

March Is Synagogue Awareness Month

Devar Torah

Parshat Tetzaveh: Absence Makes the Presence Stronger

By Nehemia Polen

It was first noticed six hundred years ago by Rabbi Jacob ben Asher in his *Perush Ba'al ha-Turim al ha-Torah* that the name of Moses is absent from Parshat Tetzaveh. The name of this central person of the biblical narrative figures prominently in each Torah portion from the moment of his initial appearance at the beginning of the book of Exodus, so its absence in this week's Parsha is indeed conspicuous.

To explain this phenomenon, R. Jacob ben Asher calls attention to Exodus 32:32. The children of Israel have just worshipped the Golden Calf, and G-d threatens to destroy them and to choose Moses as the new patriarch of a "great nation." Moses insists that G-d must forgive their sin, "and if not, erase me, please, from Your book which You have written." Moses, in offering to surrender his life and his very spiritual identity for his people, uttered a curse, which, willy-nilly, left its impression, achieving at least partial realization as we find here in Parshat Tetzaveh, where his name is absent.

But this explanation appears to make the absence of Moses' name into a kind of punishment. Why should Moses have been punished for his breathtakingly courageous defense of the Children of Israel, at the risk of his own spiritual destiny? And why was it Parshat Tetzaveh specifically which was chosen for the omission of Moses' name? Before we can answer that question, we must take a look at a trend in the narrative of the Torah up to this point.

The Torah is, in large measure, the story of the rivalry of brothers: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. This pattern is broken by the relationship of Moses and Aaron. Aaron, the older brother, is overshadowed by Moses, the leader and teacher of the people. Yet they both worked together without a trace of rivalry or animosity. Indeed, the Midrash sug-

gests, it is precisely because Aaron bore no jealousy in his heart toward Moses that he, Aaron, was chosen to be the High Priest.

Now, why Parshat Tetzaveh? The theme of Parshat Tetzaveh is the selection of Aaron, together with a specification of the garments he was to wear as High Priest, and, most significantly, a description of the dedication ceremony installing Aaron and his sons as priests. The irony is that the officiant for this dedication service was none other than Moses himself! While his name indeed does not appear in the Parsha, he is the one being spoken to. He is the one charged with carrying out all the details of the service. He is the priest for this rite. The very first word of the Parsha, "Ve-atah" — "And you" — is addressed to Moses. Thus we have the paradox that nowhere is he addressed more directly than in the Parsha in which his name is absent.

The time when Moses rose to the defense of his people by asking G-d to remove his name from the Book was a moment of supreme self-sacrifice, a surrender to martyrdom not of the body, but of the soul. At that moment Moses was rewarded with a kind of immortality which transcends the mere remembrance of his name. Moses was granted a Parsha of the Torah in which his name would not be mentioned, but in which his presence would be most acutely felt, in which he alone would serve as a High Priest. Moses' wish that his name be erased was indeed fulfilled, but its fulfillment was transformed into a blessing. Here we encounter the silence not of absence and forgetfulness, but of presence and remembrance. Such is the reward of those who surrender themselves in service to G-d and G-d's people.

Nehemia Polen is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel of Everett.

© National Havurah Committee, 270 West 89 Street, New York, N.Y. 10024.

Rebel Rabbis Back Off Miller Case

By Haim Shapiro

JERUSALEM (JPFS) — In a meeting on March 8 with Israel's two chief rabbis, the dayanim (rabbinical court judges) who signed a petition against a ruling of the High Court of Justice in effect backed down from their position and apologized.

The dayanim, who had called on the Interior Ministry not to carry out the High Court ruling to register Reform convert Shoshana Miller as a Jew, had been threatened with possible prosecution for contempt of court after Knesset Member Yair Tsaaban (Mapam) petitioned the High Court on the matter.

Attorney-General Yosef Harish asked Religious Affairs Minister Ze'evulun Hammer to take action; but Hammer's mild, conciliatory letter to the rabbinical court judges would not satisfy the High Court, Harish pointed out.

At least part of the impetus for the dayanim to modify their position came from Hammer, who is anxious to avoid an open confrontation between the rabbinical courts and the judiciary.

Not all the signatories of the petition were present at the meeting, which was described as a gathering of the

rabbinical judges' council.

However, Rabbi Gedalya Axelrod, of Haifa, who allegedly initiated the petition, was there, as were representatives of all the other signatories.

In their retraction, which was formally a "letter of clarification" to Hammer, the dayanim explained that the petition had been intended as an "opinion of halachic principle, such as had been issued

by halachic teachers of Israel over the generations."

The petition, the letter continued, "had not intended to interfere with, or harm, the rule of law."

The letter was signed by Rabbi Avraham Elmaliah, director of the rabbinical courts, and by Rabbi Shlomo Dihovski, president of the Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court.

Hammer is to pass the letter on to Harish in the hope

that it will end the affair.

But Tsaaban issued a statement describing the letter of the dayanim as the "very least" they could possibly say, and added that it did not even include an admission of the seriousness of their action.

He said he would wait to hear the statements by Hammer and Harish to the High Court before considering any further action.

9 Ontario Cantors Protest Investiture of Women

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO (JTA) — A group of Conservative cantors here have angrily protested the recent decision by the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York to ordain women as cantors in the Conservative movement.

The protest was organized by the Rev. Eliezer Kirshblum of Adath Israel Congregation here, who is chairman of the Cantors Assembly for the Ontario region. Joined by eight other cantors from Toronto and Hamilton, he sent a letter to Chancellor Ismar Schorsch of the Seminary, charging that he reneged on a

promise to maintain the status quo and to consult on such matters as women cantors.

The letter said, "Your unilateral decision in such a critical religious matter plays havoc once again in an even more dramatic way with those of us who are trying to live along traditional lines within the framework of the Conservative movement."

Chai Associates

The Chai Associates will meet on Sunday, March 15, at 2 p.m. at Temple Beth El, 1001 Hancock St., Quincy. Sandra Evans will entertain.

Call 847-6853 for information.

Purim Seudah at Kadimah-Toras

The Annual Purim Seudah of Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe will be held on Sunday, March 15, at 4 p.m., in the Social Hall at 153 Washington Street, Brighton.

A full course meal will be served and entertainment in the Purim Spirit will be provided.

For information and reservations, call the synagogue office at 254-1333.

President Robert Cohen announces that Rabbi Abraham Halldinger will lead services for the Fast of Esther on Thursday, March 12, at 6:45 a.m. and Megillah Readings for Purim will be on Saturday evening, March 14, at 6 p.m., and on Sunday Morning, March 15, at 8:30 a.m.

Why? Because By Rabbi Samuel S. Fox

QUESTION: Why is it required to have two separate cups of wine during a Jewish wedding ceremony?

ANSWER: A Jewish wedding ceremony, the way it is conducted today, comprises two different ceremonies, one after the other. Originally, these two ceremonies were scheduled months apart. The wedding is not complete without both ceremonies. In the course of time it became impractical to enforce the holding of two ceremonies. Therefore, they are now held successively. In order to establish the identity of each ceremony, two different cups of wine are used.

QUESTION: Why is it usually the family of the bride that makes the feast after the wedding ceremony?

ANSWER: Some sources explain this by referring to a statement in the Talmud

(Berachoth) which states that "Whoever enjoys the meal of the bridegroom and doesn't succeed in making the bridegroom happy has transgressed..." If, therefore, the bridegroom's family were the host, whoever would fail to make the bridegroom happy would be guilty of such a transgression. Therefore, it is the bride's family that does this. Some claim that the bridegroom's family used to make the feast after the first part of the wedding, and the bride's family would make the feast after the second part. This would establish the equality of both families.

QUESTION: Why is it customary among traditional Jews to have wedding parties for 7 days — the day of the wedding and 6 days after?

ANSWER: The example for this unit of time for the celebration of feasts is traced to

the experience of Jacob and Samson in the Bible. In both cases there was such a period celebrated following their marriages. It is interesting to note that in Jewish tradition both a happy occasion of marriage and a sad occasion of mourning take place in a unit of 7 days. Some consider this similar to the 7 days of creation. Both in marriage and in mourning, a new feeling is created. The 7 days allow enough time for each occasion to be fully experienced, so that people will be able to adjust to the new experience and live with it.

Purim Schpiel at TOS

The Purim service at Temple Ohabei Shalom, to be held at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 14, will include a visit from a famous rock 'n' roll star, back by an all-female singing group. All are invited.

The TOS Purim Schpiel Committee reminds members and friends of TOS of the wise words of the great tzaddik (pious sage) Confucius Bar None: "He [for she] who comes to TOS Purim Schpiel in wild and zany costume finds merriment, eternal happiness, endless wealth, and enhances the enjoyment of the holiday for self and others."

Come in or out of costume, with or without noisemakers (the louder the better), to be part of this year's comic Purim celebration. A Yom Tov Oneg (light refreshments) will follow the service.

TOS is located at 1187 Beacon Street in Brookline (Kent Street stop on the Cleveland Circle Green Line). For more information call TOS at 277-6610.

Magical Purim in Hull

A special Purim breakfast, complete with the reading of the Megillah and entertainment by a professional magician, will be sponsored by Temple Beth Shalom on Sunday, March 15 at 9 a.m. at the Temple's Hebrew School and Community Building, 600 Nantasket Avenue, Hull.

This event is one of the Temple's regular monthly breakfast meetings and is also part of the observance of Synagogue Awareness Month.

As a special treat, a professional magician, the Great Marvella (Mark Sokol) will appear and perform. He is a popular Boston area magician who also teaches magic and frequently performs for audiences of all ages. He also does benefits for several charities.

The public, both members and non-members of the Temple are invited to attend. Children are especially welcome.

For more information, call 925-0091.

Alan Teperow Guest Speaker

Alan Teperow, Executive Director of the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts, will be the guest speaker at a meeting of the Greater Boston chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women on Wednesday, March 18, leading a discussion on the subject of "Choosing A Synagogue." Hostess for the program will be Barbara Lichtman of Medford.

The program is part of the community-wide observance of March as "Synagogue Awareness Month" and will focus on helping unaffiliated Jewish individuals and families find congregations that are "right" for them.

For more information about Synagogue Awareness Month call 244-6506.

Free Circumcision

ASHKELON (JPFS) — A man who threatened not to have his son circumcised won him a free circumcision.

Mordechai Azran, 35, a lifeguard at the Ashkelon municipal swimming pool, was told he would have to pay between \$100 and \$200 for the circumcision of his third son.

Azran told the town's chief rabbi that, if that were the case, he could not have his son circumcised, upon which the chief rabbi organized a free circumcision.



B.U. HILLEL CHAPEL WING DEDICATED — At a recent gathering of the Hillel Board, the Traditional Chapel Wing was dedicated in memory of David and Ann Gilman of Michigan, and of Louis and Shirley Ruby of Boston. Shown are Milton and Dawn Gilman of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, whose generosity made the dedication possible, with their son Robert, a freshman at Boston University.

TEMPLE BNAI MOSHE

1845 Comm. Ave., Brighton

A Conservative Congregation

Ephraim J. Greenberg, Rabbi
Theodore Schneider, Cantor
Beryl Chazet, Sexton

SHABBAT

Fri., March 13

Kabbalat Shabbat at 5:30 P.M.

Sat., March 14 at 8:45 A.M.

Community Kiddush followed by Rabbi's Study Group

Mincha at 5:30 P.M.

Reading of the Megillah at 8:15 P.M.

DAILY SERVICES

Mornings at 8:45 a.m.

Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m.

Mincha at 5:30 p.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE EMANUEL

385 Ward Street

Newton Centre

Tel. 332-5770

Rabbi Samuel Chiel

Rabbi Seth H. Frisch, Assistant Rabbi

Gabriel Hochberg, Cantor Emeritus

Martin Segal, Ritual Director

KABBALAT SHABBAT

Fri., March 13

at 6:30 P.M.

SHABBAT MORNING

Sat., March 14

at 8:45 & 9:30 A.M.

Mincha 5:40 P.M.

Mornings at 7:00 A.M.

Evenings at 7:30 P.M.

Sunday Morning at 8:00 A.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

MISHKAN TEFILA

300 Hammond Pond Pkwy.

Chestnut Hill

KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE

Fri., March 13

at 6:15 P.M.

Sat., March 14

at 8:30 A.M.

Mincha & Megillah Reading at 5:30 P.M.

DAILY SERVICES

Sunday & Holiday mornings at 8:00 A.M.

Mincha at 5:30 P.M.

Weekdays—7:00 A.M. & 7:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Rabbi Richard M. Yellin

Cantor Aryeh Finkelstein

Dr. Israel J. Kozlowski, Rabbi Emeritus

Gregor Shelnan, Cantor Emeritus

Rev. Michael Domba, Sexton

תורה ודעה

temple ohabei shalom

1187 Beacon Street, Brookline

(At Kent St. on the T) 277-6610

SHABBAT

Friday, March 13, 6:00 P.M.

Kabbalat Shabbat

Saturday, March 14, 10:15 A.M.

D'Var Torah

Child Care Available

PURIM

Saturday, March 14, 7:00 P.M.

Megillah and Purimspiel

DAILY MINYAN

8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

(9:00 A.M. Sunday)

Rabbi Eric H. Hoffman

Cantor Alex Zingales

Rabbi Emeritus Albert S. Goldstein

A REFORM CONGREGATION

Our synagogue family welcomes you

Young Israel of Brookline

62 Green St., Brookline, MA

734-0276

Shabbat Zachor

Fri., March 13

Evening Services at 5:35 P.M.

Sat., March 14

Morning Services at 7:00 and 8:30 A.M.

Afternoon Services at 5:25 P.M.

Weekday Mornings

Sunday at 7:15 & 8:00 A.M.

Monday & Tuesday at 6:20 & 7:05 A.M.

Tues., Wed. & Fri. at 6:30 & 7:15 A.M.

Weekday Afternoons at 5:45 P.M.

Rabbi Gershon C. Gewirtz

Rev. Myer L. Lokatch

ALL ARE WELCOME

—Bruchim Habaim—

Sabbath Candle Lighting Time

March 13

5:28 P.M.

TEMPLE REYIM

1860 Washington St.

Newton

SHABBAT SERVICES

Fri. Eve., March 13

Late Service at 8:15 P.M.

Sat. Morn., March 14

at 9:30 A.M.

Shabbat Service

Torah Interpretation

Megillah Reading at 7:00 P.M.

Daily Minyan at 7:00 A.M.

Sunday at 9:00 A.M.

Rabbi Philip Kival

Cantor Martin Robbins

Congregation Kehillath Israel

384 Harvard St.,

Brookline

Dr. Shalom Stern, Rabbi

Dr. Emanuel Saltzman,

Rabbi Emeritus

Rev. Felix Kahn, Sexton

Fri., March 13

Kabbalat Shabbat at 5:30 P.M.

Sat., March 14

8:45 A.M. Only

Sat. Eve., at 6:15 P.M.

Reading of the Megillah

Sunday, March 15

at 10:30 A.M.

Reading of the Megillah

Daily Services

7:00 & 8:00 A.M.

Mincha 5:30 P.M.

Maariv 6:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE EMETH

194 Grove Street, Chestnut Hill

Rabbi Alan Turetz

Rabbi Emeritus, Zev K. Nelson

Cantor Simon Kandler

Ritual Director Alan Alpert

Fri., March 13

Kabbalat Shabbat at 5:40 P.M.

Sat., March 14

at 9:30 A.M.

Jr. Congregation (Grades 1-7)

at 10:00 A.M.

Parachim (Ages 3-6)

at 10:3