

Parshat TETZAVEH
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

This is the week of my fathers', 39th yahrzeit, the 14th of Adar, Purim. This Dvar Torah is designated LeZeicher Nishmato, (Tzvi ben Aharon, Alav HaShalom)

A major portion of our parsha discusses the garments, the eight special vestments worn by the Kohen Gadol in his performance of services in the Mishkan. One of those garments was the Me'il Ha'eiphod, the Robe (28:32). It was designed with a hem at the bottom which contained pomegranate-shaped tassels and between each tassel were bells with ringers (28:34). Altogether, there were seventy-two bells and seventy-two pomegranate-shaped tassels. This Robe had to be worn by Aharon, The Kohen Gadol, in the performance of his Service, so that "its sounds shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary before HaShem and when he leaves" (28:35).

There are many lessons that emerge from this. One is that with many people being in the sanctuary, it was only fair and proper that they know when the Kohen Gadol was entering so that they not be taken by surprise. The significant teaching of this is that whenever entering into a room, it is important to knock on the door to protect the privacy of those inside, and not to take them by surprise. The Gemara Pesachim (112a) states that Rabbi Akiva transmitted seven important lessons to his son Rabbi Yehoshua, one of them being, "AL TIKANEIS LE'BEITECHA 'PITOM', KOL SHEKEIN, LEBEIT CHAVEIRECHA", do not enter 'your' home 'suddenly' (without knocking or warning), and certainly not someone else's home. Rashi quotes the source of this instruction from our pasuk, "VENISHMA KOLO BEVO'OH EL HAKODESH", so that its sounds be heard when he enters the Sanctuary.

Jewish law teaches that we must be careful to knock before entering anywhere, even one's own home, or even a child's room. Privacy is important and must be respected. Children must develop a sense of feeling that their parents respect their privacy and dignity. By so doing, children will respect the sensitivity and privacy of others as they mature into adulthood. The Torah is giving us a lesson plan in how to inculcate our children with a sense of "VE'A'HAVTA LE'REI'ACHA KA'MOCHA", a love and respect for others.