

# Tetzaveh - Zayin Adar: What's In a Name

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

In most years, the seventh of Adar — the day of Moshe Rabbeinu's demise<sup>1</sup> — falls during or near the time of the Torah portion of *Tetzaveh*. This is why,<sup>2</sup> from the time of Moshe's birth<sup>3</sup> until the Book of *Devarim*, *Tetzaveh* is the only Torah portion in which Moshe's name is not mentioned.<sup>4</sup> The absence of Moshe's name hints at his demise on the seventh of Adar.

This corresponds to the ruling of the *Magen Avraham*<sup>5</sup> that in a leap year the fast of the seventh of Adar is observed during the first month of Adar, inasmuch as only the seventh of Adar I falls near the time of the Torah portion *Tetzaveh*.

The seventh of Adar, however, marks not only the day of Moshe's demise, but also the day of his birth.<sup>6</sup> This being so, why is Moshe's birth not alluded to in *Tetzaveh* ?

We may say that Moshe's birth is indeed implied in *Tetzaveh* , since the title "*VeAtah Tetzaveh* ," "You shall command,"<sup>7</sup> refers to Moshe. Since the title of a Torah portion hints at the content of the entire portion, it follows that the entire portion hints at (the birth of) Moshe.

But we are now faced with a remarkable paradox: On the one hand, Moshe's name is not mentioned in the portion. On the other hand, *every word* of the portion is included in "*VeAtah Tetzaveh*," which refers to Moshe.

How do we resolve this?

In the past,<sup>8</sup> Moshe's birth on the seventh of Adar was joyfully celebrated. This being so, why do we now commemorate the seventh of Adar only as a fast day?

The explanation is that since Moshe's birthday is such a momentous and auspicious occasion, it cannot descend below and be revealed through palpable joy. Rather, its joy remains concealed and affects us from afar.

Another example of the above is the difference in the degree of revealed joy on Shabbos and the Festivals. It goes without saying that the degree of sanctity of Shabbos is greater than that of the *Yomim Tovim*. So much so that *Havdalah* is recited to distinguish the sanctity of the former from that of the latter.

Nevertheless, the commandment to be "joyous" extends only to the Festivals<sup>9</sup> and not to Shabbos. The reason is that since Shabbos is loftier than the Festivals, it can only be commemorated through the more sublime "rapture,"<sup>10</sup> rather than through the less subtle "joy."

In a like manner, Moshe's birth is so sublime an event that institutionalized, palpable joy can in no way do it justice.

The sublime and subtle aspect of Moshe's birth will be better understood by referring to the saying of our Sages<sup>11</sup> that *tzaddikim* pass away on the same day as they are born.

The inner reason for this is<sup>12</sup> because *tzaddikim* perfect and complete their birth (their revelation) at the time of their demise. For at that time<sup>13</sup> there is revealed (to their disciples) the "essence of their spirit," i.e., the faith, awe and love with which they served G-d," to a greater degree than when their souls were within their bodies.

But this illumination, which instills in their disciples heart's "thoughts of repentance and good deeds," is "greatly hidden and concealed." Thus it is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>14</sup> in reference to Moshe, that after his passing his radiation extends in every generation to the "600,000 souls," but in a concealed manner.<sup>15</sup>

At the time of birth of *tzaddikim*, however, their revelation is only potential. The completed state of birth and revelation is expressly at the time of their demise. At the moment of death, this lofty level is drawn down in a concealed manner,<sup>16</sup> and that which is felt in this world is but the aspect of passing. It is therefore a fast day — a solemn day of introspection, rather than a day of revealed joy.

In light of the above, we can understand the connection between the contradictory aspects of the seventh of Adar and the portion "*VeAtah Tetzaveh*:"<sup>17</sup> In a revealed sense, Moshe's name is not mentioned there at all, for that which is revealed for all to see is that it is a day of fasting — demise.

However, the inner reason Moshe's name is not mentioned is because on the seventh of Adar there radiates an aspect of Moshe's being that transcends a mere name. It is "essence" that transcends "name."

Based on *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVI, pp. 342-351.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *Megillah* 13b; concluding passage of *Megillas Taanis*; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 580:2.
2. *Ma'or Einayim*, *Tetzaveh*.
3. Commentary of the *Rosh* (*Hadar Zekeinim*); *Baal HaTurim* beginning of *Tetzaveh*.
4. *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 246a; *Rabboseinu Baalei HaTosafos*, *Sisa* 32:32. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 674ff.
5. *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 580:8.
6. *Megillah*, *ibid*.
7. See *Megillah* 29b; *Zohar*, *ibid*.; *Seder Tefillos LehaRambam*, *Hilchos Tefillah* 13:22. See also *Rashi*, *Shmos* 25:6-7, *Vayikra* 8:3,5.
8. *Tosafos* and *Rosh* on *Nazir* 14a.
9. *.Devarim* 16:14.
10. *Yeshayahu* 55:13.
11. *Kiddushin* 38a.
12. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. V, p. 86.
13. See Part II of *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle XXVII.
14. See *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 273a; see also there, p. 216b.
15. *Ibid*.
16. See *Torah Or*, p. 89b, *Basi LeGani* 5710, ch. 1.
17. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXVI, p. 204ff.

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