due to the weakness of man.

To return to our original question, why was Moshe's name specifically not mentioned in this week's Parsha, let us recall that (Exodus 32:32) Moshe himself had begged Hashem to forgive Bnei Yisrael for their sin of worshiping the Golden Calf – that Hashem should judge them with kindness and mercy and if not, "Hashem should erase me from his Sefer." Hashem is now erasing Moshe from his Sefer so to speak, by erasing him from this week's Parsha which contains Moshe's disappointment that his defining character trait was not chosen over Aharon's. He did this to gently remind him that he should not be displeased,

because he himself used Aharon’s characteristic successfully to bring atonement for Bnei Yisrael.

Halacha – Jewish Law

QUESTION: I am a salesperson. There are

some product lines that my company sells that are more profitable for our company than others. There are also product lines that may be more efficient or more economical that are carried by our competitors. My company, of course, would prefer that I sell our customers the more profitable product line, and the product line that we carry rather than the line of a competitor even if the competitor’s product may be better or cheaper. My question is, “Is this permitted, or am I deceiving my customers (a form of *Geneivas Daas*) by selling what is good for them even if it is not what is *best* for them?”

ANSWER: The Halachic authorities (Poskim) have ruled (Choshen Mishpat, Chapter One) that when the customer has reason to assume that you are giving him the best advice that there is – then it is forbidden to promote a product that is not best for him. The Poskim have mentioned that if a seller is only selling one product or brand, then there is a tacit assumption that the customer is aware that the business tends to promote their own products and that there may be a better deal somewhere else. For example, if you are a salesperson for Toyota, then the customer assumes that you are naturally going to promote a Toyota, even though a Honda may be a better deal for him. However, even in this case, it is “best practice” to tell him that he should make himself aware of all the other car makes and models and make the decision that he feels is best for him.

Of course, it is always forbidden to promote a product to a customer that the customer does not really need. The underling prohibitions of doing so are *Geneivas Da’as* (deception) and *Lifnei Iver Lo Sitain Michshol* (do not place a stumbling block before the blind).

Mussar – Introspection

We continue with the translation of the fourth chapter of the Chofetz Chaim’s Sefas Tamim. In last week’s Parsha sheet, we continued with the parable that the Sefas Tamim uses to illustrate what it would be like to have to be reincarnated and come back to Earth to pay back what one had stolen, rather than to be allowed to stay in the *Olam HaEmes*. The parable concludes below.

“When this man realized that nothing he said was of any use, he began to ask for permission to at least return to his

home only for a month, and to enjoy his family for that brief time and after that he would go back to that other country. The authorities also ignored this plea. The man began a soulful, bitter cry and pleaded with the authorities to at least allow him some time to see his family... The authorities said, “This we will grant you. You will be allowed to see your family but you cannot disembark and go to them. Instead, we will open the gate of the wall and only allow you to look at your family from a distance [for a very short time].”...Now he is being forced to go back into exile and again put himself in danger during his pending ocean voyage [to return what he stole], and who knows if he still has other money that belongs to other people that he will also have to return.

My brothers, so too is the lesson of this parable applicable to ourselves. The primary reason why man descends from the world On High to this world is to acquire a little Torah and Mitzvos to glow later on in the eternal light of the world On High. In this regard, he must behave as though he were a stranger in a foreign country and that he came there only to attend to some business needs. His thoughts should be entirely focused on the merchandise that he must acquire; which goods to buy and which goods not to buy and not to get involved in anything else since he has no intention of settling there. But because of the prodding of the *Yetzer Hora* and for other reasons, man forgets in his youth, just what the reason was for coming here to this world, and he comes to believe that he is a resident of this place and is not merely a visitor. However, when he reaches old age, he begins to sense that he is a transient and he begins to gather his merchandise and put them in his box (namely, his Torah and good deeds that he acquired during his lifetime). And when his days come to an end, he begins to journey back home. Now it is well known from the holy *Zohar* that man must traverse seven levels of judgment before coming to his final resting place... When all of the judgments and all of their ramifications end, if there were still to be found in his possession, the sin of extortion, cheating or theft, the *Cherubim* (angels) who guard the entranceway to *Gan Eden* will not allow him to enter under any circumstances. The most they will do is allow him to look from a distance at the place he earned in *Gan Eden*, but even that is only if he has great merit... This man will cry a soulful cry, because he is now forced to be born again. Then he will need to die and endure once again the pain of the grave and again be subjected to more levels of judgment. And who knows when he returns reincarnate whether he will be successful in accomplishing his mission. Maybe he will make things even worse for himself, Heaven forbid.