

# Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

פְּרֶשֶׁת תְּצִוָּה

ח' אדר תשפ"ה

4:19

Parsha Sponsor: The Zuller Family לזכר נשמת אסתר ריבה בת משה

חֶשֶׁן וְאַפֹּד...

“A *choshen*, an *ephod*...” (Shemos 28:4)

In this week's Parsha, we learn about the vestments that Aharon HaKohen wore in his service to Hashem. One of the special things that Aharon wore was the *choshen*, the breastplate which Aharon wore on his heart. The *choshen* had the names of all the twelve shevatim inscribed on it, representing the Yidden, and symbolizing that a leader holds his people near and close to his heart. However, there was another piece of clothing called the *efod*, the shoulder straps. Emblazoned and inscribed on the shoulder straps were the names of each of the twelve shevatim again. There is a question here. Was it not enough for Aharon to have the names of the Jewish people on his heart? Why did Aharon have to have the Yidden on his shoulders too? I heard from my father Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that Rav Chaim Czernowitz zt"l, the Be'er Mayim Chaim, answers that in life it's not enough to just hold someone close to your heart. Sometimes, you've got to lift the person. Sometimes you've got to raise the person. You've got to elevate the person higher – and that's why Aharon had the twelve shevatim inscribed on his shoulders too. It wasn't enough for Aharon to have the Yidden on his heart. He also had to carry them on his shoulders.

So many people are drowning physically or spiritually and need to be saved. They need that person to elevate them and raise them up. How do you save someone? To save people in danger, firefighters, soldiers, and lifeguards - put the person on their shoulders. That's what we need to do. We have to raise each other up. We have to embrace each other and elevate one another. That's the lesson that we can learn from Aharon and his clothing.

There was a young man from a religious family in Bnei Brak who went of the derech. His Yiddishkeit continued to deteriorate, and he planned to marry a non-Jewish girl. One Shabbos,

he decided to break the news to his parents. He went and spent Shabbos with his family. It was very hard for them - he spent most of Shabbos smoking on the porch. Before Mincha, on Shabbos afternoon, the man's father told him he was going to a shiur given by Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l. Surprisingly, the man agreed to come. After the shiur, the father took his son to Rav Shteinman and mentioned that his son no longer kept Shabbos. Rav Shteinman looked at the young man and asked him how long he had not been keeping Shabbos and he replied that it's been two years. Rav Shteinman asked him if he ever thought about doing teshuvah and he said yes. Rav Shteinman asked him for how long, and he replied that about four times, for about ten minutes each, he had an inspiration to do teshuvah. Rav Aharon Leib took his hand and said, "40 minutes? 40 minutes! For forty minutes you were in a place where baalei teshuvah stand – the place where the biggest tzaddikim cannot stand! I envy you for that! You had a genuine 40 minutes of a sincere teshuvah! It's an honor and privilege to say good Shabbos to you! Rav Shteinman's words hit him and penetrated his heart. After Shabbos, the man decided to break up with his girlfriend and break off the engagement. Slowly he continued to grow and came back on the derech.



*Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l*

Later, the man's father asked him why he went to Rav Steinmann and he shared the following story: "When I was a young boy in Yeshiva, my class went to Rav Shteinman to be tested. Rav Shteinman asked very simple questions, but there was one boy who couldn't answer the question he was asked, and that was me. Rav Shteinman asked me an easier question; but again, I didn't know the answer. Seeing that learning was hard for me, Rav Shteinman asked me an even easier question, but this time, too, I couldn't answer. When the test was over, Rav Shteinman gave each boy a candy, but he didn't give me a candy - he asked me to please stay behind. Everyone left the room and it was just me and Rav Shteinman. Rav Shteinman told me that we receive reward according to how hard we try, not according to the results. All the other boys tried hard to answer one question, so they got one candy. You tried hard to answer three questions, so you get three." With a smile, he handed me three candies. That's why I decided to go to Rav Shteinman's shiur. I went to his shiur because he believed in me." Rav Shtienman didn't only acknowledge this man's struggles; he lifted him up and elevated him by showing belief in him. Let's be there for others. Let's raise each other up!

# Have a Great Shabbos!

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