

**Parshat Tzav- 5771**  
**By Rabbi Aharon Ziegler**

This past Sunday was Zayin Adar Sheni, the seventh day of Adar, commemorating the yahrtzeit (and birth) of Moshe Rabbeinu. Thinking of Moshe Rabbeinu as a human being, a husband and a father who had feelings, emotions and sensitivities one cannot help but feel very saddened and depressed after reading this parsha.

With the Mishkan completed and the laws of the Korbanot taught, the final step towards making the Mishkan operational could finally be taken. For the next seven days of consecration Moshe ministers and performs all functions of the Mishkan as Kohen Gadol. However, at the end of the seventh day Moshe is instructed to take his brother Aharon and prepare him to serve as Kohen Gadol, and Aharon's sons as Kohanim (8:1-10). In sight of the entire assembled nation the holy garments to be worn by the Kohen Gadol are placed upon Aharon.

How did Moshe feel about this new event? Did he feel displaced or rejected? Was he surprised? Was he disappointed? The text does not give us any indication, but the Midrash (VaYikra Rabba 11:6) addresses some of these issues. "R' Tanchum taught in the name of R' Yudan: All the seven days of consecration Moshe ministered in the office of Kohen Gadol, but the Shechina did not take up its abode through his ministrations, but when Aharon put on the Big'dei Ke'hunah, the Shechina descended and entered its place, as it is written, For today the Lord appears to you (VaYikra 9:4). And when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces (9:23).

While the text does not reveal Moshe's feelings there are those who believe they can discern Moshe's emotional state from the *trup*, the cantillation symbols of musical instructions, also known as *ta'amei haMikra*. The written Torah has been transmitted with not only letters and words but tradition also includes musical trup for each word which tells us how to read the text. Among the rarest of these musical notes

that accompany the Torah text is the *shalsholet*. It appears only four times in the entire Torah, and in each time it depicts a situation of *hesitation, conflict or ambivalence*. The shalsholet is found three times in the book of Bereishit.

It appears on the word “*Vayit’ma’hama*” (19:16) - and Lot “*lingered*”, and hesitated because he was torn between leaving behind his home, his fortune and fleeing for his life.

It appears on the word “*VaYomar*” (24:12)- and Eliezer, the non-Jewish servant of Avraham “*speaks to the G-d of Avraham*” asking for help in the success of his mission, to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak.

It again appears on the word “*Va’Yema’ein*” (39:8) and he *refused*. The wife of Potifar tried to seduce Yosef into committing sin, but Yosef mustered all his inner strength and was able to refuse her advances. It wasn’t easy and the shalsholet conveys this to us.

The fourth and last time it appears in our parsha on the word “*VaYish’chat*” (*VaYikra* 8:23)-and he (Moshe) “*slaughtered*” (the animal). The shalsholet, which is a long, drawn-out sound, suggests hesitation, just as Lot, Eliezer and Yosef hesitated, Moshe hesitated with conflict and emotion. It was definitely not a feeling of jealousy for Aharon’s glory and supreme position as Kohen Gadol, for this would be out of character of the Moshe Rabbeinu we know. When Moshe is informed that there are other Jews who possess Nevu’ah and are prophesying in the camp, Moshe does not become agitated about the possibility of losing his monopoly on spirituality, but responds, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only all of G-d’s people were prophets, and that G-d would bestow them with His Spirit” (Bamidbar 11:29)

Moshe hesitated and was emotionally pained in one area, in the area of children. Aharon’s children inherited the Ke’huna (priesthood); Moshe’s children did not inherit their father’s status. True, Moshe was a leader, a Kohen Gadol, a Rebbi for all of Israel, but he was also a father of two sons. The hesitation was not about the shechting, the slaughtering of the animal, but about what came next. Aharon’s sons will someday succeed

their father as Kohen Gadol but Moshe's sons will blend in with the masses and in their anonymity, they will live.

During the seven days of consecration Moshe pleaded with G-d to allow him to enter Eretz Yisrael and that his children should succeed him, but alas, both requests were turned down. How sad, how tragic.