

And God spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take Aaron and, along with him, his sons, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and the bull for the sin offering, and the two rams, and the basket of matzot (unleavened bread); And gather all the congregation together to the door of the Tent of Meeting.' And Moses did as God commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together to the door of the Tent of Meeting. And Moses said to the congregation, 'This is the thing which God commanded to be done.' And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put on him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the finely done girdle of the ephod, and bound it to him with it. And he put the breastplate on him; also he put on the breastplate the Urim and the Tummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, upon its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as God commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the Mishkan and all that was in it, and sanctified them.

(Vayikra 8:1-10)

What was the relation between the two brothers, the king and the high priest of the Israelites? How may the relationship inform us as we read ourselves in these texts?

For instance how did Moses feel about the command to invest his brother with the genetic priesthood seems impossible to discern from the text. In sight of the assembled nation the holy finery to be worn by the Kohen Gadol is placed upon Aaron. Did Moses feel displaced or rejected? Was he surprised? Was he disappointed? The text is silent.

However the Midrash as usual provides us with similar concerns and addresses these issues:

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת שמייני פרשה יא סימן ו
 ר' תנחום בשם ר' יודן תני כל שבעת ימי המילואים היה משה משמש בכהונה גדולה ולא שרתה שכונה
 על ידו הה"ד (ויקרא ט) וירא כל העם וירונו ויפלו על פניהם...

R. Tanhum taught in the name of R. Judan: All the seven days of consecration Moses ministered in the office of High Priest, but the Shechinah did not take up its abode through his ministrations, (but when Aaron put on the High Priest's robes and ministered, the Shechinah took its abode through his ministrations, as it is said, For to-day the Lord appears to you [Lev. 9, 4]) [And the glory of God appeared unto all the people...] And when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces [Lev. 9, 23].

(Vayikra Rabbah 11:6)

For the seven days of consecration Moses functioned as the High Priest or Kohen Gadol, however the Shechinah failed to descend. Yet the vestments on Aaron immediately caused it to appear. The midrash so far exacerbated any possible anxiety Moses might have felt! The Midrash continues:

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת שמייני פרשה יא סימן ו
 אמר רב שמואל בר נחמן כל שבעת ימי הסנה היה הקב"ה מפתה את משה שילך בשליחותו למצרים
 (הה"ד) שמות ד) גם מתמול גם משלשום גם מאז דברך אל עבדך הרי ששה ובשביעי אמר לו שלח נא
 ביד תשלח אמר לו הקב"ה משה את אומר שלח נא ביד תשלח חייך שאני צוררה לך בכנפיך אימתי פרע
 לו רבי ברכיה אמר ר' לוי ור' חלבו, ר' לוי אמר כל ז' ימי אדר היה משה מבקש תפלה ותחנונים שיכנס
 לא"י ובשביעי אמר לו (דברים ג) כי לא תעבור את הירדן הזה ר' חלבו אמר כל ז' ימי המילואים היה
 משמש בכהונה גדולה וכסבור שלו היא, בז' אמר לו לא שלך היא אלא של אהרן אחיך היא הה"ד ויהי
 ביום השמיני.

"Rabbi Samuel b. Nahman said: All the seven days of the [burning] bush, the Holy One, blessed be He, was trying to persuade Moses to go on His mission to Egypt. This is [indicated by] what is written, 'Also from yesterday, also from the day before, also since You have spoken to your servant (Exodus 4:10), which makes six days; and on the seventh day he said to Him, 'Send, I pray Thee, by the hand of whomever You will send (Exodus 4:13).' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses: 'As you live, I shall tie this in thy skirts.' (meaning you will pay for this dearly!)

When did He repay him? R. Berekiah gave answers in the name of R. Levi and of R. Helbo. R. Levi said: The [first] seven days of Adar Moses was offering prayer and supplication that he might enter the Land of Israel, and on the seventh, He said to him: 'You shall not go over this Jordan.' R. Helbo said: **All the seven days of consecration Moses ministered in the office of Kohen Gadol, and he imagined it was his.** On the seventh day He said to him: 'It belongs not to you but to your brother Aaron.' This is [indicated by] what is written, "And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, and he said unto Aaron..."

(Vayikra Rabbah 11:6)

The Midrash parallels the seven days that Moses served in the Mishkan with the seven days that Moses stood at the Burning Bush. From the text of the Torah, we do not know how long Moses spent at the Burning Bush. The midrashic parallel opens us to the connection between Moses declining to lead the people and the God's declining his role as Kohen Gadol. God pays him back for his initial reluctance to lead the Israelites now, after the seven days of consecration. When he might have expected himself to continue as high priest on the final day there is a sudden appointment of his brother.

But the question remains as to why Moses was not required to wear the priestly robes whereas Aaron was instructed in great detail? If we see these towering leaders not only biblical personalities but also spiritual archetypes then we might come closer to an answer. Their future role differences are characterized in many ways by the role of High Priest and the priestly garments. Although the midrash suggested Moses served for only the 7 days of inauguration whereupon he was told to invest Aaron with the office

another view suggests that it lasted all 40 years during the wilderness.¹ Either way Moses was not required to wear the vestments. What is it about clothes and ritual and why the difference between the brothers?

Below I will bring a few scholar's views who see the difference between them related to their biographical past or their different roles (Moses as king and Aaron as High Priest) and I hope to then suggest that their personalities reflect differing spiritual archetypes in midrash. Finally I hope to demonstrate that those archetypes can also be projected through kabbalistic texts onto the divine.

The vestments were to serve as 3 possible functions according to Tamar Kadari:²

"Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment...These are the vestments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash. They shall make those sacral vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me."
(Exodus 28:2-4)

"Why does the Torah require that the High Priest wear beautiful vestments? Isn't the Tabernacle a place intended to convey the spiritual connection between God and Israel? Does the service of God require such external trappings? The midrash and biblical commentators grapple with these questions and offer three possible answers.

1. The vestments are for Israel

The Netziv writes: "For dignity and adornment...and the vestments will benefit (Aaron), as they will be for dignity and adornment in the eyes of Israel, as they will cause them to understand that God favors him and he is fit to be a vessel for the Divine Presence."³

According to this interpretation, the special priestly vestments cause the Israelites to value and respect the High Priest. Aaron's vestments are a uniform that testifies to his stature and position. God has no need of them, but people do. They help people worship God by instilling a sense of respect for the High Priest who represents them before God.

2. The vestments are for Aaron

"God honored Aaron by clothing him like the ministering angels, as it says: "for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts (Malachi 2:7) ...As God said to Moses 'Make sacral

¹ Moses and Aaron were among his kohanim, and Shmuel was among those who called upon His Name; they called out to God, and He answered them. (Psalm 99:6) see Radak op cit, Keren Orah to T B. Zevachim 101b.

² <http://www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1.2506.L-3370900.00.html>

³ Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 1817-1893, *Ha'amek Davar*,

vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment,' and all this because of the Torah with which he toiled, for 'The wise will inherit honor.'" (Proverbs 3:35).

Exodus Rabba (38:3-5)

This midrash presents the beautiful vestments as a gift to Aaron. The vestments give outward expression of something within. They represent Aaron's inner self, as a messenger of God and a scholar. Wearing the vestments can also work the other way; reminding Aaron of the noble attributes required for the sacred service.

3. The vestments are for God

"Now this is what you shall do to them' (Exodus 29:1). The (numerological) total of "this" is 12, and this refers to the twelve stones that were upon Aaron's breast, and upon them the names of the tribes...What is the reason? So that The Holy One shall look upon them and upon the vestments of the priest when he enters on Yom Kippur, and favorably remember the tribes."

Exodus Rabba (38:8)

According to this midrash, Aaron's clothing forms part of a ritual in which every item is symbolic. The stones of the breastplate and the priestly vestments are intended to remind God of the positive attributes of the tribes, so that He will forgive Israel on Yom Kippur.

This last possibility stretches the philosophical mind since God has no needs, so why would He be moved by such vestments? I believe that the secret to answer this question lies in the very spiritual personality archetypes of Aaron and Moses. Beyond mere reminding God and distracting Him from the negative attributes of the tribes, the symbolic nature of the vestments act as a kind of mirror above since man is made in God's image the royal beautiful vestments may well arouse self reflexive mirror effect and cause delight above. **It seems that only Aaron could effect this!**

The biblical text however is so ambiguous that it fails to give any reasons so that any search for a kind of historical meaning behind the robes to reveal the way the High Priest's clothes functioned appears doomed. Were they meant to impress the divine, the priest himself or the people? From the Netziv to the Midrash differing views are expressed as to the intent of the pageant and costume. I believe however, that they revealed a possible inner dichotomy in relation to the divine. Only Aaron-not Moses-was able to wear and thus bear this inner dichotomy causing the delight in the divine. Whereas Moses was refused the role of priest Aaron was acceptable because of certain spiritual character traits he possessed.

It has been suggested that Moses could only see the world from God's perspective, having been enveloped in the divine cloud and touched by the divine he could no longer see the human perspective. Aaron on the other hand was uniquely able to serve his people and pursued peace above all, even during the crisis of the sin of the Golden Calf. The Talmud and Midrash explain Moses' preparation to ascend Mount Sinai as six

days in which the food was purged from his body until Moses became "like one of the angels of heaven."⁴ In other words, Moses existed on a different plane, not limited by the physical in the same way. Therefore he seems to have lost, in the process, the very ambivalence and complexity that defines most human beings.

Aaron's selection may relate to his behavior during the golden calf episode⁵. According to the Sages, after Aaron witnessed the murder of Hur, he decided that it would be preferable for him to help with the golden calf and sin. Otherwise, the entire people would become guilty of both killing him and subsequently worshipping the calf, as they surely would have done had he refused. (T.B. Sanhedrin 7b). Aaron decided that it would be far better for the Jewish people if he alone bore the guilt. Aaron was willing to sacrifice everything for his people, both in this world and the next. The only problem with this tremendous act of heroism and self-sacrifice was that idolatry was involved, good intentions notwithstanding. Aaron needed to express his great love of Israel and God however now in the context of Divine service within the Temple.⁶

*In other words, Moses simply transcended the events of this Torah portion. By virtue of his self-sacrifice, Moses needed no atonement. He was already angelic -- he had become one with Torah, and one with God.*⁷

Moving the midrashic trajectory of their personality types we find in the Hassidic masters a stretching of their differences onto a spiritual archetypal plane. Sin and forgiveness now distinguishes the two brothers and sin becomes the very trigger for a debate between truth and truth to its innermost. (*emes* versus *emes le-amito*).

Rav Tzaddok Hakohen from Lublin explained that Aaron became High Priest not despite the golden calf, rather because of it! (Takanas Hashavim, 20). This is an application of the Talmudic principle that repentance motivated by the love of God will *turn a sin into a meritorious deed*. No one represents this personality type as much as Aaron. (And this maybe the reason why this whole Torah portion is devoted to Aaron and not Moses.)⁸

⁴ Avot DeRabbi Natan, Ch. 1

⁵ The commentators differ as to when the Golden Calf episode occurred whether before or after the erection of the tabernacle and election of the high priest. see Rashi vs Ramban

⁶ According to the Zohar, Moses too, was prepared to sacrifice everything in order to save the people, just as Aaron was. The only difference was that Aaron sinned and therefore needed forgiveness. Moses did not sin; therefore his soul had no need to be a part of this Torah portion Parshas Teztaveh.

⁷ See Ari Kahn's exposition in his commentary: Explorations: In-depth analysis of the weekly parashah through the prism of rabbinic perspective.

⁸ God overlooked Moses' offer (to be erased from the book, Exodus 32:32). Nonetheless Moses was removed from one section of the Torah, the commandments regarding the Mishkan. Which section is this? V'atah T'tzaveh, which should have contained Moses' name in each and every word, and in each and every commandment. But his name was taken out of the entire section, which has no mention of him. This is an example of the curse of a sage (being fulfilled) even when it is conditional. Midrash Ne'elam Shiur haShirim Maamar 4

In Reb Zadok's Takanas Hashavim (10) he further explores the Izhbitser notion of "aveirah lishma", the idea that one truth maybe needed to become subservient to a higher truth even if it requires a sin in the process!

ואין לך עבירה לשמה גדולה מאסתר ונכתב ברוח הקודש מה שאמרה על עצמה כאשר אבדתי אבדתי
 דמסתמא יש בזה שם אבידה באמת מצד עבירה כזו דנבעלת לגוי ...
 ועל זה השיבה ואת וגו' תאבדי שיתקיים הגזירה בה כי חטאה גדול משלהם דבעל כרחם ולפנים לא
 נקרא עבודה זרה כלל באמת ולא טימוע בין האומות אבל היא לא חשה להצלת אבדון כל ישראל בגזירה
 ודאית לפניה, והיא שבה תיכף ומסרה נפשה ולא בסכנת הגוף לבד רק גם סכנת אבדון נפש דהטלת
 זוהמא ותכלית הטימוע בין האומות רק שהיה בעל כרחא ובזה תיקנה עצמה וכל ישראל במה שעשתה
 עוד עבירה חמורה כזו דליכנס ברצונה, רק שמכל מקום אינה ברצונה האמיתי כלל והוא עבירה לשמה
 שנחשב אדרבא למצוה גדולה כאשר קיבלתי כי על דרך זה הוא תכלית התיקון לכל חטא ואין כאן מקומו:

...And there is no sin for the sake of heaven greater than that of Esther and the sacred text written with the Holy Spirit that "if I be destroyed so be it" (Esther 4:17) meaning there would be a true destruction legally for her if she commits adultery with a heathen, for this she exclaimed let it happen!she came and was willing to sacrifice her soul not only with danger to her self bodily but also to her soul, for legally her dispensation might only operate under duress however here she prepared herself with a worse sin by operating and sinning willingly. This sin was not done with her true desire of course thus the sin was for the sake of heaven and was considered contrarily as a great mitzvah...

In the next text Reb Zadok compares these acts of Esther as rooted in the biblical precedent of Aaron the high priest.

ספר תקנת השבין - אות ה

ומצד האהבה יוכל להכניס עצמו לענין כזה על דרך עבירה לשמה דייעל, ולא מצינו בפירוש בתורה שדבר
 זה מותר רק מהתם הוא דילפינן והיא מרוב חשקה ואהבתה להצלת ישראל ולבער צורר ואויב ה' כמוהו
 מהעולם לא הביטה על העבירה ועל הזוהמא שהטיל כמו שאמרו (נזיר כ"ג ע"ב) שדבר זה רעה הוא
 אצלה, מכל מקום הפקירה גם נפשה בשביל דבר זה שחשבה אפילו אין שום היתר לדבר זה והיא תענש
 על זה מכל מקום מוטב תאבד היא ויאבד צורר ה' מהעולם, ועל דרך זה עשתה אסתר במה שאמרה
 וכאשר אבדתי אבדתי (אסתר ד', ט"ז) היינו גם על אבידת הנפש חס ושלום על ידי מה שעשתה עבירה
 ברצון להצלת ישראל,

...רק גבי אהרן הכהן שנבחר לעבודה, וזכה לו על ידי עשיית העגל שהוא אדרבא עבירה ועל כן היה בוש
 דייע בעצמו שאינו כדאי והגון עד שאמר לו למה אתה בוש לכך נבחרת, וראיתי הפירוש דבשביל זה
 עצמו שאתה בוש בשביל זה נבחרת, היינו דלעבודתו אין הקב"ה משתמש אלא בכלים שבורים ומי שלבו
 שבור ודואג בקרבו:

וזהו מדריגת זדונות כזכויות שבעולם הזה לא כלעתידי דיבוקש העוון ואיננו כי יהיה גלוי לכל איך הוא זכות
 ואינו עוון כלל ואין בוש כלל, אבל בעולם הזה אין זה גלוי ומבורר לעין איך הוא כן שאף על פי שחשב
 לאיסור וכוונתו מיהת לאיסורא לא יצא מכלל שוגג כנזכר לעיל דנקרא חטא ומה שמביא לידי זכויות אחר
 כך הוי כמו עבירה לשמה דנמי צריך סליחה וכפרה על העבירה, וכמו שביארתי לקמן (סימן י')

(Esther 5:1)

“It is specifically on these words that the Zohar makes the comparison between Yom Kippurim and Purim: Lest you think that Esther is entering the inner chamber to conduct herself in a sordid manner, the Zohar says that Esther’s putting on the royal garb is just like the Kohen Gadol dressing in the priestly garments. She enters the inner chamber

one should give up their life). As in the case of Aaron, the first High Priest, Esther was prepared to sacrifice her soul for the Jewish People. Just as Aaron's sin in the episode of the Golden Calf was performed to save the Jewish People from destruction, so Esther transgressed in the chambers of Ahashverosh in order to save the Jewish People from annihilation. And in both cases, God accepted their sacrifice, understood their total devotion, spared the Jewish People because of their personal sacrifice, and elevated them both a new status: Aaron became High Priest, and Esther joined the pantheon of Jewish heroism; according to the Zohar, for at least one day Esther functioned as High Priest – just like Aaron.

This idea by Kahn suggests that the motive is selfless love, which is obviously a motivating factor, but he misses the more radical idea that the Zohar describes when it uses the technical mystical term “*ve-zeh sod*” - “this is the mystery” -.

It seems that this act of selfless love is the very trigger for divine mercy and, as mystery, (*sod*) always implies a paradox, the counterintuitive notion that changes God's attitude and reaction to humans. The difference between Moses and Aaron (and Esther) might lie in the ability of Aaron to change the divine decree through his ritual and vestments on the holiest day of the year, the way Moses had done after the sin of the Golden Calf. The difference however is that Moses had to almost threaten God with self extinction “*mecheini na misifrecha*”- “*blot me out of Your book*”, in order to change the divine decree and behavior, whereas Aaron (and Esther) approach the king/King with the same self-sacrifice but also the ingredient of love. Maybe the vestments signify these differing triggers as we are already told in the talmud that the differing accoutrements reflect atonement for differing sins. (This is not without controversy however).

As we mentioned earlier the High Priest's vestments were seen either as part of the sacrificial ceremonies in response to the sin of the golden calf or independent of that event. In addition to the very rituals taking place within the temple, there was another paradoxical ritual of the “two goats”, one for sacrifice in the temple precinct and the other to be sent away to the wilderness. Ramban comments with a startling discovery:

“ And Reb Eliezer says in the name of Reb Shmuel even though it states the he goat is for Hashem..the goat to Azazel is also for Hashem, but that is not necessary since it is the one sent away and not sacrificed, so I will reveal to you that our Rabbis already taught us (Genesis Rabba 65:10) on the verse “and the goat shall bear on himself all their sins (et kol avonasam) (Lev 16:22) this refers to Esau regarding whom it also states “Behold Esau my brother is a hairy man (Ish Saeir)” (Gen 27:11)...

“avonasam...avon..tam” the sins of the tam (meaning Jacob!) as it states “ And Jacob was an ish tam” (Gen: 25,27).¹¹

For the Ramban, the midrashic connection to the very dressing up of Jacob to impersonate Esau and thereby receive the Patriarchal blessing is somehow re-enacted

¹¹ Jacob met Esau on Yom Kippur (Zohar III:100b) Raya Mehemna

here in the mystery of the two goats on Yom Kippur. This fascinating midrash suggests that the second goat is sent away to appease Esau/Sammael/Azazel/the forces of the dark side, so as not to spoil the effect of the first goat. Ramban continues:

“And the midrash Pirke deReb Elizer explains further (Chapter 46) “therefore we bribe the Sammael on Yom Kippur not to nullify their sacrifice”¹². Other midrashim suggest a kind of distraction:

*Mashal lemah hadavr domeh-a parable to what may it be compared? To a king who was angered by his son and called the accuser to find him and punish him. After his anger subsided and he was appeased he invited his son to his palace for a feast. Worried that the accuser will also come and find the son the king distracted the accuser with a specially prepared meal*¹³...

On Yom Kippur we bribe the forces of evil the dark side Esau the goat to Azzazel...satan not to testify against us...we send our dark side away to Esau to the wilderness and in doing so we send the dark satanic forces back to their natural habitat away from civilization. It is precisely Aaron whose descendants must take on the dark side, having been involved in the original sin, are uniquely suited to bear the splitting process of the goats in the Yom Kippur rituals. I think they are uniquely capable of this task precisely because of the mystery, they “know” that “sod” the paradoxical nature of the divine, the antimony working within the divine, for after all who is the satanic forces or who unleashes them if not the divine! By splitting the goats Aaron and his descendants “know” of the dual nature of the divine and they alone “know” how to assuage His rage by selfless love.

For Yonatan Grossman¹⁴ the biblical references to *levush or garments*, holds the key to the midrashic triggers:

"Esther wore royal *levush*, apparel"? Seemingly, these are the garments that she usually wears in the palace – certainly when going in to the king.¹⁵ What, then, does this piece of information add to our understanding of the story? The Midrash addresses the unusual formulation, "*va-tilbash Esther malkhut*" (literally, "Esther donned royalty") rather than "*bigdei malkhut*" ("royal robes"), and comments as follows:

“And it was on the third day that Esther donned royalty’ – she already wore royal robes; what the text hints to here is that she was garbed in the Divine spirit. Here it is written,

¹² Ramban on Leviticus 16:8 based on Pirke deReb Elizer 46:

¹³ Midrash Rabba Exodus

¹⁴ <http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/ester/13ester.htm>

¹⁵ So too with the relation between the clothing of the king and the high priest: "When he showed the riches of his glorious [*tif'eref*] kingdom": R. Yose b. Hanina said: 'This shows that he arrayed himself in the priestly robes. It is written here [Esther 1:4], 'the riches of his glorious [*tif'eref*] kingdom', and it is written elsewhere [in connection with the priestly garments, Shmot 28], 'for splendor and for glory, [*tif'eref*]. (Talmud Bavli Megila 12a)

'va-tilbash' (she donned), while elsewhere it is written, 'a spirit enveloped (lavsha et) Amasai...'16

According to this midrash, the narrator is hinting to his readers that "the Kingship" – to which all mortal kings are subservient – accompanies Esther into Achashverosh's quarters. The message of this midrash is an important one; indeed, one of the aims of the hidden writing in the Esther narrative is to hint at the presence of God's Kingship even when it is concealed. At the same time, on the level of the plain text it would seem that the emphasis on Esther wearing royal garb as she goes in to the king is meant to contrast her with Mordechai, who is unable to come to the king's gate. At the beginning of the previous chapter we read that Mordechai tore his garments; he is therefore deprived of access to the king's gate. Now, we read that Esther dons her garments and goes in to the king. This comparison is not meant to create a distance between the two characters, but rather to have one complement the other. Mordechai is busy outside of the palace; without the uniform reflecting his Persian status, he is gathering assemblies, declaring a fast, and spearheading a general movement towards repentance. Esther, for her part, is active within the palace. She must wear royal garments; she must play the Persian queen at her best – organizing a party for the king, and ensuring his enjoyment. Thus the two characters work together to overturn the decree of annihilation: Mordechai – with no garments and with no masks, and Esther – with her royal robes, playing the role that is demanded of her. Mordechai previously asked Esther, "Who knows if for such a time you achieved royal status" (4:14), and now Esther responds to her and takes up her destiny: "And Esther wore royalty...."

In the Zohar, however the connection is sealed and stretched to new limits . Once again the connection between the robes of Esther and the High Priest are made:

"And it came to pass on the third day Esher put on (*vatilbash*)¹⁷ the royal dress and stood in the inner court of the king's palace"

(Esther 5:1)

"This Yom Kippurim when the high priest is clothed in beautiful clothing, clothing of atonement... At that time she beautified herself with clothing of forgiveness..and with these garments she entered into the inner sanctum. That is the meaning of the verse "she stood in the inner chamber of the king" and "she found favor in His eyes"..this is the mystery. ¹⁸

¹⁶ Megilla 14b. The expression "*ruach lavsha*" is mentioned in three places, from which we may deduce that the Divine spirit is the "royalty" with which Esther garbed herself: "God's spirit enveloped Gidon" (Shoftim 6:34); "A spirit enveloped Amasai" (I Chronicles, 12:19 – the source upon which the Midrash establishes its interpretation); "God's spirit enveloped Zecharya, son of Yehoyada the Kohen" (II Chronicles, 24:20). See Grossman op cit

¹⁷ As in Rifkah's dressing of Jacob Gen 27 "vatalbesh"

¹⁸ Tikunnei Zohar 57:2 on which Sulam comments "this is the mystery of the exile of the Schechina!"

“Immediately God heard, God forgave...Purim is named Yom Kippurim...”

For me the Zohar has touched on the deepest divine mysteries. The High Priest is given sanction to enter the Holy of Holies and meet the divine unknowing whether he might emerge, like Esther's gamble in entering the chamber of the king. It is this very mystery that evokes divine mercy like none other.

A recent commentator, the Sulam even suggests that this mystery is none other than the secret of the very exile of the Schechina! Aaron alone (and his descendants) are given this dangerous task. Representing humanity before the possible divine rage and successfully assuaging the divine rage through selfless love. The exile of the Schechina is the very splitting of the divine between its Transcendental role versus the Immanent. We are back to Moses and Aaron once more. Moses represents God's perspective the transcendental whereas Aaron the immanent perspective.¹⁹

The Sfas Emes also picks up on the differences between Moses and Aaron in his Maamar dated 1896 for Parshas Tezaveh:

[תרג"ו] תצוה ופ' זכור

פרשת תצוה מיוחד לאהרן הכהן בחי' נר מצוה. ומשה רע"ה בחי' תורה אור. ואנו אומרים באור פניך נתת לנו כו' תורת חיים ואהבת חסד. והם בחי' משה ואהרן כי המצות ניתנו לצרף האדם ושימצא חן וחסד לפניו ית'. כמ"ש כי לוית חן הם כו'. וזה אהבת חסד. והנה שורש כל המצות בתורה. אבל נתלבש הארת התורה במצות גשמיות שלפנינו. שמתעורר בזה שורש המצוה למעלה. ואם היינו נמשכין אחר הנהגות משה רע"ה בשלימות היו מקיימין המצות במעלה יתירה. כמו שהי' קודם החטא שהקדמנו נעשה לנשמע. כמ"ש חז"ל עושי דברו וכמלאכי השרת שמקיימין רצונו ית' ומרגישים בעצמם רצון הבורא. כמ"ש משרתיו עושי רצונו. ולכן אמרו במד' כשנאמר למרע"ה הקרב כו' אהרן כו' הרע לו. פי' שראה שניטל ממנו הכהונה בעבור שלא ניתקן בחי' נעשה כראוי שיהי' תורה ממש. רק ע"י בחי' נר מצוה כנ"ל. וזה שרמזו שלא נזכר שמו בפרשה זו הואיל ואמר מחני נא מספרך כו'. שמרע"ה הבין מיד שאם לא יתוקן כל החטא לא יוכלו להימשך אחר מדריגה שלו. ובוודאי כך הי' שלא נמחה כל החטא להיות דביקין בתורת חיים ובעץ החיים. והי' התקרבות בכח אהבת חסד. וזהו התכשיטין ובגדי כהונה שהוא רומז לתקון הגוף שהוא המלבוש. ונרמז ג"כ במד' שכעס המלך על המטרונא ואעפ"כ צוה לעשות לה תכשיטין כו'. פי' שתמצא חן בעיניו ע"י התכשיטין. מה שלא הי' נצרך מקודם. וזה ג"כ ענין זכירת שמות השבטים. והוא בחי' תורה שבע"פ כי האבות הם המרכבה. והוא תורה שבכתב. שמותיו של הקב"ה. וזה בחי' זה שמי. אבל זה זכרי הוא בחי' תורה שבע"פ. והוא נשתנה לפי זכות הדורות. וצריך להיות לזכרון במקום שצריך זכירה. אבל האבות א"צ זכירה שהם מרכבה לשכינה. זה שמי לעולם:

This parsha is uniquely concerned with Aaron the priest in the aspect of “The lamp of the mitzvah...” whereas Moses our teacher is the aspect of “And the Torah is light”... for the function of mitzvot is to coalesce²⁰ a person into performance in order to find favor before the Almighty One. Now the mitzvot's source is the Torah. However they become enclothed (levush) with the radiance of Torah in the very earthy performance of physical mitzvot. So that through the performance down below there is an arousal of the source

¹⁹ Interestingly it was Reb Yonasan Eybeshutz who suggested that Purim is greater than Yom Kippur since the latter heals the rift between man and God whereas Purim heals the rift between man and his fellow. Yaarot Devash 1:8

²⁰ root tziruf as in combine letters to form a word, to reign in or assemble.

of the mitzvah above. Had we followed Moses' example we would have fulfilled the function of the mitzvot above more exaltedly. As was happening before the sin when the people exclaimed "we will do and we will obey"... so when it states "And God said to Moses draw close Aron (Lev. 8:1) and it was evil for him (Moses)" because he saw (realized) that the priesthood had been taken from him since his approach of "we will do" would not be able to fix the (relationship) so as to have that radiance of Torah shine, rather in the aspect of (Aron's method of) "The lamp of the mitzvah". This is why Moses' name is not mentioned in this parsha since his approach following the sin of the Golden Calf would not be successful. (lit. if the sin could not be fixed then his spiritual level (madreigah) his approach would not work). And this is in effect what happened for the sin was not fully expiated so that the people could be fully attached to the living Torah and the Tree of Life. The way to come close to the divine now had to be through "ahavas chesed" (the way of Aaron) loving kindness (divine forbearance?).

And this is the jewelry (Aron's adornments) and the priestly vestments that are hinted by the fixing of the body that is the malbush (the vestments). **And the jewelry that is mentioned in the midrash regarding the king who was angered by his wife etc..then went out and bought her jewelry...meaning she will find favor in his eyes through the wearing of the jewelry** which was not needed prior to her angering him.

Quoting from the midrash rabba Numbers II: 15 (below), he cites the second parable of the king who was angered by his wife and banished her from the palace.

טו והיה במקום אשר יאמר להם וגו' והיכן נאמר להם כשעשו אותו המעשה קרא אותן הקב"ה עמו של משה שנא' (שמות לב) לך רד כי שחת עמך מיד חגר משה מתניו בתפלה שנאמר (שם/ שמות ל"ב) ויחל משה את פני ה' אלהיו וגו', משל למלך שראה את אשתו מנשקת לסריס אמר לשושבינה מגרשה אני טורפה אני תלך לבית אביה אמר לו למה שמצאתיה מנשקת לסריס אמר לו עכשיו היא מעמדת לך בנים נאים וגבורים והם יורדין עמך למלחמה אמר אין הימנו תוחלת אין מוליד לי ועל דבר שאין הימנו הנאה אתה כועס כך (שם/ שמות ל"ב) למה ה' יחרה אפך בעמך וגו' אמר לו משה זה העגל שעשו ישראל עכשיו הוא מסייעך הוא מוריד גשמים ואתה מפריח טללים אמר לו הקב"ה וכי יש בו תוחלת אמר לו משה ואם אין בו ממש למה אתה כועס למה ה' יחרה אפך בעמך וגו' למה יאמרו וגו' זכור לאברהם וגו' מה כתיב אחריו וינחם ה' על הרעה וגו' שלו הוי והיה במקום אשר יאמר להם וגו', ד"א והיה במקום וגו' א"ר יוחנן מה כתיב למעלה מן הענין (הושע א) לך קח לך אשת זנונים וגו' וילך ויקח את גומר וגו' וכל הענין קרא שמו לא עמי כי אתם לא עמי וגו' ואח"כ והיה במקום אשר יאמר להם וגו' מה אם בשעה שהיה כועס עליהם כך היה מחבבן בשעה שהוא אוהבן עאכ"ו =על אחת כמה וכמה=, למה הדבר דומה למלך שכעס על אשתו אמר מגרשה אני ואיני חס על בניה לא היא אשתי ולא אני אישה ירד לשוק הלך לו אצל הזהבי אמר לו עשה לאשתי תכשיטים של זהב הלך אוהבו ומצא לו אצל הזהבי שעשה לאשתו תכשיטים הלך ואמר לשכנותיה לא שמעתן שהמלך עושה מריבה עם אשתו והוא אומר לה מגרשה אני עכשיו ראיתי אותו אצל הזהבי אומר לו עשה תכשיטין לאשתי כך כשכעס הקב"ה על ישראל אמר להושע קח לך אשת זנונים וגו' איני מבקשה זנה תזנה הארץ וגו' איני מרחם עליה קרא שמה לא רוחמה לא היא שלי ולא אני שלה) (שם/ הושע א') (כי אתם לא עמי ואנכי לא אהיה לכם אמר להם הושע אומות העולם מה אתם סבורים בשביל שאמר להם הדברים הללו כי אתם לא עמי שהוא כועס עליהם ראו היאך הוא אומר להם מה כתיב אחריו והיה במקום אשר יאמרו וגו' וכן ישעיה אומר, (ישעיה א) שמעו שמים והאזיני ארץ וגו' הוי גוי חוטא ומה כתיב אחריו) (שם/ ישעיהו א') (לכו נא ונוכחה רחצו הזכו וגו',

II:15. 'And it shall come to pass that, instead of that which was said unto them: Ye are not my people,' etc. (Hos. II, 1). But where was such a thing said to them? When they did what we all know, the Holy One, blessed be He, called them 'the people of Moses'; as it is said: Go, get thee down; for thy people... have dealt corruptly (Ex. XXXII, 7). Thereupon Moses girded his loins for prayer; as it is said: And Moses besought the Lord his God, etc. (ib. 11)...

Another exposition of the text, 'And it shall come to pass that, instead of,' etc. What, asked R. Johanan, is written before this passage? Go, take unto thee a wife of harlotry... so he went and took Gomer, etc. (Hos. I, 2 f.), and the whole passage concluding Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not My people, etc. (ib. 9). After that, however, we read 'And it shall come to pass that, instead of that which was said unto them', etc. Now, if at a time when He was wroth with them He showed them such love, how much more will He show them at a time when He is pleased with them!

To what may this be likened? To a king who waxed wroth with his wife and said: 'I will divorce her and have no pity on her children. She is not my wife nor am I her husband.' He went, however, to the market-place, paid a visit to the goldsmith's and said to him, 'Make some golden jewellery for my wife.' His friend went and found him with the goldsmith who was making jewels for his wife. He went back and said to her neighbours, 'Did you not hear of the king's quarrel with his wife, and of his intention to divorce her? I have just seen him at the goldsmith's ordering jewels for his wife!'

It is so with the Holy One, blessed be He. When He was wroth with Israel, He said to Hosea, "Take unto thee a wife of harlotry," etc.; I do not want her, for the land doth commit great harlotry, etc. (ib.); I will have no pity upon her, call her name Lo-rahamah³ (ib.); she is not Mine nor am I hers, for ye are not My people, and I will not be yours' (ib.). {Num. 50} Hosea said, 'O nations of the world! What do you imagine? That because He spoke to them these words-- "for ye are not My people"- he is therefore angry with them? See how He speaks of them in the following passage: "And it shall come to pass that, instead of that which was said unto them," etc.' Isaiah in the same strain says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth... Ah, sinful nation, etc. (Isa. I, 2 ff.). But what is written afterwards? Come now, and let us reason together (ib. 18), Wash you, make you clean, "And it shall come to pass on that day it shall be told to them"...

And how will they be told if they belong to Moses alone (how will they find out about the divine temper?) When they were guilty of "that sin" (i.e the Golden Calf) it states (God tells Moses Exodus 32) "Now go down for your people has become corrupted" (implying from then on they belong to Moses) Moses immediately girded himself in prayer as it states (op cit) "and Moses entreated the Lord..." to what may this be compared? to a king...

Another explanation of "And it shall come to pass on that day" Rabbi Yochanan states: "what is said before this verse?" And God told Hosea (Ch.1) "go get thee a harlot and he went and to Tagar..." so that what followed is "ye shall be called 'not my people'"...but then what follows is a reconciliation with (Isa. 1) "and it shall be on that day..."

Meaning that at the time he is angered by them he still loves them, how much more would the love be were he not angered by them! To what may this be compared? To a king who is angered by his consort and says to her "I am banishing you (divorcing) and what's more I have no pity for your child!" "She is no longer my wife and I am no longer her husband!" He then goes down to the market place to see the goldsmith and says "make some jewelry for my wife". His friend comes down to the market and sees him ordering jewelry for his wife. He then goes and tells the queen's neighbors "have you not heard that the king has been angered by the queen and divorced her! Well I went down to the market and saw the king ordering jewelry from the goldsmith saying "make me jewelry for my wife!"

So too the text states (Hosea) "get thee a harlot for you are to be called 'not my people' yet immediately afterwards "let us reason" (Isa. 1).

The implication is that the vestments represent the jewelry and the function of the vestments are to allow the queen to become reconciled to the king (Israel) by buying her adornments. After his rage subsided he went to town to a goldsmith to buy her jewelry. The king's friend marvels to the queen's neighbors (our Greek chorus!) as to the fact that although the queen was banished here is the king buying her jewelry! Although the midrash implies the jewelry is a bribe of sorts to reconcile the queen with the king and to bring her back to the palace, the Sfas Emes makes the astounding claim that the purpose of the jewelry was to make the queen more attractive to the king so that he could be excited once more. The parable reflects the antimony within the king's personality. In the midrash his rage forces him to banish the queen and right after his love for her forces him to see the goldsmith about a new piece of jewelry in order to express his love for her and somehow soften her to comply with his desire to return her to the palace. The opposite motive is given by the Sfas Emes however with king seeing the jewelry as adorning the queen so that she will become attractive to the him once more! It is as if the rage has turned him off her so the jewelry serves to arouse his love once more. The shift between the plain meaning of the midrash as bribe/gift/reconciliation and the Sfas Emes' reading of jewelry to arouse his love for her is stark. Now the king has to work on his own residual resentment issues and needs the jewelry to even see the queen as attractive once more. The jewelry acts like an aphrodisiac for the king's dual personality, split as it is between love and rage. It is a potion that will possibly change his view of the queen to love her again. The Sfas Emes reads this more piously however, the jewelry representing the vestments of the high priest meaning the way of Aaron which, after the great sin, is the only approach to reconcile with the king. The king's anger is justified in the nimshal because of its association with the Sin of the Golden Calf, *thus justified, and the jewelry allows the king to once more get close to the queen or Israel through the agency of the High Priest's vestments the jewels.* Note that in the midrash no reason for the anger is given and maybe it is obvious coming as it does to explain God's wrath in Hosea. Either way the difference between the midrashic reading and the hassidic master's of the function of the jewelry

opens up the mystical literature to further exegesis and allows for situations where the punishment does not fit the crime.²¹

In the mystical literature we see the archetypal figures of Moses and Aaron, the strict bearer of the “letter of the law” versus the unconditional loving of “beyond the letter of the law” when projected above in the sefirotic world, reveal a mirror image of these very processes and conflicts within the divine. Moses and Aaron in the kabbalah are represented by the sefirot of Netzach (Moses) and Hod (Aaron). These two sefirot are spiritual archetypes that support Yesod the generative organ that connects the upper worlds and the lower worlds, the very sefirah that connects with malchut or the lowest world of all.²² Yesod allows for the influx of divine vitality into the feminine representation of the divine, none other than Schechina! Thus Moses and Aaron who represent opposing approaches to the divine and now seen as forces within the divine are reconciled in the balancing central sefirah of yesod. Yesod must balance these two opposing forces in perfect tension (antinomy) and thus reconcile them paradoxically, or at least hold them in that very tension for yesod to properly find its generative capacity to impregnate malchut, the queen or Schechina.

We have seen that these two opposing forces work not to destroy each other rather be held in tension by the intermediary sefirah. This is antimony not duality. To quote Jung:

... “but God is not a human being: he is both persecutor and a helper in one, and the one aspect is as real as the other. God is not split but an antinomy—a totality of inner opposites— and this is the indispensable condition for his tremendous dynamism, his omniscience and omnipotence.”²³

I believe this is the secret (sod) the Zohar and the Sulam were hinting at. The exile of the Schechina, the splitting of the upper from the lower waters in the second day of creation, the very reality of this world and the divine vitality that animates it must mean a splitting within the divine, the same splitting between the spiritual archetypes and emotions we have outlined in the personalities and makeup of Moses and Aaron and their different spiritual approaches to the divine. This is truly a mystery for how can the divine be split? and if we image/imagine the divine in our anthropomorphic imagination, perhaps the only way we can truly do justice to the complexity of the inner workings of the divine we intuit, is by the parables of a deeply torn king who desperately wants his queen back. This split in emotions sounds so characteristically human no wonder there are traditions that frown upon these texts and behoove us to see only the allegory and metaphor.

²¹ For further discussion see my PhD thesis and the use of parables to disguise rabbinic protest at the inappropriate divine rage.

²² The very splitting of the upper and lower worlds is seen in kabbalah to have occurred on the second day of creation where the firmament was split into upper and lower waters. This is the only day where the statement “and behold it was good” did not occur leading commentators to believe that this splitting off the lower real world was not considered by the divine as a positive move.

²³ Answer to Job 567 transl. R.F.C. Hull, Collected Work, Vol 11 Bollingen series XX 1958

For me however, struggling to find meaning in a post-Holocaust nightmarish world where technology and genocide will be the single most important historical fact of our century, these texts of the torn conflicted king become critical. There was no Moses or Aaron to successfully stop the Holocaust. This very fact alters the entire covenant. The Piacetzner Rebbe, writing in the Warsaw Ghetto²⁴ also struggled with divine meaning and the conflicted nature of divine *chesed* and *din*. In line with his Hassidic forebears he saw the Tzaddik as the yesod archetype who must continuously assuage the divine rage and through the process of *mittuk hadin* of “sweetening harsh judgements” through acts of penitence devotion and selfless love like Aaron the High Priest and queen Esther. He was able to tap into the notion of divine weeping and regret that seems to point us back to those poignant texts of Eicha Rabba where he cites the king weeping in his inner chamber. As if He has lost control of his omnipotence or feels conflicted and torn about the need for punishment yet the punished one is none other than his child.

I however confess that I remain more moved by this tragic quality of the king in the parables. Torn and conflicted the rabbinic and hassidic imagination goes to great lengths to imagine a divine compassionate being even though impotent. It is as if the compassion must be foremost (Aron’s schema) in order to keep the very marriage going even it might be at the expense of the king’s ability to control his own rage. This is a very human king, a projection of a very human dilemma.

Mostly what comes to mind (back when I wrote my thesis and today!) is King Lear’s last speech. Holding his dead beloved Cordelia he pays no attention to his friends. His vast and profound suffering has been the subject of much debate as to what Shakespeare intended in his last act V.

The image of the fool (now affectionately remembered) and of Cordelia however suggests that in the end the Lear’s emotions represent the antinomy of the male and female archetypes now fused and con-fused in his mind. This is followed by his full awareness that what he holds in his arms is absolutely dead, and life will never return to this body.

“Pray you, undo this button, thank you sir”

Lear V.iii.311

Like the midrashic king, Lear is an egocentric man, who by his own mistake, continuously causes suffering to others. At the moment of greatest suffering however there is a fusion of opposite drives that make him see the truth as it is.

“Lear, like Hamlet, represents uncalibrated duality. The entire tragedy is polarized; its characters divided into the good(Cordelia) and the bad(Regan and Goneril) with Lear in between, painfully unable to attain the equilibrium the audience craves . Lear teeters between bestial monarch (masculine) and pathos-evoking infirm (feminine), convinced that “Unaccommodated man is no more but a poor, bare, forked animal”(3.4.96-103). Cordelia, the only character capable of spiritually abetting him, later forgives her father;

²⁴ See his Eish Kodesh translated by HJ Worchas “Sacred Fire”

*however, the inappropriateness of his incestual response (wistfully describing a magical life imprisoned with her and "the gilded butterflies") makes his later appearance on stage (as he carries her corpse) a hideous ending to the disturbing drama.*²⁵

For Jules Cashford a Jungian, the play's central character, the king, like in our midrashic narratives, once he has wronged, and then banished, his youngest daughter, Cordelia, the play, in a sense, yearns for them to be reconciled to each other, for Lear to understand his wrong and for her to forgive him, to bring about a healing of the heart (the "One sees what one can best see oneself").

"Cor" of Cordelia means "heart," coeur de Lear, the heart of Lear). But for this to happen Lear must learn, in the language of the play, to "see" Cordelia for who she is apart from his need of her— to see, in Jung's terms, her, and him- self, objectively as well as subjectively. Lear's capacity to see the true being of "the other" is shown to be inseparable from his capacity to love.

So, if we may approach the play as a drama of the psyche in its journey towards wholeness, we could say that Lear is the center of consciousness, which immediately shows itself to be out of balance with the deepest values of the Self—the center of unconscious- ness—revealing radical conflict in the psyche. What literary criticism would call the "subplot" of the blinding of Gloucester, we could read as the more literal acting out of the original distortion, which makes explicit in the external world what is the essence of the problem of the inner world: the moral blindness of Lear.

At the moment of truth with his daughter lying in his arms dead, he is awaked to the tragedy of his actions and has a vision of her lips moving. Kirsch²⁶ interprets this as an awakening for the king whose actions hitherto have revealed his fantasy detached from the real world.

"The ego, attached to the outside world, and ruling it, is step by step deprived of all it possesses and finally even of the beloved daughter. Then, when life has definitely left Cordelia's body he sees something:

*" Do you see this? Look on her! look! her lips!
Look there, Look there!"*

V.iii.312

Since we are not told what he sees it must be a vision which is projected onto her.

*"Considering that, in his prison fantasy his exaltation was due to an anticipated eternal life with Cordelia, I can only conclude that at this moment the image of the coniunctio²⁷ has come to life. A vision of transcendental impact lights up and floods him. **This is the secret of the play.** At the moment of death...in this vision Lear perceives ultimate truth, achieves full consciousness and thus experiences redemption.*

²⁵ Jamie Crawford : King Lear

²⁶ James Kirsch, Shakespeare's Royal Self, 1966, C G Jung Foundation 186-319

²⁷ A technical Jungian term for the union of opposites that must occur for individuation to take place.

Just like our midrashic king, and the king in Esther, here Lear (and elsewhere I hope to discuss Job's God and Kafka's judge in The Trial) through the tragic events he inflicts on his daughter and subjects, becomes more conscious of self, and the mystery behind nature (or transcending it) reveals more of himself to himself.

Is it possible that our role as Tzaddik, or even humans is to bear this unfolding of divine self-consciousness? That through our suffering (christ like?) all humans in their own way add to the unfolding of divine self-consciousness? That the role of Aaron, Esther, and Tzaddik, in the various texts we have encountered is to reveal the real secret, (sod) the mystery the Zohar tells us, of the High Priest on the holiest day of the year in the Holiest place on earth at the holiest time, when the name of God is allowed to be uttered, the name that reveals the mystery at the same time protecting the dark side of the divine by sending the other goat to appease it. This secret the Sulam tells us is the very secret of the universe, the Exile of the Shechinah, meaning the very banishment of the mystical queen or the ecclesia of Israel,²⁸ or the soul incarnated in each of us, from the Father. This secret is the very exposing of the unfolding self/Self conscious of the divine as it is born through our suffering.

Maybe we learn for this is the need for unconditional loving in this world where the forces of divine rage have been unleashed without historic precedence. Only by such acts of love can we repair the divine image that has been tarnished forever by His rage and abandonment of His queen/people of Israel.

Only the acts of Aaron and Esther and the "sins for the sake of heaven" or "*aveirah lishmah*" will allow us to awaken divine consciousness from its slumber and hasten a full awakening. It is a tragic history of a people who have emerged as the divine bearers of His unfolding self-consciousness, that as bearers this costs us dearly in terms of martyrdom, all for the sake of the relationship that special close bond that had been until recently not open to question, but, for the sake of the victims, must now be re-examined.

²⁸ And Rabbi Nachman's Lost Princess!