Jewish Tribune – Tetzaveh

**Behind the Scenes**

The omission of Moshe Rabbeinu’s name in this week’s parsha is striking. From the moment he is born in parshas Shemos, he appears in every sedra apart from ours.

The Ba’al HaTurim notes that it is a consequence of Moshe saying "מחני נא מספרך" after the sin of the egel hazahav in next week’s parsha.

But the question remains: why omit Moshe Rabbeinu’s name, davka from our parsha, parshas Tetzaveh?

The Ba’al HaTurim suggests that it is because our parsha deals with the clothing and adornments of the Kohen and Kohen Godol. Moshe Rabbeinu was meant to serve as the Kohen Godol and lost the privilege when he resisted to go on the mission to save Klal Yisroel (see Rashi, Shemos 4,14). Mentioning Moshe’s name in this parsha would be insensitive to him.

The Vilna Gaon notes that parshas Tetzaveh always falls around the 7th of Adar, the yohrtseit of Moshe Rabbeinu and it is therefore an appropriate sedrah to omit him.

I’ve always felt that leaving his name out of parshas Tetzaveh is a tender and poignant expression of HKBH’s love for Moshe Rabbeinu. Saying "מחני נא מספרך" after the sin of the egel hazahav was a remarkable exhibition of Moshe Rabbeinu’s mesiras nefesh. He was so dedicated to Klal Yisroel, he was willing to be erased from the very Torah he had battled to secure and give to Klal Yisroel.

On one hand, HKBH had to erase Moshe’s name. If a tzaddik says something it cannot be ignored – קללת חכם אפילו בחנם היא באה (Berachos 56a). But HKBH was reluctant to erase the name of His precious servant and therefore waited until the very last possible moment.

Moshe said "מחני נא מספרך" in parshas Ki Sisa. HKBH didn’t want to act on it straight away, nor in the following parsha, parshas Vayakhel or Pekudei or Vayikra and so on and waited until we were almost back at Ki Sisa before doing it. Namely, parshas Tetzaveh, the last parsha before Ki Sisa.

Some commentators note that although he is not mentioned explicitly, he is alluded to in an interesting way. Every letter has a נגלה (revealed) and נסתר (hidden) element. For example, the letter “א” is actually written “אלף”. The “א” is revealed and the “לף” is hidden.

So too in the name “משה”. If you spell out the name in full, the gematria of the hidden part adds up to 101, as the chart below shows. 101 is the number of pesukim in our parsha.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **נסתר** | **נגלה** |
| **40** | **ם** | מ |
| **60** | **ין** | ש |
| **1** | **א** | ה |
| **101** |  |  |

The idea is that although he doesn’t appear explicitly, Moshe Rabbeinu is very much there, albeit behind the scenes.

The same is true in many walks of life. There are people who play a major role but do so behind the scenes.

The Vilna Gaon famously notes that this is true in a siyum. The Gematria of the נגלה (revealed) and נסתר (hidden) of each letter in the word סיום, is the same. For example, the letter ס, is made up of the נגלה part (ס) and the נסתר part (מך). The gematria of both parts are the same – 60. The same is true for the other letters of the word סיום.

The message is that for every person making the siyum, there are people behind the scenes who facilitated it. Perhaps an encouraging wife or mother or Rebbe.

So, although we feel somewhat bereft of Moshe Rabbeinu in this week’s parsha, we at least know why he is not there and perhaps can feel his presence behind the scenes.

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