

Parashat Tzav: Shadow and Light

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Vayikra 8:33	
וּמִפֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא תֵצֵאוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים עַד יוֹם מְלֹאת יְמֵי מְלֹאֵיכֶם כִּי שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יִמְלֵא אֶת־יְדֵיכֶם:	[Moshe said to Aharon:] You shall not go outside the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days until the day that your period of ordination is completed. Your ordination will require seven days.

1. Brotherly Competition

Midrash Tanhuma Shemini 3:1	
אָמְרוּ זָכוֹנוֹם לְבָרָכָה, כָּל שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים שֶׁהָיָה מֹשֶׁה בְּסִנְיָה, אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, לֵךְ בְּשִׁלְיָחוּתִי. וְהוּא אָמַר לוֹ: שְׁלַח נָא בֵּיד תִּשְׁלַח (שְׁמוֹת ד, יג). כֵּן יוֹם רָאשׁוֹן וְשֵׁנִי. אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲנִי אֹמֵר לָךְ לֵךְ, וְאַתָּה אֹמֵר לִי שְׁלַח נָא בֵּיד תִּשְׁלַח. חֲיִיךָ, לְמַחֵר אֲנִי פּוֹרֵעַ לָךְ, כְּשִׁיעֲשֶׂה הַמִּשְׁכָּן, תִּהְיֶה סָבוּר בְּעֶצְמְךָ שְׂאֵתָה מִשְׁמֵשׁ בְּכֹהֵנָה גְדוֹלָה, וְאַנִּי אֹמֵר לָךְ, קְרָא לְאַהֲרֹן שִׁשְׁמֵשׁ. לָכֵן נֶאֱמַר: קְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו. אָמַר, יֵשׁ קְרִיאָה לְשָׁבַע, וְיֵשׁ קְרִיאָה לְרָעָב. לְשָׁבַע מִנִּין, וְקְרִיאָתִי אֶל הַדָּגָן וְהָרִבִּיתִי אוֹתוֹ (יחֲזַקְאֵל לוֹ, כט). לְרָעָב מִנִּין, כִּי קְרָא ה' לְרָעָב (מ"ב ח, א).	Our masters have said: All seven days when Moshe was at the thornbush, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Go on My mission"; but he was saying (in Exod. 4:13), "Please make someone else Your agent." So was it the first and second day. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "I say to you, 'Go,' and you say to Me, 'Please make someone else Your agent?'" By your life, I am paying you back. Someday soon, when that tabernacle is being made, you will be thinking privately that you should serve in the high priesthood; but I am telling you, "Call Aharon to serve." It is therefore stated (in Lev. 9:1), "Moshe called Aharon and his sons." There is a calling for abundance [and there is] a calling for famine. Where is it shown [that there is a calling] for abundance? Where it is stated (in Ezek. 36:29), "I will call for the grain and increase it." And where is it shown [that there is a calling] for famine? [Where it is stated (in II Kings 8:1),] "for the Lord has called for a famine."
יֵשׁ קְרִיאָה לְגִדְלָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: קְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן. אָמַר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה, כֵּן אָמַר לִי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, לְמִנּוֹתְךָ כֹּהֵן גְּדוֹל. אָמַר לוֹ אַהֲרֹן, אַתָּה יֹגַעַת בְּמִשְׁכָּן וְאַנִּי נֹעֲשֶׂה כֹהֵן גְּדוֹל. אָמַר לוֹ: חֲיִיךָ, אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂאֵתָה נֹעֲשֶׂה כֹהֵן גְּדוֹל, כִּאֲלוּ אֲנִי נֹעֲשֶׂה. שְׂכָשֵׁם שֶׁשְׂמַחְתָּ לִּי בְּגִדְלָה, כֵּן אֲנִי שֹׂמַח בְּגִדְלָתְךָ.	There is a calling for greatness, as stated (in Lev. 9:1), "Moshe called [Aharon]." Moshe told him, "The Holy One, blessed be He, has told me to ordain you as high priest." Aharon said to him, "You have labored on the tabernacle, so shall I be made high priest?" He said to him, "By your life, even though you are being made high priest, it is as if I were being made [high priest]; for just as you were glad for me in my greatness, so I am glad for you in your greatness."

¹ All translations are from Sefaria, unless otherwise noted.

Aviva Zornberg, *The Hidden Order of Intimacy: Reflections on the Book of Leviticus*, 42

The midrash proposes that Moshe is punished for his original resistance to God's call: since he has "disappointed" God, he will experience his own disappointment by having his expectations thwarted; he will play the priestly role for seven days, only to yield it thereafter to Aharon...However, the midrashic narrative focuses on the mutual nobility with which Moshe and Aharon deal with this situation. Aharon empathizes with Moshe's loss and Moshe remembers how generously Aharon had responded, after the Burning Bush, to Moshe's rise to power, he now finds it in himself to be equally magnanimous in his own moment of disappointment.

Rabbeinu Bahya on Vayikra 8:33

כי שבעת ימים ימלא את ידכם. וכן אמר לו הקב"ה בסדר ואתה תצוה, שבעת ימים תמלא את ידך. ועל דרך הקבלה היו ימי המלואים שבעה כנגד השבעה הידועים, כי כבר ידעת דוגמתו של כהן גדול מהו שמתוכו התנבא משה ע"ה כענין שכתוב (ישעיהו ס"ג:י"ב) מוליך לימין משה זרוע תפארתו, ולכך נצטוו משה שיטפל באהרן ושימשחנו, כי כן הזכיר למעלה ויצק משמן המשחה על ראש אהרן וימשח אותו לקדשו, ולכך נקראו ימי מלואים, לשון שלמות, כי דוגמתם שלמות הכל, וכבר ידעת כי משה שמש כל שבעת ימי המלואים וחנוך כהונתו של אהרן על ידי משה היתה, והבן זה.

כי שבעת ימים ימלא את ידכם, "for you shall be inaugurated for a period of seven days." God had said something similar when the Torah wrote: "For seven days you shall inaugurate them." A kabbalistic approach: The days of inauguration were seven, and the people had already realized the significance of the seven garments of the High Priest (the trousers were not a specific garment of the High Priest). We read, "Who made His glorious arm march at the right side of Moshe." This is a reference to Moshe, who trained Aharon and gave him some of his prophetic powers. And this is why Moshe had to anoint Aharon. During these seven days, Moshe performed the High Priest's duties (dressed only in a white tunic) to confer all this sanctity upon Aharon. Rabbi Abba said that seeing Moshe was firmly rooted in the holy place when all this power stemmed, he could transfer this sanctity to Aharon. This is why the Torah wrote earlier, "he poured from the oil of anointment on Aharon's head, and he anointed him and sanctified him." This is also why these inauguration days were described as "days of perfection, or perfecting."

Aviva Zornberg, *The Hidden Order of Intimacy: Reflections on the Book of Leviticus*, 43

Moshe's unease with being invoked by God at the Burning Bush and the midrashic narratives about the mutual generosity displayed by the brothers imply an intimate struggle with a kind of idolatry. If Moshe is later called "the most humble" of all men, perhaps this humility is a function of the hidden ethical work that the midrash gestures at here.

2. Shadow and Light

Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Kindle Locations 728-730

Leadership is hard work for which one is regularly criticized and rarely rewarded, so it is understandable that we need to bolster ourselves with positive thoughts. But by failing to look at our shadows, we feed a dangerous delusion that leaders too often indulge: that our efforts are always well intended, our power is always benign, and the problem is always in those difficult people whom we are trying to lead!

Ann Belford Ulanov and Barry Ulanov, *The Healing Imagination: The Meeting of Psyche and Soul*, 97

Burnout and burn-up join. The un-lived life that we refuse to live, like the helper who claims to be all good, with nothing bad, just a bundle of help, ignores the hidden power-motive in so much of our helping. That life waiting to be lived seeps into our relations with those we are out to help and poisons them, hurting all of us, reducing the help to nothing.