

Parshat Tzav

Vayikra 8:6-10

וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וַיִּרְחֹץ אֹתָם בַּמִּים וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־הַכֹּתֶנֶת וַיַּחַגְרֵה אֹתוֹ בַּבִּגְדֹת וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ אֶת־הַמְעִיל וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־הָאֶפֶד וַיַּחַגְרֵה אֹתוֹ בַּחֹשֶׁבֶת הָאֶפֶד וַיֹּאפֶד לוֹ בֹּו: יִשָּׁם עָלָיו אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַחֹשֶׁן אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתֻּמִּיִּם: וַיִּשָּׁם אֶת־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּשָּׁם עַל־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל־מִוֶּל פָּנָיו אֶת צִיץ הַזָּהָב נֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וַיִּמְשַׁח אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֹתָם:

And Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and bathed them in water. And he placed the tunic upon him [Aaron], girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, placed the ephod upon him, girded him with the band of the ephod, and adorned him with it. And he placed the choshen upon him, and he inserted into the choshen the Urim and the Tummim. And he placed the cap on his [Aaron's] head, and he placed on the cap, towards his face, the golden showplate, the holy crown, as the Lord had commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the Sanctuary and everything in it and sanctified them.

Yoram Ranann: The Everlasting Fire



Hillel Smith- Parshat Tzav



Orly Lashak- Class of 2021 : Rashi- Anointing the Kohen

Background:

The pesukim here are discussing the process of how Moshe dressed Aaron and his sons in the proper kohanim attire. The parsha describes the different things they are obligated to do as kohanim, especially concerning the sacrifices.

Medieval commentary:

Rashi (France 1040-1105)

ויצק, וימשח: בתחלה יוצק על ראשו, ואחר כך נותן בין ריסי עיניו ומושך באצבעו מזה לזה:

And he poured...and anointed [him]: At first, he [Moses] poured [the oil] on his [Aaron's] head, and afterwards, he placed it between his eyelids, and drew it with his finger, from one [eyelid] to the other

My take on the commentary:

It's interesting that Rashi explains a whole process which the Torah does not mention. I wonder what the purpose behind this process was. I believe that Moshe did this to show the kohanim that the eyes are the window to Hashem's soul and that the oil would remind them of that.

Ezra Miller- Class of 2023 An Original Thought

In these pesukim it says that Moshe was the one who had to dress Aron and his sons. He was the one who had to bathe them. Why was Moshe the one who had to do this? After all, could not have Aron and his children bathed and clothed themselves? I drew a parallel to Kiddushin 36b. It states that the way we should honor our parents is by feeding your parents, clothing them, and helping them come in and out. I think this notion of Moshe dressing them and propping them up is to not only keep Moshe in check, but to also show how even the leader of Bnei Yisrael has to respect the Cohanim. Additionally, Moshe was very close to God, and most say he was even holier than Aron and his children. This shows you that no matter how great you may be, you still must show respect to those who work for God, like Rabbis and people of the such.

Jeremy Morgan- Class of 2021 - A Kabbalistic View of the Choshen

The pesukim chosen from Parshat Tzav discuss how Moshe would dress his brother Aharon in the holy garments of the Kohen Gadol after which he would anoint him with oil. One of the significant items worn by Aharon was the Choshen, a breastplate, featuring 12 gemstones; one for every tribe. **Yehuda Altein, Chabad Rabbi**, delved into kabbalah in discussing the priestly breastplate. Kabbalistic sources, he says, explain that the high priest, the man who represented the nation in the Beit HaMikdash, was able to effect a positive change within the people through his service. Likewise, the garments he wore possessed great spiritual energy and influence. Gemstones are inanimate matter, yet they shine and impart radiance. The stones of the breastplate thus empowered the Jews to refine their coarse animalistic souls and make them into shining beacons. Similarly, the words of prayer might, on their own, be "inanimate" but through investing in them feeling and meaning, each word becomes a dazzling gem. As we see, each specific stone reflects its correlated tribe's unique character. This highlights how each individual is distinct and, through employing the appropriate effort, can reach the highest heights of their unique potential.

Personally, I find this to be a beautiful interpretation and analysis of the Choshen and its gemstones. In general, I think that giving meaning and deeper beauty to inanimate objects allows for incredible insight and Rabbi Altein does a masterful job of pulling from Kaballah to do just that with the gemstones of the breastplate mentioned in this weeks Parsha