

JEWISH STUDY NETWORK

Parsha Tetzaveh

From the time that Moses entered the scene in Parsha Shemot throughout the rest of the Torah, this week's Parsha is the only one that lacks any mention of our great leader's name. Why is Moses uncharacteristically missing from our Parsha?

I will present five answers to ponder. (1) The Vilna Goan (Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilnius, 1720 -1797) states that Moshe's Yahrtzeit (death anniversary) is the 7th day of Adar. This Hebrew date usually corresponds with the Parsha of Tetzaveh. Hence, the Torah omits his name to hint to his absence.

(2) Another answer given is that Moshe defended the Jews by offering to have his name erased from existence by the sin of the Golden Calf. A righteous person's threat always comes true, even if made conditionally. The power of the righteous person's words make it that his statements become reality. Hence, Moses stated that his name should be erased so that the Jews should receive forgiveness from the sin of the Golden Calf. It was fulfilled in this Parsha in two ways. Firstly, because Moshe's phraseology was "מספרך", "erase me from Your Book". This word can be rearranged to spell: "מספר כ", from the 20th book. Parsha Tetzaveh is the 20th Parsha in the Torah. Secondly, he made this statement in Parsha Ki Sisa, which is the Parsha that immediately follows Tetzaveh. Hashem didn't want to take Moses' name out and so He delayed doing so until the last possible moment, which was one year later in the Parsha before the words are found.

(3) The Vilna Goan also states that the Parsha contains 101 verses. The hidden part of Moshe's name is equal to that number. This refers to the letters that spell out and extrapolate the letters Mem-Shin-Hey (מ"ש"ה = 101). Hence, a hint to Moshe is truly found in the Parsha. Specifically the "inside" of his name is alluded at, to show that Moshe's spiritual, internal essence is with us eternally even if he is not visibly apparent.



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This can be taken even deeper. The Talmud (Chagigah) states that one who reviews his studies 101 times is far greater than one who reviews it 100 times. The simple explanation is that whenever one reviews again he or she receives a cumulative benefit of repetition that provides exponential benefits. The deeper part is the fact that 101 is also the numerical value of the name of Moshe, whereas 100 is the value of Samael, the evil angel who is appointed as the minister of forgetfulness. When one reviews his studies with diligence he elevates the learning to that of the caliber of Moses, connection and memory.

(4) This Parsha is all about Aron HaKohen, his Priesthood and the priestly garments and is not related to Moses. Moses lost the privilege to be a Kohen when he questioned God and thus Aron is the only one of the two who is found in this Parsha.

(5) The final answer is that just as on Purim, Hashem hid His face, so too Moshe is hidden. Moses spread the word of God and thus since our Parsha falls out during the time of the year of Purim, Moses is absent to hint to hiddenness. We seek out God at this time and we deepen our commitment to truth. This results in the greatest revelations and great reason to rejoice.

Shabbat Shalom!

