

This Week's Parshah - Parshas Tetzaveh

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of

Yaakov *ben* Louis *a"h*

a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of his *neshamah*

A Fitting Crown

The Kohein-King Connection

There appear to be certain parallels between the *Kohein Gadol* (High Priest) and the *melech* (king), which can be derived from this week's *parshah*.

Perhaps the most obvious of these is the general theme of *kavod* (honor). This is the thrust of the special priestly garments the *Kohein Gadol* and his priestly offspring were to don – לְכָבוֹד וּלְתִפְאָרֶת – “for honor and glory” (*Shemos 28:2,40*). Of course, the honor due the *melech* is likewise a key component of the nation's interactions with their monarch. We find numerous *halachos* (laws) aimed at protecting his honor and preserving his dignity. As the Mishnah states (*Sanhedrin 2:8*):

אֵין רוֹכְבִין עַל סוּסוֹ, וְאֵין יוֹשְׁבִין עַל כִּסֵּאוֹ, וְאֵין מְשַׁתְּמְשִׁין בְּשִׁרְבִיטוֹ, וְאֵין רוֹאִין אוֹתוֹ כְּשֶׁהוּא מְסַתְּפֵר וְלֹא כְּשֶׁהוּא עָרוֹם וְלֹא בְּבֵית הַמְּרֻקָּץ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שׁוֹם תִּשִּׂים עָלָיו מֶלֶךְ, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה אֵימָתוֹ עָלָיו:

“No one (aside from the king) may ride his personal horse, sit in his seat, nor use his scepter. One may not view him while he takes a haircut, is without clothing, or in the bath-house; as is mandated by the verse, ‘You shall place the king on you’ (*Devarim 17:15*), intimating that his awe should be upon you.”

A more specific item shared by these two figures is the crown. This has an obvious manifestation in the case of the king, but the head of the *Kohein Gadol* is similarly bedecked. One of his unique vestments is the *Tzitz*, the golden plate that adorns his head; this is referred to by the verse as the “*nezer hakodesh*” (crown of sanctity) (*Shemos 39:30*).

This *Tzitz*-crown connection can be the source of some fascinating insights. We shall hopefully discover this after laying some preliminary groundwork.

Heads Up

One item we need to clarify before proceeding further is the issue of head shapes. The first thing that ordinarily pops into mind (no pun intended) when contemplating head shapes is roundness. In crude stick-figure drawings, for instance, the “stick” is usually topped by a circle-shaped ball.

But closer inspection reveals that assigning mere “roundness” to the average head is a less than accurate portrayal. Few people have a globe perched on top of their necks. To be more precise, a head is generally appointed by a flatter facial area (barring noses or other protuberances) culminating in a forehead; the remaining hair-covered head area above and behind is what accounts for the quality of roundness. Stated another way, the letter “D” might be a more faithful representative of head shape than the letter “O.”

Now, this arrangement might present some challenge when it comes to donning a crown. By and large, these

precious-metal objects resemble a large, circular ring. As such, they might actually do better if placed on a ball-shaped head than upon the conventional “D” model.

One seemingly simple way to “circumvent” the problem would be to simply place the crown on the top/back part of the head that retains a round shape. This might be the ideal solution for *gentile* kings; as we shall soon see, however, the matter is not that simple as far as the Israelite kings are concerned.

Perfect Fit

The complication that arises has to do with the *tefillin shel rosh* (*tefillin* worn on the head), which are supposed to be placed between the hairline and the “soft-spot” on the upper portion of the head (*Menachos 37a*). Let us return briefly to the headwear of the *Kohein Gadol*. As mandated in this week’s *parshah*, the *Kohein Gadol* had to don both the *Tzitz* and the *Mitznefes* (turban-like headdress). In addition to all of this, he also had to find space for his *tefillin*! The Gemara (*Archin 3b*) states that a shock of hair was actually visible between the *Mitznefes* on top and the *Tzitz* below. That is where the *tefillin* were to be placed – on the spot directly above the *Tzitz*. And while this might sound a bit tight, there is actually just enough room here for the *tefillin*. The Gemara states (*Avodah Zarah 44a*) that there is enough room on the front of the head to provide for two pairs of head *tefillin* (one on top of the other). Similarly, it could accommodate a *Tzitz* with *tefillin* right above it.

Let us recall also that the *Tzitz* is a type of crown. And so, the *Toras Chaim* explains (*Avodah Zarah, ibid.*), this is where the crown-problem arises. The *melech* was to wear his crown in the same place as the *Tzitz* – that is, right below where the *tefillin* would rest. In other words, he could not wear his circle-shaped crown on the upper, round part of his head, but had to place it around his hair-line area – a basically level region. What to do? The only way his round crown could fit properly and snugly on this flat surface would be by some miracle.

Which is exactly what happened. The Gemara in *Avodah Zarah (ibid.)* states that one of the hallmarks of the Davidic dynasty was that the crowns they used would fit only on their heads, but not on the head of any pretender to the throne. Tosafos explains that the reference here is to the aforementioned miracle – that the circular crown fit perfectly on the non-round area of their heads.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the words of the popular song have their roots in this dissertation. Why, indeed, did the Davidic kings employ these round crowns (which could only fit with a miracle)? The *Toras Chaim* explains that the circular shape – symbolizing a continuum – reflects the fact that David Hamelech’s dynasty will exist in perpetuity. He concludes with the fitting quote from the Gemara in *Rosh Hashanah (25a)* –
 מִלְּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּי וְקָיָם – *David, King of Yisrael, lives on!*