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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TEZAVEH – PURIM - 5770

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From: **Rabbi Goldwicht** [rgoldwicht@yutorah.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 09, 2006 11:02 PM
Subject: Purim 5766 WEEKLY INSIGHTS BY RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT

The gemara in Taanit (29a) says: "Once Adar begins we increase our rejoicing." Rashi explains: "The Jews experienced miraculous days, Purim and Pesach." Why does Rashi mention Pesach, which falls in Nissan, when the gemara is clearly discussing Adar, the month in which Purim falls? Rather, Rashi is pointing out that if we wish to properly understand the miracle of Purim, we must understand the miracles of Pesach as well. Through an understanding of Pesach we will be better prepared for the simcha of Purim.

The navi refers to yetziat Mitzrayim as the birth of Am Yisrael, calling it, "Your birthday" (Yechezkel 16:4). This birth, like every birth, required a period of pregnancy before it could take place. This pregnancy, like every pregnancy was divided into three stages: the first trimester, the second trimester, and the third trimester. The three stages of Am Yisrael's pregnancy correspond to parashat Shekalim, parashat Zachor, and parashat Parah, three of the four special Torah readings read during Adar and Nissan. After passing through these three stages of pregnancy, we arrive finally at parashat HaChodesh, which represents hitchadshut (renewal) and birth.

Parashat Shekalim, which corresponds to the first trimester, discusses netinah (giving). When a person gives willingly, it is an expression of the love he has inside. Love is expressed practically through zerizut (zeal) and desire to give. In nature, zerizut is represented by water, which is constantly flowing, as well as constantly giving of itself in order to help others grow. Avraham Avinu is called "ohavi," the one who loved Me, as it says, "The seed of Avraham, who loved Me" (Yeshayahu 41:8). In the Prayer for Rain, which we recite on Shemini Atzeret, we refer to Avraham as "The Patriarch who followed You like water." This is the first stage of pregnancy, corresponding to Avraham Avinu, corresponding to the middah of zerizut, and corresponding to the act of netinah. Zerizut is the message of parashat Shekalim, represented by the act of giving willingly.

However, when a person gives and gives with no restraint, he can reach a level of forbidden netinah, a level of forbidden hitkarvut (closeness). When the Torah discusses arayot (forbidden relationships), it says, "chesed hu, It is an abomination" (VaYikra 20:17). In order to prevent over-zerizut, one must practice zehirut (watchfulness). Zehirut is an expression of fear;

when one is afraid, he is proceeds with caution. In nature, zehirut is represented by ashes, as one who fears something will destroy it to its very foundation as soon as he gets the chance. Yitzchak Avinu, whose "ashes" lie under the Throne of Glory, is the Patriarch who represents zehirut. Zehirut is the message of parashat Zachor, when we fulfill the obligation to remember evil, remain wary of it, and to ultimately destroy it.

However, too much zehirut is also not good. One needs to find the proper balance between zehirut and zerizut, and to combine them harmoniously. The proper synthesis of zehirut and zerizut is nekiut (cleanliness). This is the message of parashat Parah, which discusses the process of purification from tumah, leading the person to a state of nekiut. The kohen takes water from a flowing source, representing zerizut, and mixes in the ashes of the parah adumah, representing zehirut. The proper mixture of water and ashes, zerizut and zehirut, creates a state of nekiut. This is parashat Parah.

Once we arrive at a state of nekiut, we are prepared for hitchadshut. Just as these three states set the stage for our birth as a nation with yetziat Mitzrayim, which was in the merit of the zerizut of Avraham Avinu, the zehirut of Yitzchak Avinu, and the nekiut of Yaakov Avinu, so too did they lay the groundwork for our rebirth as a nation in the days of Mordechai and Esther (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim 102).

How were we reborn in the days of Mordechai and Esther? Haman knew that he could not rely on physically overcoming Am Yisrael in order to defeat them, but that he must destroy them spiritually as well. Therefore, Haman drew lots, as if to suggest that Hashem had set the date for the destruction of the Jews, not Haman. Chazal tell us that the shock this caused was so powerful that tragic accidents immediately began to take place: women would go up to the roof to lay out clothes to dry and fall to their deaths; men would go to draw water and simply fall into the well. This only deepened the sense of shock and abandonment.

This continued to happen until Mordechai pointed out that, although Haman was correct that our lot looked dismal, the Jewish people also have power over lots, as the kohen gadol would draw lots on Yom Kippur. If the Jewish people could change Purim to Yom HaKippurim, to teshuva and willingness to change, they would regain power over chance and be reborn. The gemara in Niddah (31a) says that in the first trimester of pregnancy, the fetus grows in the lower part of the womb; in the second trimester, the fetus grows in the middle part of the womb; in the final trimester, the fetus grows in the upper part of the womb. When it comes time for the child to enter the world, he flips upside down and comes out. In other words, every birth requires a flipping over). This is exactly what happened to the Jewish people in the time of Mordechai—"v'nahafoch hu, And it was flipped" (Esther 9:1). Since we flipped over spiritually, through tefillah, teshuva, and acceptance of the commandments, our fortune changed and we were born anew.

This is Chazal's message in the aforementioned gemara in Taanis: If we learn from the miracles of Pesach about how we were born a nation originally, in the merit of the zerizut, zehirut, and nekiut of the Patriarchs, we will understand how we were born again in the time of Mordechai and Esther.

Eretz Yisrael was divided up among the twelve tribes and acquired by lots as well. In Shacharis, we say, "Fortunate are we! How good is our portion, how pleasing is our lot, and how wonderful is our inheritance!" If our lot is pleasing, then automatically our inheritance must be wonderful as well. Today, we find ourselves again in a situation where we must be born anew. This can only be accomplished by acquiring zerizut and zehirut, and finding the proper balance between them, bringing us to nekiut and hitchadshut.

We are promised, "I will surely redeem you at the end as at the beginning." Twice we have been born as a nation during the month of Nissan: once when we left Egypt and once in the days of Mordechai—Esther says in the Megillah, "And fast for me, do not eat and do not drink" (Esther 4:16). The Gra points out that Esther's order not to eat or drink is

superfluous, as she begins by ordering the nation to fast. Rather, the Gra explains that it was Pesach, and Esther was ordering them to forgo the obligation to eat matzah and to drink the arba kosot. We are further promised that the third geulah will also take place in Nissan: "They were redeemed in Nissan; they are destined to be redeemed in Nissan" (Rosh HaShana 11a). The way to be redeemed is to be reborn.

If we make an effort to better ourselves, to strengthen our emunah and to serve as role models in our daily actions, we can be born anew this year and merit "light and gladness, joy and honor" (Esther 8:16).

Shabbat Shalom! Meir Goldwicht The weekly sichah is compiled by a student. Please feel free to forward the weekly sichah to friends and family. If you aren't yet subscribed, you can subscribe here. A PDF version of this week's sichah can be found here. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts and suggestions at talliskattan@sbcglobal.net. Weekly Insights on the Parsha and Moadim by Rabbi Meir Goldwicht is a service of YUTORAH, the online source of the Torah of Yeshiva University. Get more parsha shiurim and thousands of other shiurim, by visiting www.yutorah.org. To unsubscribe from this list, please click here.

From: office@etzion.org.il on behalf of Yeshivat Har Etzion
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Sent: Monday, March 13, 2006 1:31 PM To: yhe-holiday@etzion.org.il
Subject: Special Purim Package
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

YHE-HOLIDAY: SPECIAL PURIM 5766 PACKAGE

The htm version of this shiur for easy printing is available at: <http://vbm-torah.org/archive/chag66/purim66.htm>

The Wildness of Purim

By Rav Yitzchak Blau

Rava said: "A person must drink on Purim until he cannot distinguish between cursed Haman and blessed Mordechai."

Rabba and R. Zeira held a Purim feast together. They became intoxicated. Rabba arose and slaughtered R. Zeira. The next day, he asked for mercy and R. Zeira was revived.

The following year, Rabba said to him: "Let the master come and we will make a Purim feast together." R. Zeira answered: "A miracle does not happen every time." (Megilla 7b)

Before I begin to comment on the humorous story at the end of this gemara, I must mention the possibility that it is a halakhic text and not only an aggadic addition. A major debate exists as to the extent of the obligation to drink on Purim. Some authorities understand that a person should truly become drunk. Of course, even those authorities would condemn drunkenness that leads to immoral and improper behavior. The Rema (Orach Chayyim 695:2) recommended that one drink enough to become tired, thus creating a situation in which one cannot distinguish between blessed Mordechai and cursed Haman. The Ba'al ha-Ma'or (on Rif 3b) understands that the whole point of the Rabba / R. Zeira episode is to reject the rule that one should drink on Purim. The gemara deliberately places this story after the halakhic discussion of the obligation to become drunk, in order to argue that the halakha could not obligate something with such destructive potential.

On an aggadic level, what does this story illustrate? Maharsha refuses to take this tale at face value. It simply cannot be true that Rabba killed his colleague. Instead, Maharsha suggests that Purim's wild merriment led to a situation in which R. Zeira drank too much and became seriously ill. Rabba prayed for him and he was restored to health. Even if we accept this reading, the story still illustrates the perils of alcohol, as it caused a dangerous health issue.

R. Yitzchak Hutner raises a different possibility in his Pachad Yitzchak (Purim, 32). He begins with the midrashic idea that at Sinai, every word of God caused the souls of the people to depart, until eventually

their souls came back and the people were revived. For R. Hutner, this conveys something about the experience of receiving the Torah. In its ideal form, kabbalat ha-Torah serves as a transformative experience, which renders the recipient other than he or she was previously. The midrash about souls departing and returning conveys the sense of renewal brought about by the Torah.

The gemara (Shabbat 88a) famously views Purim as a second accepting of the Torah, done freely without the element of coercion that was present at Sinai. If so, Purim should also include this element of vitality and renewal. The death and return to life of R. Zeira indicates this novel identity achieved through the fresh acceptance of Torah in a successful Purim.

I admit that Rav Hutner may intend this interpretation more as a good homily than as the simple reading of this story. He explicitly states that he will interpret this story differently today than he does the rest of the year. In any case, let us work with his interpretation and raise a question that he does not mention. According to Rav Hutner's reading, why does R. Zeira express reluctance to come back to Rabba's party the following year?

Perhaps this kind of identity-altering experience also includes an intimidating element. Change frightens us and it might seem safer to maintain one's current Torah personality, especially if it already incorporates much of worth. If so, this story challenges us not to fear the attempt to make this holiday an acceptance of Torah with far-reaching implications for religious growth. Realizing the inner meaning of this holiday depends much more on authenticity and inwardness than on the quantity one drinks. Happy Purim!

Thanks to hamelaket@hotmail.com for collecting the following items.

from Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
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subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein
PURIM TODAY :: Rabbi Berel Wein

In thinking about Purim 5770/2010 a few things are fairly obvious. There is no shortage of Hamans around, with the current Persian ruler a good leading candidate for the part. Nassrallah, Mashad and a few others of our cousins can also be counted to be in contention for the role.

There are also many contenders for the role of Achashvairosh. These include Goldstone, Ban, the Guardian, Putin and sometimes even the professors and intellectuals of the Israeli left who demand that the universities that pay their salaries somehow be subjected to boycott and deligitimization.

In fact many of the so-called Western world leaders are certainly capable of being stand-ins for the false and power hungry king who has no scruples over participating in the threatened annihilation of millions of Jews. The main crime that Jews are guilty of is the crime of being Jews. There are other faults that the Jews possess, certainly individual Jews, but those are only ancillary issues compared to the great crime that the Jews are a "different" people. And there is no repentance possible for that crime. The American Secretary of State, powerless and forced to always be flitting around the world so she can't influence and trouble the American administration in Washington, probably is a good candidate for the poor Queen Vashti, who had her head handed to her by a loveless boss. Maybe our own Tzipi can also audition for that role of being unable to deal with the fact that she is not currently running the country. The current contempts over Naomi and her beloved but ill named New Israel Fund makes her also a possible contender for that part. And then there are the secretaries, spokesmen, roving ambassadors and the State Department who merrily execute the orders of Achashvairosh and Haman without any hesitations or moral compunctions. And in the spirit of Purim everyone is

wearing a costume and a disguise so that the whole situation is seemingly backwards and turned on end.

Candidates for the roles of Mordecai and Esther seem to be in short supply today. People who are unwilling to bow and scrape before tyrants and evil, who have principles for which they are willing to risk personal honor and even life itself.

Mordecai is interested in saving the entire Jewish people irrespective of individual opinions, behavior and attitudes. The plight of the Jewish people pains him deeply and personally. He is even willing to bear the strange indignity of having some of his rabbinic colleagues criticize him for his efforts to save the Jewish people and he does so unflinchingly and without rancor.

He asks for no reward for his services and is solely interested in a positive outcome to his efforts. He was proven right in his predictions regarding Achashvairosh and Haman and he never states that "I told you so." Such a person is truly difficult to find in our current divided and divisive society. Mordecai the Jew is the quintessential Jew but he is also the rarest of characters in Jewish history. His niece Esther is also somewhat of a rarity. Jews in high public office in non-Jewish governments do not have a sterling record of protecting Jewish interests, even when Jewish survival is at stake. To put one's concern for the Jewish people over personal ambition and position, and to address the ruler in terms that certainly reveal that primary concern, is an act of honesty, loyalty and courage. Again, there do not seem to be too many candidates today vying for the role of Esther. The unseen hero, so to speak, of the Purim story is naturally the God of Israel Himself. That role is filled today as well. The unseen hand that guides us through history and guarantees our survival as a people is certainly present in today's Purim drama as well.

The Jews of Shushan were not particularly God fearing or observant. They felt very comfortable and assimilated in the society, values and political correctness of the time. They were shocked by the enmity directed at them by the community of nations into which they had so mightily tried to assimilate. Yet in the end they were forced to see their true situation realistically and to rely upon God's salvation – the hidden miracles that are part of our daily lives and existence.

That part of Purim is certainly in play in our situation today as well. In a society that oftentimes cannot distinguish between Haman and Mordecai, Purim comes to remind us of our vulnerability and our hopes for a brighter tomorrow. That is what makes Purim such a great and joyous holiday. A happy, sober and sane Purim to all.

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha :: TETZAVEH :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The purity of oil for the lamps of the menorah/candelabra is emphasized in this week's parsha's opening verse. It seems clear that the Torah requires the purest of olive oil for the fuel to light the menorah/candelabra not only for the physical and practical reason that the flame should not flicker and be weak but also for symbolic and moral reasons.

The light of Torah is dependent upon the moral purity of its source. Just as dregs and pulp contaminate the oil and prevent a steady light from emerging, so, too, grave imperfections of character and behavior weaken the teachings of Torah to students and to the masses of Israel. Recent events here in Israeli religious and secular society only serve to reinforce this standard.

The fuel for the light of Torah must also possess purity within it. King Solomon stated that "dead flies can render the finest oil repugnant." The finest oil is present but it is the dead fly in the ointment that renders the entire mixture to be repugnant.

Unfortunately and tragically there is apparently no escape from this observation about life and human behavior and attitudes. Therefore the Torah places such great emphasis upon the fuel for the lights of the

menorah/candelabra. For if the fuel is contaminated and dirtied then the menorah/candelabra is itself demeaned and cheapened in the eyes of the public and its light dimmed and darkened. The Torah makes this point directly and boldly in stating its strict requirements for the olive oil that fuels the menorah/candelabra. Its lesson should not be lost on us.

Another important lesson that emerges from this week's parsha emanates from the absence of the name of Moshe in the parsha. The Torah, its truths and values, its eternity and validity, is never dependent upon one person no matter how great that person may be perceived to be. The Torah emphasizes the mortality of Moshe as well as his human ability to fall below the heavenly standard that was set for him.

The Torah warns us not to deem humans as being perfect or infallible. The Psalmist warns us not to place our trust in humans, even great humans, but rather only in God and His Torah. The tendency to deify humans, even if they be scholars, leaders or holy people, is a dangerous one. It leads to the dreaded "cult of the personality" that has claimed so many victims throughout the past and modern history of the Jewish people and the world generally.

Even though the Torah is always identified with Moshe, this week's parsha shows us that the Torah exists independent of Moshe. His name need not appear for the Torah validates itself even without him. The modern tendency in the religious world to worship and idolize people is therefore a dangerous one. All humans are subject to sin and failure, temper and error. Worship in the Torah is reserved for only God Himself. It often takes bitter and sad occurrences to remind us of this truth.

Shabat shalom.

From Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>

To weekly@ohr.edu

Subject Torah Weekly

TORAH WEEKLY—Parshat Tetzaveh

For the week ending 27 February 2010 / 12 Adar I 5770

from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the menorah in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the bigdei kehuna (priestly garments): A breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate, and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the Mishkan. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

INSIGHTS

Silent Broadcast

Upon it shall Aharon bring the spice incense... (30:7)

Advertising is the touchstone of contemporary society. The art of advertising is not to sell a product. It is to sell to people a perception of themselves which will result from buying the product. Maybe the little blue stripes will keep your teeth looking brighter. Maybe they won't. What sells the product, however, is not the promise of brighter teeth; it is the lifestyle of people who have brighter teeth. As we all know, people with brighter teeth are never unhappy. They never feel tired. They flit effortlessly from one party to another. They jetset across the world without a bank manager or a mortgage in sight. And all for the price of a tube of toothpaste. Now that's what I call value for money!

In an age where illusion has become reality, where people send wreaths to TV stations when soap-operas stars “die” and are written out of the script, selling the Brooklyn Bridge has never been easier. All you need is a lot of money. And airtime.

The truth, however, sells itself. It doesn't need to be trumpeted to the skies. Nothing is more infectious than the truth.

There is a Jew who sits in a most frugal apartment in Jerusalem. He has never made any television appearances. He has never been interviewed on any chat show. No one has ever advertised him. And yet the Jewish world beats a path to his door when it needs a halachic decision. His status and fame come entirely from his piety, plus the fact that, in most areas of Judaism, he knows the law better than anyone else. And everyone else knows it.

In the Beit Hamikdash, the ketoret the service of burning the incense was performed away from public eyes, in private. Yet its scent could be detected as far away as Jericho, over twenty miles away.

When a person puts all his effort into living correctly, in accordance with the truth of the Torah, then, even though he may not broadcast his virtues, the nation will seek him out. His life may be a quiet understatement, but all his actions will radiate inner purity and holiness like a beacon.

Of Olives And Oil

“And you shall take pure pressed olive oil for illumination” (27:20)

The Jewish People are like the olive: Just as the olive only yields its oil after it has been crushed and squeezed, so too the Jewish People reveal their true stature only after suffering oppression.

And just as oil cannot mix with any other liquid, but rather floats above it, so too the Jewish People never vanish into the melting pot. And most remarkably, despite being persecuted and subjected to the most severe ordeals, the Jewish People always rise above their oppressors and remain distinct from them.

Where's Moshe?

“And now, you shall command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)

From the description of his birth in the beginning of Sefer Shmot (Exodus) until Sefer Devarim (Deuteronomy), Moshe's name appears in virtually every Torah portion. Actually in every portion except one. This week's portion. The Vilna Gaon explains that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar and this date usually falls in the week of Parshat Tetzaveh. Just as Moshe was removed from the world during this week, so his name was “removed” from the portion of this week.

Where's Moshe? Part 2

The words of a tzaddik reverberate. They are like the ripples of a pond that travel outward and are felt even on a distant shore.

After the Jewish People had been unfaithful to G-d in the incident of the golden calf, Moshe pleaded with G-d. He said, “Erase me from Your Book that You have written.” Moshe asked that he, rather than the Jewish People, should be eradicated. Even though Moshe spoke out of total self-sacrifice, nevertheless, his words made an impression, and it is for this reason that his name was “erased” from the Torah portion.

Sources:

Silent Broadcast - Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Of Olives And Oil - Tzror Hamor

Where's Moshe - Vilna Gaon, Baal HaTurim, Nachal Kadmonim in Iturei Torah

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>

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Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Parshas Tetzaveh

And you shall make holy garments for Aharon and your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

Bigdei Kehunah, the Priestly vestments, played a critical role in the sacrificial service. Indeed, the character of the Priesthood, and, thus, the validity of the Priestly service, is dependent upon the Priestly garments. The ritual which the Kohen performs becomes a holy service only if he is attired in Bigdei Kehunah.

Whether it is Priestly vestments or the everyday clothing worn by people, the source of clothing has a place of great significance in the moral education of mankind. As a result, clothing has acquired great moral significance in its own right.

When Hashem sent Adam and Chavah out from Gan Eden, He gave them clothing. They were going into the world of the mundane, a world in which toil and renunciation of worldly pleasures work side by side to keep man focused on spiritual growth; a world with its attendant moral dangers lurking throughout, waiting to ensnare man in its grip. Man can either rise up to his calling or descend to the level of beast, so that he is forever subject to being a slave to his base desires. Clothing reminds man of his moral mission in life. After all, as Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, notes, the most conspicuous feature that characterizes a creature as a human being is his clothing.

Having said this, we can now take a critical look at our modern day attire and question: Does this style bring me closer to the moral/spiritual posture which Hashem expects of me? Do I look like a human being was intended to look, or am I flirting with my base tendencies? Am I dressing with dignity and majesty, or simply attempting to call attention to myself for a variety of reasons? “Clothes make the man” is a popular maxim, probably introduced and maintained by clothing salespeople. While clothing does not make the person, it certainly tells us something about his character.

You shall make the Robe of the Eiphod entirely of turquoise wool. (28:31)

The Me'il, Robe, worn by the Kohen Gadol was a long robe, which had seventy-two pomegranate-shaped tassels attached to its hem. In between these tassels were seventy-two golden bells, each with a ringer. When the Kohen Gadol moved around, his approach was quite noticeable. The Ramban explains that the bells were there by design, specifically so that the sound of his approach would be heard as he entered the palace of the King. It was his way of asking permission to enter. It is only proper for one to “knock” before entering a room. The Kohen Gadol was no different. Interestingly, this requirement is not imposed upon the Kohen Hedyot, regular Kohen. Why is the Kohen Gadol different?

Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, views the Kohanim allegorically. The Kohen Gadol represents the tzaddik, righteous Jew, who spends his time in deep devotion to - and communion with - Hashem. He is involved in the “inner sanctum” of service to the Almighty. The Kohen Hedyot symbolizes the common Jew whose avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty, consists of tefillah, daily prayer, Tallis, Tefillin, etc. The Torah is teaching us that one who seeks to live a life of spiritual ascendancy, who is driven by piety and virtue to lead a lifestyle of purity in total attachment to Hashem, must ask “permission” before he enters the area reserved for the few and the holy. He must introspect and question his true motives; he must have an acute understanding of who he really is; he must determine if he is worthy and prepared for this exalted calling.

We find an example of this sort of examination in an incident recorded in the Talmud Bava Kamma 59b. Elazar Zeira was standing in the marketplace of Neherdea wearing black shoes, which was the custom of one who is in aveilus, mourning. He was met by attendants of the Reish Galusa, who questioned his unusual choice of footwear. He explained that he was in mourning for Yerushalayim. They asked, “Are you such a distinguished person to be worthy of mourning the holy city?” Considering this to be an arrogant act on his part, they grabbed him and placed him in prison. He was later freed, when it was proved that he really was a Torah scholar of repute, and, thus, worthy of the “mantle” of mourner of Yerushalayim. For one to “assume” that he is worthy of acting like a “gadol,” Torah leader, or a tzaddik is presumptuous. It is a status that one merits after much rumination and self-analysis. On the other hand, the avodah, service, rendered by the Kohen Hedyot needs no consent. Likewise, every Jew, regardless of his station in life and level of spirituality, not only may - but is mandated to - fulfill every mitzvah of the Torah. He may not reflect “Who am I?” “Am I worthy of performing this mitzvah?” “Am I really up to it?” It is everyone's obligation to serve and observe. Questioning is nothing more than a pretext for renegeing his responsibility.

On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol entered the Kodesh HaKodoshim wearing only four Begadim. He did not wear the Me'il with the Paamonim, bells. Why? One would think that in order to enter the holiest place in the Bais Hamikdash on the holiest day of the year, the Kohen Gadol would have to be on an exceedingly sublime level of holiness. Clearly, under these circumstances, he should have to ask permission to enter. Why is Yom Kippur different?

Rav Pincus derives a powerful lesson from here. The Kodesh HaKodoshim was the place where the Aron Hakodesh, containing the Sefer Torah, was kept. The Kodesh HaKodoshim was the seat of Torah for Klal Yisrael. Entering there signifies the approach of the Jew to Torah study. When it comes to Torah study, no questions are asked. One should not ask: “Am I worthy of studying Torah?” “Can I make it?”; “Is it for me?” Kedushas haTorah, the sublimity of the Torah, extends above all of the mitzvos. One who studies Torah elevates himself. He is surrounded by a wall of Heavenly Fire, as he becomes a receptacle upon whom the Shechinah reposes. So, the

question is repeated: "How can I, a simple Jew filled with sin, hope to experience this hallowed encounter?"

The answer is that Torah study neither requires formal invitation nor expects the individual to examine himself to see if he is worthy of it. Torah is for everyone who wants it to become a part of his life. The crown of Torah is not exclusively reserved for the elite. It is present for all those who wish to earn it. No questions are asked. It is almost ironic that the greatest spiritual leaders, individuals whose commitment to Hashem and the Torah was unequivocal, would be the ones who found reason to question themselves. Perhaps this is specifically what made them so special. They took nothing for granted and were paragons of humility. Horav Aryeh Levine, zl, who was popularly referred to as the "Tzaddik of Yerushalayim," was such an individual. Arriving in Eretz Yisrael at the turn of the twentieth century, he joined the faculty of the noted Eitz Chaim Yeshivah. His desire and capacity for helping the underprivileged, his outreach and comfort to those who knew misery and wretchedness, is legend. He visited patients in the leper hospital every week, bringing food, warmth, a smile and love. He spent every Shabbos visiting the Jewish inmates in prison. Indeed, during the British Mandate, he was the prisoners' link to the outside world. Personal risk and trouble meant nothing to him. Above all, his modesty was unparalleled. Loved and revered by all factions of the Jewish spectrum, observant and secular, ordinary laborers and members of the government, he continues to serve as the example of the meaning of tzaddik.

A well-known Israeli author wrote a column about Rav Aryeh to be distributed in dozens of Jewish periodicals throughout the world. The following is Rav Aryeh's response.

"I have read your letter. Your intention is sound and good: to make noteworthy, outstanding people known through the various publications, so that a great many will read about their activities and follow in their footsteps. In this case, though, to my regret, you did not achieve your purpose - although the fault lies with me and not with you. I have searched and examined myself thoroughly, and I have found nothing of note or value. If perhaps I once did some good, I have already received honor and acclaim a hundred times beyond anything I deserved.

"Take then my good advice and choose someone who is really a man of great spirit and achievement to publicize as a fine model to emulate, someone in whose shining light and sturdy steps it is really worth following. Then, I will be your good friend and admirer, for it will be of value to me, too..."

You shall make the Robe of the Ephod entirely of turquoise wool. (28:31)

Each of the Priestly vestments which the Kohanim wore had symbolism attached to it. The Kohen Hedyot, ordinary Kohen, wore four vestments, while the Kohen Gadol, High Priest, wore eight. The Kohen Gadol's vestments represented atonement for various sins incurred by the nation. One of the eight garments worn by the Kohen Gadol was the Me'il, Robe, which was a full-length garment that went from the neck to the ground. At its hem seventy-two pomegranate-shaped tassels and seventy-two golden bells were attached, each with a ringer. Obviously, when the Kohen Gadol walked around, his presence was "heard." Chazal tell us that this was by design. The Me'il atoned for the sin of lashon hora, slanderous speech. They say, "Let something which emits a sound atone for the evil sound of hurtful speech." I am sure Chazal mean more than simply emitting a sound. This is a "good" sound, a sound of derech erez, manners, thoughtfulness, and proper etiquette. When one enters a room, he makes his presence known, just as one knocks on the door of a home. Lashon hora is a devastating sin. It destroys the one who speaks, as it slanders the subject of the lashon hora, and it also takes its toll on the one who listens to it. It took a sage of a calibre no less than the Chafetz Chaim to raise public awareness concerning this sin. What catalyzes lashon hora? Why does a person resort to character assassination? Why is it that some people are obsessed with divulging the worst about others?

The venerable Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, Horav Avraham Pam, zl, feels that petty jealousy is the source of the problem. When a person is envious of the success, honor, or wealth that his friend enjoys, he feels that he must protest and declare to the world that his friend is undeserving. After all, he himself has not yet had the good fortune to reach this level of achievement. By diminishing his friend's attainments, he somehow feels better - despite the fact that it neither adds money to his bank account nor garners success and honor for him. By speaking disparagingly of his friend, however, by mocking his success and casting aspersions on his wealth, by claiming that it was ill-begotten, he feels that he is elevating himself. How utterly foolish he is. Does he not realize that he is making a fool of himself and digging himself deeper into a pit from which there is no return?

Rav Pam explains that only one person has the ability to bring atonement for such behavior, which afflicts a broad spectrum of the nation. It has to be someone whose heart is pure and who does not view his fellow Jews through jaundiced spectacles. He sees only their good, and he hopes that they achieve their best. Envy is an anathema to him. Love is his catchword. This person is Aharon HaKohen, who embodies all of the above and more. The progenitor of the Kohanim, he transmitted this characteristic to his descendants. As Amram's oldest son, he was heir to the mantle of

leadership from his father. He endured the merciless servitude that the Jewish people experienced at the hands of Pharaoh and his taskmasters.

Hashem decided otherwise. The mantle of leadership would go to Moshe. The younger brother, Moshe, demurred the appointment, giving a variety of reasons which Hashem eschewed. He knew the real reason for Moshe's refusal: It was Aharon. He was afraid of slighting his older brother. After all, Aharon had been running the show in Egypt up until that time. The Almighty told Moshe, "Fear not. You neither really know your brother, nor do you recognize his true greatness and perfection of character. Not only will he not harbor any ill will or jealousy to you for taking his position, he will actually rejoice in his heart over your success - even if it comes at his expense."

The Rosh Yeshivah takes this point a bit further, into an area in which some refuse to traipse, and others totally ignore: Jealousy among family members. I am not talking about sibling rivalry. This refers to envy between brothers and family members. The Torah relates that when the famine began sweeping the land of Canaan, our Patriarch Yaakov encouraged his sons to travel to Egypt to seek food: "Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?" (Bereishis 42:1) Quoting the Talmud Taanis 10b, Rashi notes that, at that time, Yaakov had enough staples stored away to withstand the famine. Nonetheless, he told his sons to go to Egypt, because he did not want to arouse the jealousy of Bnei Eisav and Bnei Yishmael, who were suffering greatly from the famine. He insisted that his sons undertake a long, hard, dangerous trip, just to circumvent any jealousy among his neighbors.

The Maharashah wonders why the Talmud refers to arousing the envy of Yishmael and Eisav, whose children did not even live in Canaan at the time. Why did Yaakov seemingly ignore his neighbors, the Canaanites? The Maharashah responds with a chidush, novel idea. Since Yishmael and Eisav were blood relatives of Yaakov, a much greater possibility for envy existed; they would see that he and his children - their relatives - had plenty to eat, while they starved. The Canaanites were not related to Yaakov. Thus, they were not prone to the jealousy that devoured the others.

As I said before, this is something that many of us refuse to acknowledge.

Regrettably, it is real, and it is highly destructive. This phenomenon is an almost daily occurrence. It is not uncommon for the blue-collar worker at the bottom of the company totem pole to be jealous of the executive who is his employer. After all, he must toil every day and endure great hardship to eke out his meager living. His boss, however, is a millionaire who lives off the fat of the land, enjoying a life of luxury and excess. It just is not fair. Imagine, if you will, that the boss "just happens" to be his brother or other close relative. Then the jealousy intensifies beyond reason. It is not necessary to emphasize how often this occurs. It is more difficult to accept because we wonder where we went wrong? Why we are the ones who have it so challenging? We grew up in the same home, same parents, same school, yet our sibling - and, in many cases, our younger sibling - is so much more successful etc. This was Aharon HaKohen's distinction. He was able not only to wish his younger brother, Moshe, success, but actually to feel true happiness in his heart for his achievement. Due to this special heart, he merited the privilege of being the one who served as the medium through which Klal Yisrael's atonement was effected on Yom Kippur. Only an individual who possessed such purity of spirit that he would not find fault in the shortcomings of another Jew could bring about their atonement. This is much like a parent who, although not blind to his or her child's errors, cannot bear to see or hear anything negative about him.

The last statement is significant since it does not advocate us to be self-deceptive, deluding ourselves that nothing is wrong. When we purposely close our eyes to our child's faults, we do him the greatest harm. We cannot help the child in need, the child who is crying out for help, unless we open our eyes and take notice. The difference is that a parent does this reluctantly, as a means for helping his child, while the jealous person seeks negativity. He thrives on it.

It all stems from insecurity. One who lacks self-confidence often resorts to denigrating others as a means of bolstering his ego. One who feels unthreatened, who is composed and secure in himself, is not only unbothered by his friend's success, but is actually happy for him! Regrettably, some people need that pat on the back.

Without attention they cannot survive - even if it comes at the expense of others. The following vignette illustrates the middah of Aharon HaKohen. Two grocers in the Machane Yehudah shuk, market, were speaking with one another. "Moshe, why are you frowning today? Remember your son is getting married tomorrow. You should be happy today - not glum," the neighbor said.

"I have just heard that the wealthiest man in our community is marrying off his daughter at the same time that my son is having his wedding. Because he is such a great philanthropist to whom most of the community is indebted, all the rabbis and distinguished communal leaders will be in attendance. Who will dance at my son's wedding?" Moshe replied.

Suddenly, a respected chacham appeared, and a gentle voice joined in their conversation. When Moshe saw who it was, he quickly jumped up out of respect. It was none other than Chacham Yaakov Ades, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Porat Yosef. "Mazel tov, Moshe," the Rav said. "I look forward to dancing at your son's wedding."

That is exactly what happened. Most of the city's eminent personalities went to the philanthropist's wedding, and why not? They had a debt of gratitude to him. Rav Yaakov Ades, however, danced joyfully at Moshe's son's wedding.

A few weeks later, the wealthy philanthropist met the Chacham and asked him why he had not attended his daughter's wedding. "The Chacham was the only one of the rabbanim of the city who was not there," he said.

"My friend, that is exactly why I went to Moshe's son's wedding" was the Chacham's reply.

We have priorities in life. For Chacham Ades, his greatest priority was raising the spirits of another Jew - regardless of the expense. I am not questioning those who attended the social event of the year. I only want to emphasize the exemplary thoughtfulness of a great man. Indeed, thinking of the "little guy" is the true hallmark of a "great" man.

And this is what you shall offer upon the Altar; yearling sheep, two each day, continually. (29:38)

The Mizbayach, Altar, was situated directly in front of the entrance to the Mishkan, precisely opposite the Aron HaKodesh which was in the Kodesh HaKodoshim. The Altar brings to mind symbolically that a commitment to the Torah, which was housed within the Aron, is a prerequisite for entry into the Sanctuary. Up until this point, the Torah has detailed the instructions for the construction and sanctification of the Mishkan, and its accompanying vessels, as well as the design and creation of the Priestly vestments. It then concludes with the consecration and investiture of the Kohanim. The Torah now teaches us that all of the above is wonderful, but it can only be attained by means of daily self-dedication on the part of the people. This dedication is, in turn, expressed by the Kohanim to the ideals symbolized by the Sanctuary. In other words, the Sanctuary becomes consecrated as its objectives are realized via the service rendered by the Kohanim as agencies of the people. Then the Mikdash, sanctuary, becomes the Mishkan, resting place for the Shechinah, Divine Presence. The establishment of the Sanctuary affords the possibility to attain this end result.

Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl, explains that this goal is achieved only when the Sanctuary receives life through the constant acts of self-dedication performed by the people, through the life-rhythm of the nation. This idea is symbolized by the Korban Tamid, the Daily offering, which is discussed by the Torah immediately following the instructions concerning the dedication and consecration of the Mishkan and the Kohanim.

Rav Hirsch emphasizes the symbolism connected with the Korban Tamid. The Torah requires a yearling sheep to be brought daily. At its moment of birth as a nation, Klal Yisrael stood before Hashem as a "sheep of His flock." It earned its existence as a nation only by entrusting its destiny in Hashem as their Eternal Shepherd. This commitment, which it solemnly made then, accompanies our people throughout its existence. Thousands of years have gone by since that auspicious day when we stood at the foot of Har Sinai, but we have not aged. We are as young today as we were then. We will never outgrow the leadership of our Shepherd - just like the young sheep. In our relationship with Hashem, we remain forever as fresh and as youthful as in the first year of our existence. We will always stand before Him as a yearling sheep.

The Daily offering has a profound symbolism to it. "Day" denotes the time of "standing erect," as opposed to night, when one lays down to sleep. It is an independent entity, flanked on either side by night. It is in its ascendant phase from night until high noon, and it begins to decline from noon to night. This cycle of waxing and waning, working itself up to noon and descending from that point until it is once again night, governs man's physical existence. There is the waxing and waning of daylight, the waxing and waning of fortune, indeed, the waxing and waning of all life on earth - and it is all governed by the decree of Hashem. As the Shepherd of all life, He oversees and controls our destiny. As His sheep, we are able to confront the waxing and the waning with the same tribute to Hashem, acknowledging His oneness and joy in being able to serve Him. We accept what life "dishes out" to us, because we trust in our Shepherd to guide us through the maze. It is for this reason, suggests Rav Hirsch, that we offer the Daily Morning sacrifice on the northwestern side of the Mishkan, so that the rays of the rising sun may fall upon the offering from the east. In contrast, the evening sacrifice is performed on the northeastern side, allowing the rays of the setting sun to fall on the Korban from the west. We maintain the same emotion, the same unaltered spirit, whether we are riding a wave of ascension or confronting the challenge of decline. We never lose our courage. We trust in our Divine Shepherd.

Yefa'er anavim b'yeshuah. He crowns the humble ones with salvation.

How can one glorify a humble person? Glorification and humility are opposites! The humble person cringes from glory. The Mei HaShiloach explains that the glorification of the anav, humble person, takes place only when he is the subject of Hashem's salvation. Horav Avigdor Miller, zl, explains that the word yeshuah, salvation, is related to two words whose meaning is connected. It is related to shaah, which we find in Bereishis 4:5, V'el kayin v'el minchaso lo shaah, "And to Kayin and

to his offspring He did not turn," or, He paid no attention. It is also related to shaashuah, which we find in Yirmiyahu 31:20, yeled shaashuim, "a child of pleasure," or, with which to play, a word which denotes being together. Hence, yeshuah is a word which expresses close togetherness, attentiveness to one another. When Hashem demonstrates His pleasure, Rotzeh Hashem b'amo, "He is pleased with His people," He does so by indicating that He is together with them and that they bring him pleasure. That is the glory of His humble ones. Their status is elevated, their trust is justified, and they see that they are loved by Hashem. When a person asks for a yeshuah, he should know for what he is asking: He wants to be close to Hashem, to be loved by Hashem, because when one has this, everything else fits into place.

Sponsored in memory of Uncle Levi R' Levi ben Zev Dov Levi Gottesman niftar 26 adar. By Marilyn & Sheldon David, Shlomo Levi Silverman, Yehoshua Levi Markovitz

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Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Tezaveh

Training One's Disciple So That The Teacher Becomes Obsolete

Our parsha begins with the pasuk: "And you shall command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed for illumination, to light a lamp continually (l'ha-alos ner tamid)" [Shmos 27:20]. The Gemara [Shabbas 21a] infers from the expression "l'ha-alos ner tamid" that the Kohen would kindle the fire of the Menorah until the flame would rise on its own. (In other words, he would not remove his hand from the wick he was lighting until the flame of that candle was an independently firm flame).

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch sees a symbolism in this halacha that affects every teacher and indeed affects every parent, because ultimately, every parent is a teacher of his own children. It is well known that the lights of the Menorah are symbolic of Torah ("the candle is a mitzvah and the Torah is light" [Mishlei 6:23]). This symbolism is expressed in many ways. The Gemara states that if a person desires wisdom, he should face (slightly) to the south when praying, because the Menorah was positioned at the southern side of the Mishkan [Tabernacle].

Using this general Talmudic equation between Torah wisdom and the Menorah, Rav Hirsch explains the specific symbolism of having the flame arise on its own: The job of every teacher is to make himself superfluous. The job of every teacher is to inspire and teach the student so that the student should become self-sufficient in their learning.

There is an aspect in many relationships where the parties involved in that relationship want to feel needed. Ultimately, the role of the teacher and of the parent is to train the child so well that they will no longer be dependent upon their teacher or parent. True success for a mentor is not achieved by having the child perpetually dependent. Rather, true success is achieved when the child becomes independent and is able "to rise on his or her own". This "stepping back" is sometimes a psychologically hard thing for a parent to do. The child won't need them as much. Some parents need to be needed. But ultimately, the goal of teachers and parents is to render themselves obsolete.

Blot Me Out Of Your Book

Parshas Tezaveh is the only parsha in the last 4 books of Chumash (i.e. - after the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu) in which Moshe's name is not mentioned. Chazal say this was a fulfillment of Moshe's plea to be "wiped out of the Book that You wrote" [Shmos 32:32], which he uttered when pleading for forgiveness on behalf of the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf. The curse of a righteous person comes true, even if it was only uttered conditionally. Thus, Moshe's words, although uttered conditionally (if You do not forgive the people), did not go totally unfulfilled, even though the Jewish people were in fact forgiven. In this small way, Moshe's name WAS erased from G-d's Book, in that his name does not appear in Parshas Tezaveh.

Rav Ovadya Yosef asks: Why of all Parshios in the Torah, did the fulfillment of this "Curse" come to fruition in Parshas Tezaveh? Rav Ovadya Yosef answers that the statement "Erase me from YOUR BOOK (Sifrecha)" can be broken down to read "Erase me from Sefer Chaf" [Book #20]. Since Parshas Tezaveh is the 20th parsha in the Torah, it is the appropriate parsha in which to have Moshe's name omitted.

This cute insight only begs the question. Why did Moshe pick the 20th parsha, Parshas Tezaveh, as the one to have his name removed from? I saw in a sefer the following explanation: Many times when a person is being removed from the picture, he feels a need to remind people "You should know that I could have had this job".

There was a famous incident involving Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz. There are usually 3 jobs in connection with a garbage truck - the driver and the two fellows who empty the garbage cans into the back of the garbage truck. The driver has the comfort of driving around in an air-conditioned truck. He does not need to smell or handle the garbage. It is a relatively decent job. The guys in the back need to jump on and off the truck, and handle and smell the garbage, etc. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz commented that he was once walking in Yerushalayim and he saw a garbage truck. After one of the fellows on the back of the truck did his job with the garbage cans, he noticed Rav Shmuelevitz. The man went over to the Rav and told him in Yiddish, "I could have been the driver, but I'm not looking for honor." This precious story tells us much. We learn that there are hierarchies of honor in all aspects of life. It also demonstrates this need for people who were passed over or who even voluntarily passed over a certain privileged position to let other people know "I could have done that".

Chazal say that Moshe Rabbeinu was offered to be the Kohen Gadol [High Priest]. However, Moshe declined the job, preferring that it go to his older brother. Parshas Tezaveh is the parsha of the Priestly Garments. This is the parsha describing the glory of the Kohen Gadol. When Moshe Rabbeinu reached Parshas Tezaveh, he may be thinking to himself "the Torah could be talking about me over here; this could have been my uniform; I could have been the Kohen Gadol." In his extreme modesty, however, Moshe says that this is precisely the parsha where he does not even want to have his name mentioned. "This is Aaron's parsha. I want to take a back seat and not even be mentioned in the whole parsha."

This is a classic example of someone who "flees honor". Furthermore, as we said at the outset, this is the goal of every teacher. This is an example of what Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch means - that the flame should arise on its own. The teacher should not always hover over the student and tell him "Remember I was the guy who put you there" or "I taught you everything you know." The teacher must be prepared to stand back, take himself out of the picture, and let the student and disciple go forth totally by himself. The flame of the light of the Menorah should arise on its own.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD
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From Matzav Editor <webmaster@matzav.com>
To webmaster@matzav.com
Subject [Matzav.com - The Online Voice of Torah Jewry] Parsha
Parshas Tetzaveh: Inconspicuous Assumption
By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Matzav.com)

In this week's parsha, Moshe is charged to prepare every detail of the priesthood for his brother Aharon and his descendants. In intricate detail, the sartorial traits of every one of the priestly vestments are explicated, down to the last intertwined threads.

And though Moshe is in charge of setting up the administration and establishing the entire order of service while training his brother and nephews, his name is conspicuously missing from this portion.

Our sages explain the reason for the omission. When Hashem threatened to destroy His nation, Moshe pleaded with Him: "And now if You would but forgive their sin! — but if not, erase me now from Your book that You

have written" (Exodus 32:32) As we all know, Moshe's plea were accepted. The nation was spared. But Moshe was not left unscathed. His request of written eradication was fulfilled in one aspect. He was left out of one portion of the Torah Tezaveh. Thus the words of the tzadik were fulfilled in one aspect. But why this portion?

Though this English-language publication is not wont to discuss Hebrew etymological derivations, it is noteworthy to mention a thought I once heard in the name of Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef. Moshe's plea "erase me now from Your book," bears an explanation. The word sifr'chah, "your book" can be broken down to two words sefer chaf — which means the twentieth book. Thus Moshe was removed from this portion of Tezaveh, the twentieth portion of the Torah.

But why would Moshe intone such omission in this, of all the portions of the Torah? Why not omit his name in the portions that declare the tragic outcome of sin or the calamities of insurrection? Wouldn't that be a better choice for omission? Why did Moshe allude to having his name omitted in the week he charges Aharon with all the honor and glory that is afforded the High Priest?

Rav Yitzchak Blaser was once seated at a gathering of the most prominent sages of his generation that was held in his city of St. Petersburg.

Among the Talmudic sages present was Rabbi Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik of Brisk, world renowned for his Talmudic genius. Rabbi Soloveitchik presented a Talmudic question that his young son, Reb Chaim, had asked. After posing the question, a flurry of discussion ensued, each of the rabbis offering his own answer to the riddle, while other rabbis refuted them with powerful rebuttals. During the entire repartee, Rabbi Blaser, who had a reputation as a Talmudic genius, sat silently. He did not offer an answer, nor did he voice approval to any of the answers given by the Rabbis.

When Rabbi Soloveitchik ultimately offered his son's own solution, Rabbi Blaser sat quietly, neither nodding in approval nor shaking his head in disagreement. It seemed as if he did not comprehend the depth of the insightful discourse. It was as if he was not even there! Bewildered, Reb Yosef Dov began having second thoughts about the renowned Rabbi Blaser. "Was he truly the remarkable scholar that the world had made him out to be?" he wondered.

Later that evening, Rabbi Soloveitchik was in the main synagogue where he got hold of the book "Pri Yitzchok," a volume filled with Talmudic exegesis authored by none other than Rabbi Blaser himself.

After leafing through the large volume he saw that the afternoon's entire discourse, his son's question, the offered and reputed responses, and the final resolution, were all part of a dissertation that Rabbi Blaser had himself published years earlier!

"Now I realize," thought Rabbi Soloveitchik, "Rabbi Blaser is as much a genius in humility as he is in Talmudic law!"

Our sages tell us that actually Moshe was to have been chosen as the Kohen Gadol in addition to the leader of the Jewish nation. It was his unwavering refusal to accept any of those positions that lost him the opportunity to serve as Kohen Gadol. Instead, Hashem took it from him and gave it to Aharon.

Many of us would have always harped on the fact. How often do I hear the claims "I got him that job!" "I could have been in his position!" "I started that company! Had I stayed, I would be the one with the stock options!" "That was really my idea!"

Moshe, too, could have injected himself as the one who propelled and engineered Aharon's thrust to glory — especially after a seemingly tainting experience with the Golden Calf. In his great humility, Moshe did just the opposite.

Moshe did not want to diminish Aharon's glory in any way. He wanted the entire spotlight to shine on Aharon and his great service to Klal Yisrael. Therefore, in the portion in which Moshe charges, guides, and directs the entire process of the priesthood, his name is conspicuously omitted.

One of the greatest attributes of true humility is to let others shine in their own achievement without interfering or announcing your role in their success. The greatest educators, the wisest parents, and most understanding colleagues know when to share the spotlight and when to let another friend, colleague, sibling, or child shine in their success or accomplishment. They know exactly when to be conspicuously or inconspicuously “missing from the book.”

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The Puzzling Story of the Megillah

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

The story of Esther tells us in the most lively, realistic fashion, with a tinge of refined yet biting sarcasm, about paradoxical, absurd events, which are both tragic and comical at the same time. We are told a story of a king who, as our Rabbis have already remarked, killed his beautiful, beloved, young queen at the suggestion of his friend (Memucan); this friend then succeeded to rise to the top of the Persian hierarchy (“Memucan was Haman,” Megillah 12b), and later the king hanged the friend upon the complaint of his new, beautiful queen and bride. It is a strange story, both sad and funny, about a king, neither wicked nor cruel per se, who signed, upon the spur of the moment, a decree to exterminate a people he did not know, without even inquiring as to their identity, and a short time later forgot the whole incident and became very indignant over Haman’s foul conspiracy. It is a story about a commonwealth where many races lived, many languages were spoken, many rituals practiced, a pluralistic society, culturally and religiously, which suddenly decided to commit genocide for one reason only: the people who were to be exterminated were abiding by religious statutes and laws that differed from those of other people.

It is a puzzling story about millions and millions of people, about countless liberal-minded, decent individuals who indifferently accepted the satanic, bloodthirsty, murderous royal edict, without even asking themselves, Can we tolerate that? Can we stand by and witness the extermination of a people? It is a story about a conspiracy of silence agreed to by the entire citizenry of the great Persian empire. And, mind you, it was permissible to demonstrate in Shushan. Mordecai paraded in the streets of the capital, wrapped in sackcloth with ashes on his head, and he cried with a bitter and loud cry (4:1). Mordecai even demonstrated in front of the royal palace. No guards blocked his way. Yet no one else joined him, neither friend nor stranger. “The city of Shushan was perplexed” (3:15). The Jews did not believe it; they refused to face reality. The non-Jews did not care. Moreover, the story is puzzling because of a very strange coincidence. A short time before, the entire population was invited to the seven-day feast on the grounds of the royal palace. The invitations were extended to everybody, Jew and gentile alike, to all races and faiths, “unto all the people who were present in Shushan” (1:5). The invited guests fraternized, drank toasts, shook hands, and hugged each other. A little later, the ruthless, inhuman edict was issued and sent hastily with the couriers to all parts of the commonwealth “to destroy, to slay and cause to perish all Jews both young and old, little children and women in one day” (3:13). How is it possible? What is more amazing is the cryptic remark:

The posts went forth in haste and the decree was given out in Shushan, and the king and Haman sat down to drink and the city of Shushan was perplexed (3:15).

The king and Haman celebrated by feasting on wine! The dignitaries of the Nazi party, after completing their work on the famous Wannsee Conference Protocol, dealing with the Final Solution of the Jewish Question, feasted until dawn.

The answer to this riddle can be found in our philosophy of man as a dual, dichotomous being, burdened with an inner contradiction. I have said before that Judaism has never accepted the two-valued Aristotelian logic

which, in its principles of contradiction and the excluded middle, states that, if A contradicts B, then only one of them is right and the other is wrong; the thing is either B or A, to the exclusion of either being both together or being neither A nor B. Judaism has ignored this principle and has quite often acted as if both A and B are right, in spite of their mutual exclusiveness.

Even in the halakhic realm, Judaism believes that there is a possibility for a contradiction in the objects without negating either of them. Jewish philosophy and the metaphysics of man can only be understood if the dialectical principle is adopted as the point of departure.

On the one hand, Judaism looks upon man with a sympathetic, appreciative eye—indeed with admiration. He is the king of all creatures. Judaism has time and again expressed faith in man and belief in human uniqueness, in man’s royal status, in his contemplative, meditative power. After all, he is the only rational being in the universe. In a word: he is a great figure.

That this thesis is correct, that Judaism is optimistic about man and his nature, can be attested by our stand on human freedom. Judaism has declared without any reservations that the human being enjoys unrestricted moral freedom. God does not interfere with man’s liberty to plot his own existential course. Apparently, man is deserving of freedom. It has not been granted to any other creature.

On the other hand, Judaism has also treated man with extreme caution, alas suspicion. The Jewish skepticism concerning man is due to our historical experience and memory that man, though endowed with Divine rationality, may turn at a moment’s notice into either a non-rational or an irrational being. That is why Judaism took all the extravagance of man in stride. It has never been stunned, amazed, or aghast watching the latter suddenly run amok. In the opinion of Judaism, there is no element of surprise in man’s abrupt changes and transformations; his unpredictability is a part of his humanity, and I would say that his unpredictability is quite predictable. Excerpted from Day of Deliverance: Essays on Purim and Hanukkah by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

From TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

To weeklydt@torahweb2.org

Rabbi Benjamin Yudin

Belief Comes From Past Experience

Purim is a very busy day. The very fulfillment of the four mitzvos of the day (reading the Megillah, seeking out and giving gifts to at least two poor individuals, the Purim meal celebration, and sending mishloach manot—food parcels to at least one person) is most time consuming. Moreover, the tone and flavor of the day is one that distracts us from serious contemplation and meditation. Thus, I welcome the opportunity to share some serious uplifting food for thought to help us appreciate the special holiday of Purim.

The Rambam in his introduction to his enumeration of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah (in his introduction to Yad HaChazakah) notes that even the rabbinic mitzvos have a biblical frame of reference. The rabbis could not, would not institute a holiday that did not reflect a biblical tenet. Case in point: Purim demonstrates that special relationship that exists between Hashem and the Jewish nation. As is stated (Devarim 4:7) “for which is a great nation that has a G-d Who is close to it, as is Hashem, our G-d, whenever we call to Him.” G-d promises: Call to Me, pray to Me and I will respond positively. Esther (4:16), “go assemble all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan, and fast for me.” We fasted, we prayed and it was effective. This, according to the Rambam is a primary characteristic of the holiday of Purim, namely the efficacy of prayer.

The Chofetz Chaim zt”l in his Shaar Olam (Shaar Hischazkus ch. 14) utilizes Purim to buttress the faith - emunah we are to have in our ultimate redemption. The prophet Isaiah (51:1, 2) teaches “look to the rock from which you were hewn, and the hollow of the pit from which you were dug, who bore you.” The prophet, says the saintly Chofetz Chaim, is comforting the Jewish nation that would experience and endure long painful

humiliating and degrading exiles. “Don’t despair.” Look at Avraham and Sarah. They were blessed with a child when they were respectfully 100 and 90 years, when they had despaired from children. Proof: Abraham’s response after his circumcision that he will have a child with Sarah was, (Braishis 17:18) “O that Yishmael might live before you.” It is only then that they bore Yitzchak. On the verse (Braishis 15:5) “and He took him outside” Rashi cites our Chazal (Talmud Shabbos 156) that Hashem took Avraham and his descendants outside the realm of nature and the natural order of the world.

Who could have imagined that after hundreds of years of back-breaking servitude, Pharaoh himself would liberate the enslaved Jewish people and ask for a blessing from them (Shemos 12:32). If the above is not sufficiently startling, who could have imagined that the former slaves would 7 weeks later experience prophecy the likes of which Ezekiel the prophet did not savor, as the Torah states (Devarim 5:4) “face to face did Hashem speak to you on the mountain”.

Finally, the upcoming holiday of Purim serves as a bastion of faith. In Esther (3:12, 13) we read of the dreadful decree against the Jewish nation “to destroy, to slay and to exterminate all the Jews, in one day on the 13th of the 12th month, and to plunder their possessions”. Who could have envisioned that on that very day it would all be reversed, and the Jews would kill their enemies, “and many from among the people of the land professed themselves Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them” (Esther 8:17).

Imagine the excitement that accompanied the writing of Megillas Esther by Mordechai and Esther. At the completion of the scroll, after enumerating the mitzvos of the day, they write with prophetic certainty (Esther 9:28) “and these days should be remembered and celebrated by every generation, every family... and these days of Purim should never cease among the Jews nor shall their remembrance perish from their descendants.” Pinch yourself! Your celebrating with your family, your community is living proof of this prophecy. But moreover, the celebration teaches us the veracity of the future prophecy of redemption for our people. Purim is a day that bolsters our faith, despite the most challenging conditions that surround us.

There are 3 possible reasons, suggests the Chofetz Chaim, as to why an individual will not respond positively to the request for assistance from another. The first is that just prior to being approached the usually generous mild mannered individual was aggrieved and aggravated, and hence will act out of character and say no. Secondly, he truly wants to assist but does have the wherewithal to say yes. Finally, he wants to help, has the ability to help but is fearful that the petitioner will squander the financial assistance and lacks the resolve to use it wisely.

None of the above applies to Hashem. King David (Tehillim 130:7,8) states “for with Hashem is kindness and abundant redemption and He shall redeem Israel from all its iniquities”. The first possibility of catching Him “out of character” doesn’t apply as He is constantly abounded by kindness. The second reason, namely the inability to help cannot be ascribed to Hashem, as the verse attests He possesses abundant redemption. The third and final possibility, the paucity of merit of the recipient, or perhaps the transgressions of the Jewish people make then ineligible for redemption, this too does not apply as the verse concludes with His redeeming Israel unequivocally.

Purim is an injection of optimism and a booster shot of emunah and bitachon. May this appreciation of the day add to your simchas Purim. Copyright © 2010 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

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Parshat Tetzaveh/Purim

SHABBAT ZACHOR

by Rav Shalom Rosner (reishit.org)

This Shabbat we will be commemorating one of the six “remembrances” and the only Torah level Torah reading when we read Parshat Zachor. We

tend to be very careful about the halachos of this reading – how we pronounce the words, making sure we hear every word, etc. But we cannot forget to understand the words as well and learn lessons from them. We will explore the meaning and the lessons from just one word in the Parsha. The Torah describes that Amalek “karcha.” What does this mean? Rashi teaches three explanations for this word:

- a) “Happened” (“karah”) – Amalek happened to come across our path as we traveled through the desert.
- b) “Impurity” (“keri”) – Amalek was a nation of great impurity.
- c) “Cooled” (“koo”) – Amalek cooled the rest of the world and every nation felt empowered to attack the Jewish people as Rashi explains with the well known parable of the hot bath and the one person with the courage to jump in cooling it off for everyone else.

Rav Shternbuch explains that these three definitions capture the beliefs of Amalek. First, the idea that they “happened” to come across the Jewish people captures that Amalek believes that there is no God in control of what happens on Earth. This belief is the root of impurity. Finally, the world had warmed to the idea of belief in God after seeing what God did for the Jews as they were saved from Egypt. Amalek succeeded in cooling the world from their belief in God and the world returned to its pagan ways. In fact, Rav Ephraim Wachsmann teaches that you can see this idea in the letters of the name “Amalek.” They were an “am,” a nation, which took the “lamed” a letter which reaches high, and reduced it to a “kuf,” a letter which descends below.

The reading of Parshat Zachor must remind us of the core Jewish value of belief in God’s involvement with the world and the holiness which this instills in us and the world.

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Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski The Superiority of Purim

There is a Midrash that has perplexed many Torah scholars. In the Megillah (Book of Esther) we read, “These days of Purim will never cease among the Jews” (9:28), upon which the Midrash says, “All the other festivals are destined to fall away, but Purim shall always remain” (Shochar Tov, Mishle 9). How can this be? We know that nothing in the Torah will ever be obsolete? How can the Midrash say that there will be no observance of Passover, Shavuot or Sukkos? Various interpretations have been offered, but it still remains enigmatic. However, one thing is clear: Purim is of extraordinary importance. Indeed, some sefarim say that Yom Kippur, which the Torah refers to as Yom Kipurim, means that it is a day similar to Purim. The holiest day of the year, yet it is only “like” Purim.

Rebbe Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev in Kedushas Levi says that the miracle of Purim indeed surpasses the miracles commemorated by the festivals. The ten plagues in Egypt, the dividing of the Reed Sea, the daily manna (and a double portion on Friday), the clouds of glory, and the revelation at Sinai were all manifestly supernatural phenomena, easily recognized as the handiwork of Hashem. The sea does not split of its own accord. There was no challenge to emunah, but after the miracles ceased, our ancestors backslid into idolatry, as is clear in the works of the prophets. Miracles are indeed very impressive, but their effect may not endure.

The first of the Ani Maamin, the Thirteen Principles of Faith formulated by Rambam, is “I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, creates and guides all creatures, and that He alone made, makes and will make everything.” With the exception of moral behavior, in which we have bechirah (free choice), in which Hashem does not intervene, everything is the work of Hashem.

In our prayer we say, “We shall thank You and relate Your praise for our lives, which are committed to Your power and for our souls that are entrusted to You, for Your miracles that are with us every day.” Miracles

every day? What miracles? We do not see supernatural happenings every day.

King David says, "To Him Who alone performs great wonders" (Psalms 136:4). The Talmud explains "alone" to mean that only Hashem knows the great wonders He does. "The beneficiary of a miracle does not recognize the miracle (Nidah 31a). The problem is that we tend to believe that things happen "naturally" or that we make them happen. Moses warned us, "You may say in your heart, 'My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!' Then you shall remember that it was Hashem who gave you strength to make wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). The Midrash says that one should praise Hashem for every breath, because with each breath we are given new life (Bereishis Rabbah 14).

At the Exodus, we indeed saw many miracles. We were then given the mitzvah of matzah on Passover. The prohibition of chametz is unique. For all other forbidden foods, the halachah is that if non-kosher food happens to get mixed with kosher food, and the ratio of kosher to non-kosher is greater than 60 to 1, the food may be eaten. This is not true of chametz on Passover, where if a tiny morsel of chametz falls into a great vat of food, so that the chametz is less than one millionth, all the food is forbidden. Why is the prohibition of chametz so severe?

Bnei Yisaschar explains the difference between matzah and chametz. With matzah, from the time the flour is mixed with water, someone is at all times processing it. It is kneaded, rolled, perforated and baked. The dough is never left alone without someone doing something with it. Not so with chametz, where after the flour and water are mixed, it is set aside for several hours to rise by itself. In the formation of chametz there is spontaneous action, without anyone doing anything to make it rise. Matzah, therefore, expresses the concept that nothing happens on its own, not even the tiniest of tiniest thing. There is no spontaneity. Hashem is directing and manipulating everything.

This teaching was given to the Israelites at the Exodus, to know that the slightest occurrence in the world is as much the direct handiwork of Hashem as the dividing of the Reed Sea.

This is why the miracle of Purim is more important than the miracles commemorated by the festivals. There was nothing supernatural about Purim, yet everything was being orchestrated by Hashem to bring about the salvation of the Jews.

What happened? The king got drunk and was infuriated by the queen's refusal to obey him, so he had her executed. Hardly a supernatural miracle. It is possible that the following day, a Jew said to his friend, "Did you hear what happened at the palace yesterday? The king was drunk and had the queen executed." The friend may have responded, "Why are you telling me this foolishness." Foolishness! This was Hashem's way of preparing for the salvation of the Jews, but no one was aware of this. This was just something natural.

There is a palace intrigue to assassinate the king. This is discovered by Mordechai, and he reports it to Esther. The king wishes to reward the person who saved his life, and Haman assumes that he is the one to be honored, but instead has to lead a parade honoring his arch enemy, Mordechai. Nothing supernatural about this.

Every little event in the story of Purim was Hashem at work, but this just wasn't apparent. The Purim story conveys the basis of our faith, as Rambam states that "I believe that Hashem alone made, makes and will make everything." That every single thing that happens in the world is under the direct management of Hashem, that is the teaching of Purim, and that is why it is of greater importance than Passover, Shavuot and Succos. Copyright © 2010 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

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Rav Kook on the Torah Portion Purim: Wine Enters, Secrets Emerge

What is the significance of the Talmudic instruction to drink on the holiday of Purim?

The Sages taught, "Wine enters, and secrets emerge" (Eiruvin 65a). In our generation, we very much need our inner secrets to come out and be revealed. Through this revelation, we will discover that which is hidden in our souls and learn to recognize our true selves.

When we reach the level of intoxication prescribed by the Sages - *ad lo yada* (so that one does not know) - we are able to free ourselves, at least temporarily, from the pseudo-knowledge and popular truisms that confuse us. We can shake off all of the accepted certainties that conceal the truth from us.

We are drunk with superficial illusions. We think that we have come this far, establishing a foothold in our homeland and embarking on the nascent beginnings of our redemption, by virtue of our talents and wisdom. We forget that without the hand of the One "Who sows kindnesses and produces triumphs," all of our efforts would be for naught. We fail to perceive the Divine hand that is hidden behind all of our achievements. All year long, we are drunk with a deceptive inebriation. We live unaware of the calculated plans of a greater world, a world ruled by the Master of the universe, with Whom we have a sworn pact guarding over Israel's eternal spirit. This covenant is ingrained in our very essence. It cannot be voided by evasion or alienation. Even if we should sink to the lowest level, we cannot change our skin, our body, our soul. Those who deceive themselves will suffer greatly until they return to where they are integrally connected. "His heart will understand, and he will return and will be healed" (Isaiah 6:10).

A Call to Unity

In the days of Mordechai and Esther, the Jewish people renewed their promise to keep the Torah (Shabbat 85). In our days also, Esther's call to "Go, gather all of the Jews" should ring in our ears and stir the inner soul to break forth from its place of hiding. The inner soul, buried deeply in the soul of every Jew, resists the clever manipulations of misleading ideas and popular notions.

Let us reveal this epistle of Purim in all of its wonders, set above and beyond all of our superficial 'knowledge.' Let us announce the power of a united Israel, bringing together all sectors of the Jewish people. This is the secret strength of eternal Judaism. And through the strength of our unity we will be able to overcome all obstacles that stand in the way of our national rebirth.

(Adapted from *Mo'adei HaRe'iyah*, pp. 266-267, from an article in *HaYesod* that Rav Kook published on his last Purim in 1935.)

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Dressing up: The Prohibition of Lo Yilbash

Question: Is it permitted for boys to dress up like girls and vice versa in celebration of Purim?

Discussion: Before we are able to answer this question we must first explore the laws of Lo yilbash that apply all year around, and then we will discuss if Purim is an exception.

It is biblically forbidden for a man to wear women's clothes or for a woman to wear men's garments. The Torah refers to this kind of conduct as an abomination since it can easily lead to promiscuity and immorality.¹ This prohibition, known as Lo yilbash, applies even if one cannot be seen by others and even in the privacy of one's home.²

"Men's clothing" includes any garment which, in that locale, is worn strictly by men, and "women's clothing" means garments which are worn strictly by women. But an item which is not gender specific and is worn in that locale by both men and women is permitted to be worn by either gender.³ While contemporary poskim debate whether or not women who wear pants which are specially designed for them are in violation of Lo yilbash,⁴ all poskim agree that it is strictly forbidden for women to wear pants or slacks in public, since it is forbidden for them to wear in public any form-fitting garments which outline any part of their body.

Lo yilbash includes wearing even one garment that is specifically worn by the other gender.⁵ It is forbidden, for instance, for a woman to wear a man's hat, belt, tie or shoes even if the rest of her clothing is clearly feminine and she is clearly identifiable as a woman. Similarly, it is forbidden for a man to wear a woman's shawl, tichel, jewelry or wig, even if that is the only feminine item that he is wearing.

Once a boy or a girl reaches the age of chinuch, parents are forbidden to dress them in the clothing of the opposite gender. The age of chinuch concerning this halachah is defined as the age when a child is old enough that his mother is particular not to dress a boy like a girl or vice versa, or when a boy or girl is old enough to be embarrassed to wear the clothing of the opposite gender.⁶

Question: Are there any situations where the prohibition of Lo yilbash does not apply?

Discussion: Many poskim are of the opinion that the prohibition of Lo yilbash applies only if one's intention is to beautify, adorn or to call attention to oneself; if, however, the intention is for other reasons, e.g., to protect oneself from the sun or rain, it is permitted.⁷ According to this opinion it is permitted for a man to wear his wife's sweater, scarf, socks or slippers if he is cold and needs to warm himself, her rain coat or boots if it is raining, her slippers if he needs to protect his feet from cold or wetness, or her apron if he is cooking and needs protection from splatters. While a minority opinion disagrees with all of the above⁸ and some poskim recommend being stringent,⁹ the basic halachah follows the more lenient view.¹⁰

Based on the above, we may also permit a man to wear his wife's watch or ring for safekeeping,¹¹ or her sunglasses if the purpose is to protect his eyes from the sun's rays.

The poskim also agree that Lo yilbash does not apply to umbrellas, canes (when used as a walking aid) or handkerchiefs, even if a particular type or style is designed for use by men primarily or by women primarily.¹² It is also permitted for a man to wear a toupee,¹³ to use a hair-clip or bobby pin to fasten his kippah,¹⁴ to wear a ring on his finger in a locale where men wear rings,¹⁵ and to ride a woman's bicycle.¹⁶

Question: May women wear pants when they are exercising in the privacy of their homes or in gyms which are for women only? Is it permitted for them to wear ski pants when they are sledding in an area where there are no men around?

Discussion: From a strict halachic perspective there are grounds for leniency, since many poskim maintain that Lo yilbash does not apply to pants or slacks which are designed specifically for women, and since the activity is taking place in a private area there is no breach of modesty. In addition, wearing pants for those activities is generally not for the purpose of adornment but for other reasons, e.g., for protection, as in the case of ski

pants, or for ease of movement, as in the case of exercising, which is permitted according to most poskim mentioned earlier. Still, for a variety of reasons, some authorities are hesitant to permit women, even when there are no men around, to wear pants indiscriminately. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv is quoted as ruling that women may wear ski pants only if they wear a top that reaches the knees over the pants.¹⁷ In actual practice, women should follow the ruling of their own rav who is in the best position to judge what the proper approach is for his community.

Question: Is the prohibition of Lo yilbash less severe when dressing up in celebration of Purim?

Discussion: This topic has been hotly debated for generations. In some communities it was customary for men to dress up as women and vice versa on Purim, and the rabbonim did not object. They reasoned that the dressing up was being done only for the sake of simchas Purim and it does not violate Lo yilbash.¹⁸ But in many other communities the rabbonim were strictly opposed to the practice and demanded that it be stopped,¹⁹ and this has become the prevalent custom nowadays.²⁰ Children below the age of chinuch, however, are permitted to dress like the opposite gender.²¹ Even for adults, the poskim do not object to those who wear just one item that is usually worn by the opposite gender, as long as one's true identity is clearly recognizable (even though this is forbidden during the rest of the year).²²

1 Rashi, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra, Devarim 22:5. See Rambam (Sefer ha-Mitzvos, lo saseh 39 and Moreh Nevuchim 3:37) and Chinuch 542 who connect this prohibition to idol worship as well. 2 Some poskim suggest that the prohibition of Lo yilbash in the privacy of one's home applies only to men but not to women. According to this opinion, women are permitted to wear men's garments as long as they don't mingle with men. But most poskim hold that mi-derbanan, this is forbidden for women as well; see Darchei Teshuvah, Y.D. 182:7, Minchas Yitzchak 2:108-3, B'tzeil ha-Chochmah 5:126-3 and Shevet ha-Kehasi 2:258 for the various views. 3 See Maharshah, Nedarim 49b. 4 See Avnei Tzedek, Y.D. 172, Minchas Yitzchak 2:108, Tzitz Eliezer 11:62, Shevet ha-levi 2:63; 6:118; Yabia Omer 6: Y.D. 14. 5 Rama, Y.D. 182:5, based on Rambam, Hilchos Avoda Zara 12:10. 6 Igros Moshe, E.H. 4:62-4. Some poskim maintain that the prohibition begins even earlier than that; see Minchas Yitzchak 2:108 and Yechaveh Da'as 5:50. 7 Bach, Taz and Shach, Y.D. 182:5. 8 Yad ha-Ketannah (pg. 279b); Chochmas Adam 90:1, Binas Adam, 74. 9 Maharsham 2:243; Rav C. Kanievsky (Halichos Chayim, pg. 120). 10 See Igros Moshe, Y.D. 2:61 and Yabia Omer 6 Y.D. 14-4. 11 Teshuvos Torah Lishmah 214. See also Avnei Yashfei 4:90-4. 12 Chochmas Adam 90:1, Binas Adam 74; Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Ve'oleihu Lo Yibol, vol. 2, pg. 72). 13 Levushei Mordechai, O.C. 1:108. 14 See Rivevos Ephraim 5:40 and Da'as Notech, pg. 76. 15 See Ran, Shabbos 62a and Mishnah Berurah 161:19. 16 Be'er Sarim 6:61. 17 Yashiv Moshe, pg 170. 18 Rama, O.C. 692:8. 19 Bach and Shach, Y.D. 182:7, quoted by most of the latter poskim. 20 Aruch ha-Shulchan, O.C. 692:12. See Be'er Moshe 8:7-8. 21 Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 60; Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, quoted in Yismach Yisrael 31, note 309. 22 Mishnah Berurah 692:30, quoting Peri Megadim.

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff
Matanos La'evyonim

by **Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Before I begin the article on the halachos of matanos la'evyonim, I am introducing a request for funds for American Friends of Nimla Tal, Inc. which functions as my "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund." As I have not sent out a fund raising e-mail for quite a while, allow me to explain this tzedakah's unique features: *Every dime raised goes directly to tzedakah, and all the money goes to people living in Eretz Yisroel. There are no salaries. I pay for the postage, toner and envelopes myself. This appeal involves no advertising expenses, all money raised goes to help. PROJECT #1: The single biggest expense that I distribute funds is to pay for therapy for individuals or couples. Some are situations where marriage therapy is very necessary to keep a frum family intact. This is an investment not only in these two individuals, but also in generations of healthy future families. In all of the situations, I remain on top of the situation, and usually I am in regular contact with the therapist. I am including a completely unsolicited letter of appreciation that I received: "We wanted to let you know where we are holding in regards to the therapist (and our marriage). "Over a year ago I came to you in a state - miserable and lonely in my marriage - today it is a total turn around. I feel much more confident in the marriage - am much happier and so is Yossie. We regularly spend time together these days - and it is not because "we need to do that" it is because we enjoy each other's company and want to spend time together. Not only that, Yossie has started to do some learning again - much to my delight and surprise. Also other areas of his yiddishkeit that bothered me have started to improve - and not as a result of my nagging (as everyone knows that never works anyway). "You were sensitive to the fact that we were in no position financially to pay for the therapy, although I recognized its necessity. I wanted you to know that Yossie and I decided that we want to maintain contact with seeing her on an occasional*

basis for some unresolved personal issues. Don't worry – we are not asking you for more funds. Both of us are now employed, thank G-d, and Yossie and I decided that we can -- and must -- include this in our budget. We need it for ourselves, and for the sake of our children. Hopefully, now that we hope that most of our financial hurdle is behind us, we hope to be on the giving end of some funds for these types of projects in the future – but this is all in Hashem's hands. "Thank you for absolutely everything you did for us." PROJECT #2: I am also distributing some funds for maos chitin. I am aware of numerous families that do not have money to provide for basic Pesach needs. Some are employed, some are underemployed, and others have unusual family expenses. In every instance, these are situations that I am personally familiar with, and I am aware of the family needs. Those interested in a US IRS tax deductions can write checks to: American Friends of Nimla Tal Inc. and mail them either to: c/o Fishkind 3215 Shelburne Road Baltimore MD 21208 Or Kaganoff 3 Kfar Ivri Neve Yaakov Jerusalem, Israel If you send me a return e-mail with a pledge amount, I will begin budgeting the amount immediately. Courtesy of one of my tabmidim, we also now have the ability to pay by paypal (about which I admit to being a novice). Here is the link: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=DXAGA7RRHA2SG Thanks so much and with my best wishes to you and yours. Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

And now for our article. I have made several revisions in this article over the copy that I sent out previously.

Megillas Esther teaches that one of the mitzvos established by Mordechai and Esther was "matanos la'evyonim," giving gifts to the poor. Since the megillah states one should give gifts "La'evyonim," which is plural, we derive that one must give gifts to at least two poor people (Gemara Megillah 7b; cf., however, Be'er Heiteiv 694:1).

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM GIFT TO FULFILL THE MITZVAH?

There are several opinions regarding the minimum gift needed to fulfill the mitzvah. The Maharasha contends that one must give each person an amount significant enough to be respectable (Chiddushei Agados, Megillah 7a s.v. shadar). Some contemporary poskim rule this way.

Zera Yaakov (Shu"t #11) contends that it is sufficient if the poor person could purchase a minimum meal with the gift, which he defines as bread the size of three eggs (quoted in Pischei Teshuvah 694:1). Thus according to this opinion, one fulfills matanos la'evyonim if one gives three slices of bread to each of two poor people (or enough money for each to purchase three slices of bread).

Ritva contends that one is required to give only the value of a prutah, a copper coin worth only a few cents (Ritva, Megillah 7b; Menoras HaMaor; Shu"t Maharil #56). Mishnah Berurah (694:2) rules this way and one can certainly follow this approach.

HOW MUCH SHOULD ONE STRIVE TO GIVE?

The above amounts are indeed extremely paltry matanos la'evyonim and only define the minimum amount to fulfill the mitzvah. There are two other rules that are important:

Firstly, one should give money to every person who asks for a tzedakah donation on Purim without verifying whether he has a legitimate tzedakah need (see Yerushalmi Megillah 1:4). We will explain the details of this halacha later. (It is obvious that one should not make a major donation without verifying that the need is legitimate.)

Secondly, one should calculate how much one intends to spend for shalach manos and the Purim seudah and then designate a greater amount of money for matanos la'evyonim (Rambam, Hilchos Megillah 2:17).

MATANOS LA'EYONIM VERSUS SHALACH MANOS

Question: Assuming that one has limited resources, which is more important to give, many gifts to the poor or many shalach manos?

One should give a greater amount of matanos la'evyonim and limit how much shalach manos he sends (Rambam, Hilchos Megillah 2:17).

IS IT BETTER TO GIVE A LOT TO A FEW POOR, OR A LITTLE TO EACH?

The Bach rules that someone with 100 gold coins to distribute for matanos la'evyonim should distribute one coin to each of 100 poor people rather than give it all to one individual because this makes more people happy (Bach 695 s.v. v' tzarich lishloach). According to Rav Elyashiv, it is better to give two large gifts that will make two aniyim happy than to give many small gifts that are insufficient to make the recipients happy (quoted in Shevus Yitzchok on Purim, pg. 98).

These two Piskei halacha are not in conflict -- quite the contrary, they complement one another. The mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim is to make as many poor people happy as possible. Receiving a very small gift does not place a smile on a poor man's face, although it fulfills the minimal requirements of the mitzvah as noted above. However, both the Bach's

gold coin and Rav Elyashiv's large gift accomplish that the poor person becomes happy. Therefore, giving each person enough of a gift to bring a smile to his face is a bigger mitzvah than giving a very large gift to one person and being unable to bring a smile to the others. Thus, the optimal way to perform the mitzvah is to make as many people happy as possible. MAY MATANOS LA'EYONIM COME FROM MAASER FUNDS? The minimal amount that I am required to give may not be from maaser funds just as one may not spend maaser money on other mitzvos (Shu"t Maharil #56; Magen Avraham 694:1). The additional money that I give may be from maaser (Magen Avraham 694:1). However, since I concluded that one is not required to give more than one perutah to each of two poor people, two perutos are worth only a few cents. Therefore, once can assume that one's matanos la'evyonim may come from maaser money.

DO I FULFILL THE MITZVAH WITH MONEY GIVEN BEFORE PURIM?

If the poor person receives the money on Purim, one is yotzei (Be'er Heiteiv 695:7; Aruch HaShulchan 694:2). Therefore, one can fulfill the mitzvah by mailing a contribution if one is certain that the poor person will receive it on Purim. If the poor person receives the money before Purim, one is not yotzei (Magen Avraham 694:1).

Similarly, one does not fulfill the mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim if the ani does not receive the money until after Purim.

DO I FULFILL MATANOS LA'EYONIM BY DONATING MONEY TO AN ORGANIZATION?

If the organization distributes the money to the poor on Purim, I can perform my mitzvah this way.

DOES GETTING A TAX DEDUCTION PRECLUDE ME FROM FULFILLING MATANOS LA'EYONIM?

If I donate the money through an institution that will distribute the money on Purim, I can fulfill the mitzvah and also deduct the donation from my tax liability.

CAN I FULFILL THE MITZVAH BY CHECK?

If the poor person can convert the check into cash or food on Purim, then I fulfill the mitzvah (Shvus Yitzchok pg. 99, quoting Rav Elyashiv).

DOES MY WIFE NEED TO GIVE HER OWN MATANOS LA'EYONIM?

A woman is obligated in matanos la'evyonim (Shulchan Aruch 695:4). Magen Avraham states "I did not see that people are careful about this, possibly because this rule applies only to a widow or other woman who does not have a husband but that a married woman fulfills her obligation by having her husband distribute for her. However, one should be more machmir." Thus according to the Magen Avraham, a woman should distribute her own money to the poor. It would be acceptable for a husband to tell his wife, "I am giving matanos la'evyonim specifically on your behalf," but it is better if he gives her the money for her to distribute or gives the money to a shaliach to be zocheh for her, and then gives the money to the ani. Although most poskim follow the Magen Avraham's ruling, some rule that a married woman fulfills the mitzvah when her husband gives, even without making any special arrangements (Aruch HaShulchan 694:2), and others contend that a married woman has no responsibility to give matanos la'evyonim (Pri Chodosh, quoting Maharikash).

MUST I GIVE MONEY?

No. One fulfills the mitzvah by giving the poor either food or money (Rambam). However, one should give the poor person something that he can use to enhance his celebration of Purim (see Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos Zahav 694:1).

MUST THE POOR PERSON USE THE MONEY FOR PURIM?

No. The poor person may do whatever he wants with the money (see Gemara Bava Metzia 78b).

MAY ONE FULFILL THE MITZVAH AT NIGHT?

One does not fulfill the mitzvos of matanos la'evyonim, shalach manos, or the Purim meal if they are performed at night (see Machatzis HaShekel 694:1).

HOW POOR MUST A PERSON BE TO QUALIFY FOR MATANOS LA'EYONIM?

The Mishnah (Peah 8:8) states that someone who owns less than 200 zuz qualifies to collect most of the Torah's gifts to the poor, including maaser ani, the second tithe reserved for the poor, and peah, the corner of the field left for them. What is the modern equivalent of owning 200 zuz?

Contemporary poskim rule that someone whose income is insufficient to pay for his family's expenses qualifies as a poor person for all halachos including matanos la'evyonim. This is assuming that he does not have enough income or savings to support his family without selling basic essentials (Piskei Teshuvos 694:2).

DOES A POOR PERSON HAVE A MITZVAH OF GIVING TO THE POOR?

Does the mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim apply to the poor? Is there an easy way for him to perform it?

The Tur (694) states that "Chayov kol adam litein matanos la'aniyim," "Every person is obligated to give matanos la'evyonim." What is added by emphasizing "kol," everyone? The Bach explains that this emphasizes that even a poor person, who is himself a tzedakah recipient, must also give. Is there an inexpensive way for a poor person to give matanos la'evyonim? Yes, he can give part of his seudas Purim to another poor person and the other poor person reciprocates. Thereby, they both fulfill matanos la'evyonim (Mishnah Berurah 694:2). Also, note that according to what I concluded above, a poor person can give a dime to each of two other paupers and thereby fulfill the mitzvah.

MAY ONE USE MONEY COLLECTED FOR MATANOS LA'EYONIM FOR A DIFFERENT PURPOSE?

One may not use money collected for matanos la'evyonim for a different tzedakah (Gemara Bava Metziah 78b). This is because the people who donated the money expect to fulfill two mitzvos with their donation: tzedakah and the special mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim. Thus, if one uses the money for a different tzedakah purpose, they fulfilled the mitzvah of tzedakah, but not the mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim.

If someone decided to give money for matanos la'evyonim, he is required to give it for this purpose even if he did not say so (Mishnah Berurah 694:6, quoting Hagahos Ashri).

PURIM VERSUS SHUSHAN PURIM

Do residents of Yerushalayim and other ancient walled cities who observe Purim on the fifteenth of Adar (often referred to as "Shushan Purim") fulfill the mitzvah of matanos la'evyonim by giving to the poor who observed Purim the day before? Do people who observe Purim on the Fourteenth fulfill the mitzvah by giving to the poor of Yerushalayim when it is not yet Purim for them? These are good questions that are debated by contemporary poskim.

In the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Megillah 2:17), "It is more important to provide more gifts to the poor than to have a more lavish Purim seudah or send more shalach manos. This is because there is no greater and honored joy than bringing happiness to orphans, widows and the needy. Someone who makes the unfortunate happy is likened to Hashem's Divine Presence, as the pasuk says: 'He who revives the spirit of the lowly and brings to life the heart of the crushed,'" (Yeshayah 57:15).

In its discussion of the Torah prohibition against a kohen performing the sacred service in the Beit Hamikdash while he is intoxicated, the question arises as to how sobriety can be restored after drinking wine. The conclusion is that if only a revit of wine (the amount required for kiddush on Shabbat and Festivals) is imbibed, a short nap will make the drinker sober. If he has drunk more than that amount any slumber which follows will make him more intoxicated.

On the basis of a gemara (Mesechta Megillah 7b), the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 695:2) rules that "one is required on Purim to drink until he reaches the stage in which he can no longer distinguish between 'cursed be Haman, blessed be Mordechai.'" "

In contrast to this tall order Rabbi Moshe Isserles (RaMA) cites an opinion that "one need not get that drunk but should drink more than is his custom and then go to sleep, which is a state in which he cannot make the above-mentioned distinction."

A simple reading of this formula leaves us with a problem of understanding how sleep following a little extra drinking qualifies as the intoxication mentioned in the gemara in Megillah. It has therefore been suggested that this approach is based on our gemara. By drinking more than is his custom a revit of wine and then taking a nap, one truly achieves a state of intoxication.

WHAT THE SAGES SAY

"Anyone who teaches Torah to another is considered as if he gave birth to him." Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeni in the name of Rabbi Yonatan – Sanhedrin 19b © 2010 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved

TALMUDIGEST—Sanhedrin 16 - 22

For the week ending 27 February 2010 / 12 Adar I 5770

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by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

PURIM DRINKING AND SLEEPING - Sanhedrin 22b

In honor of upcoming Purim we will share some "Purim Torah" based on a daf learned this week.