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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TETZAVE PURIM - 5773

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from last year 5772

Covenant & Conversation

**Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

Orthodox Union / [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org)

Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

**The Aesthetic in Judaism**

Why is the Torah so specific and emphatic, in this week's parsha, about the clothes to be worn by the Cohen and the Cohen Gadol? "These are the vestments that they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a knitted tunic, a turban, and a sash. Make them as sacred vestments for Aaron and his sons so that they will be able to be priests to Me" (Exodus 28: 4).

In general, Judaism is sceptical about appearances. Saul, Israel's first king, looked the part. He was "head and shoulders" taller than anyone else (1 Samuel 9: 2). Yet though he was physical tall, he was morally small. He followed the people rather than leading them. When God told Samuel that He had rejected Saul, and that Samuel should anoint a son of Yishai as king, Samuel went to Yishai and saw that one of his sons, Eliav, looked the part. He thought he was the one God had chosen. God, however, tells him that he is mistaken:

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Sam. 16: 7)

Appearances deceive. In fact, as I have mentioned before in these

studies, the Hebrew word for garment, begged, comes from the same Hebrew word as "to betray" – as in the confession Ashamnu bagadnu, "We are guilty, we have betrayed." Jacob uses Esau's clothes to deceive. Joseph's brothers do likewise with his bloodstained cloak. There are six such examples in the book of Genesis alone. Why then did God command that the cohanim were to wear distinctive garments as part of their service in the tabernacle and later in the Temple?

The answer lies in the two-word phrase that appears twice in our parsha, defining what the priestly vestments were to represent: le-kavod ule-tifaret, "for dignity [or 'honour'] and beauty." These are unusual words in the Torah, at least in a human context. The word tiferet, "beauty" or "glory," appears only three times in the Torah, twice in our parsha (Ex. 28: 2, 40) and once, poetically and with a somewhat different sense, in Deuteronomy 26: 19.

The word kavod, "dignity" or honour," appears sixteen times, but in fourteen (2x7) of these cases the reference is to the glory of God. The twice they appear in our parsha are the only occasions in which kavod is applied to a human being. So what is happening here?

The answer is that they represent the aesthetic dimension. This does not always figure prominently in Judaism. It is something we naturally connect with cultures a world apart from the Torah. The great empires – Mesopotamia, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome – built monumental palaces and temples. The royal courts were marked by magnificent robes, cloaks, crowns and regalia, each rank with its own uniform and finery.

Judaism by contrast often seems almost puritanical in its avoidance of pomp and display. Worshipping the invisible God, Judaism tended to devalue the visual in favour of the oral and aural: words heard rather than appearances seen.

Yet the service of the tabernacle and Temple were different. Here appearances – dignity, beauty – did make a difference. Why? Maimonides gives this explanation:

In order to exalt the Temple, those who ministered there received great honour, and the priests and Levites were therefore distinguished from the rest. It was commanded that the priest should be clothed properly with the most splendid and fine clothes, "holy garments for glory and for beauty" ... for the multitude does not estimate man by his true form but by ... the beauty of his garments, and the Temple was to be held in great reverence by all. (Guide for the Perplexed, III:45)

The explanation is clear, but there is also a hint of disdain. Maimonides seems to be saying that to those who really understand the nature of the religious life, appearances should not matter at all, but "the multitude," the masses, the majority, are not like that. They are impressed by spectacle, visible grandeur, the glitter of gold, the jewels of the breastplate, the rich pageantry of scarlet and purple and the pristine purity of white linen robes.

In his book *The Body of Faith* (1983), Michael Wyschogrod makes a stronger case for the aesthetic dimension of Judaism. Throughout history, he argues, art and cult have been intimately connected and Judaism is no exception. "The architecture of the Temple and its contents demand a spatial thinking that stimulates the visual arts as nothing else does. It must be remembered that among the many artefacts past civilisations have left behind, those intended for ritual use almost are always the most elaborate and aesthetically the most significant."

Wyschogrod says that postbiblical Judaism did not, for the most part, make outstanding contributions to art and music. Even today, the world of religious Jewry is remote from that of the great writers, painters, poets and dramatists. To be sure, there is a wealth of popular religious music. But by and large, he says, "our artists tend to leave the Jewish community." This he believes represents a spiritual crisis. "The imagination of the poet is a reflection of his spiritual life. Myth and metaphor are the currency both of religion and poetry. Poetry is one of the most powerful domains in which religious expression takes place. And the same is true of music, drama, painting, and dance."

Rav Abraham Kook hoped that the return to Zion would stimulate a renaissance of Jewish art, and there is a significant place for beauty in the religious life, especially in Avodah, "service," which once meant

sacrifice and now means prayer.

An immense body of recent research into neuroscience, evolutionary psychology and behavioural economics has established beyond doubt that we are not, for the most part, rational animals. It is not that we are incapable of reason, but that reason alone does not move us to action. For that, we need emotion – and emotion goes deeper than the prefrontal cortex, the brain's centre of conscious reflection. Art speaks to emotion. It moves us in ways that go deeper than words.

That is why great art has a spirituality that cannot be expressed other than through art – and that applies to the visual beauty and pageantry of the service of tabernacle and Temple, including the robes and sashes of the priests. There is a poem in the reader's repetition of Mussaf on Yom Kippur that expresses this to perfection. It is about mareih cohen, the appearance of the High Priest as he concluded his service and emerged from the Holy of Holies:

As the brightness of the vaulted canopy of heaven,  
As lightning flashing from the splendour of angels,  
As the celestial blue in the fringes' thread,  
As the iridescence of the rainbow in the midst of clouds,  
As the majesty with which the Rock has clothed His creatures,  
As a rose planted in a garden of delight,  
As a diadem set on the brow of the King,  
As the mirror of love in the face of a bridegroom,  
As a halo of purity from a mitre of purity,  
As one who abides in secret, beseeching the King,  
As the morning star shining in the borders of the East –  
Was the appearance of the [High] Priest.

And now we can define the nature of the aesthetic in Judaism. It is art devoted to the greater glory of God. That is the implication of the fact that the word kavod, "glory," is attributed in the Torah only to God – and to the cohen officiating in the house of God.

Judaism does not believe in art for art's sake, but in art in the service of God, giving back as a votive offering to God a little of the beauty He has made in this created world. At the risk of oversimplification, one could state the difference between ancient Israel and ancient Greece thus: that where the Greeks believed in the holiness of beauty, Jews believed in hadrat kodosh, the beauty of holiness. There is a place for the aesthetic in avodah. In the words of the Song at the Sea: zeh Keili ve-anvehu, "This is my God and I will beautify Him." For beauty inspires love, and from love flows the service of the heart.

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Heritage House <innernet@gmail.com> to innernet  
INNERNET MAGAZINE  
<http://innernet.org.il>  
March 2008  
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### "PURIM AND SEEING BEYOND SELF"

by Ephraim Nisenbaum

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Besides the mitzvot of reading the Megillah and rejoicing on Purim, we have two other mitzvot to perform: mishlo'ach manot, the sending of at least two pieces of food to a friend, and matanot le'evyonim, gifts of charity to at least two poor people. While tzedakah and acts of good will are encouraged throughout the year, the connection between these acts and the holiday of Purim is not clear.

There is a puzzling statement found in the Talmud regarding Purim: Where do we find a source for Haman in the Torah? The Talmud points to the verse in Genesis 3:11, where God confronted Adam and Eve after they had eaten from the tree. He asked them, "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The first word in the verse, "Hamin," has the same letters as the word "Haman."

What is the connection between eating from the tree and the story of Haman?

The Talmud may be teaching us a lesson in human nature. The commentators see in Haman the epitome of arrogance and the mindless

pursuit of honor. Haman had everything a person could possibly want: money, power, family, and prestige. The entire country bowed before him -- except for one Jew, Mordechai. Thousands upon thousands of people throughout 127 provinces paid homage to him, yet Haman could find no rest because Mordechai the Jew refused to bow down. He told his wife, "All of this is meaningless to me when I see Mordechai the Jew sitting at the king's gate" (Esther 5:13).

That, Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz explains, is the essence of the pursuit of honor. It is all in the imagination. There can be no second best. If he doesn't have everything, he feels he has nothing and can find no pleasure in all that he does have.

"Where do we find a source for such foolishness in the Torah?" the Talmud asks. The answer given is that this attitude is as old as the history of man. Adam and Eve could eat all the delicious fruits in the Garden of Eden. Only one tree was prohibited: the Tree of Knowledge. Why weren't they satisfied? Did they need more? Yet they saw that "the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight for the eyes." Nothing else mattered. They wanted the fruit from that tree, and no other. Such is man; consumed by desire, he cannot think rationally. He thinks only of himself and the present, the same foolishness shown by Haman, who ignored all else because Mordechai refused to bow before him.

The Purim story contains another example of this attitude. Achashveirosh could not sleep one night and asked his advisors to read to him from the chronicles. They read that Mordechai had never been rewarded for saving the king's life.

At that moment, Haman happened to enter the king's courtyard, to speak about hanging Mordechai on the gallows. Achashveirosh asked Haman how the king should act toward a man deserving of honor. Haman said to himself, "Who would the king want to honor more than me?" (Esther 6:6). It is amazing that it never even entered Haman's mind that the king might want to honor someone other than himself! Again we see how a man can become so self-absorbed that he is totally oblivious to anything else in the world.

\* \* \*

Now we might better understand the mitzvot on Purim of gifts to friends and poor people. The Sages wanted to show how self-centered a person could become, as seen in Haman's behavior. This is especially important, when we consider the special mitzvah to celebrate Purim with joyous feasting and the drinking of wine. A person might be so absorbed in his enjoyment that he forgets everything and everyone else. For this reason, the Sages instituted the mitzvot of gifts to friends and poor people on Purim, to sensitize us to other people's needs and feelings, even as we enjoy ourselves.

With this in mind, we can perhaps offer a new interpretation of another Talmudic statement: "A person is obligated to imbibe on Purim until he can no longer distinguish between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai'." How could the Sages condone this type of behavior? Where do we ever find a mitzvah asking us to lose control of our minds? But our interpretation of sending gifts to friends may show the purpose of the mitzvah of drinking to be the exact opposite of what it implies. The Sages instructed us to rejoice by drinking enough alcohol that we become oblivious to the realities of the world ("Cursed be Haman" and "Blessed be Mordechai"). Under such conditions it is difficult to deal with anyone else, let alone empathize with their needs. Yet the Sages wanted to show us that we must never allow our self-indulgence to interfere with our relationships with others. The mitzvot of gifts to friends and poor people prevent us from falling into the trap of the conceited Haman.

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Young Israel Weekly Dvar Torah

From: National Council of Young Israel [YI\_Torah@lb.bcentral.com]

Sent: Monday, March 13, 2006 1:19 PM

Subject: NCYI Dvar Torah: Purim

**Purim**

14 Adar 5766 March 14, 2006

Guest Rabbi:

**Rabbi Moshe Greebel**

Cong. Sons of Israel, Belmar, NJ

**PURIM REFLECTIONS**

Upon examining the ninth chapter of Megillas Esther very closely, we find the actual word Purim recorded five times. "Therefore, did they call these days Purim....." (Esther 9:26) "And these days of Purim will never vanish from the Jews....." (Esther 9:28) ".....To fulfill this second letter of Purim." (Esther 9:29) "To fulfill these days of Purim in their times....." (Esther 9:31) "And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim....." (Esther 9:32)

The Chaishek Shlomo instructs that these five references of Purim coincide with the five possible days of reading the Megillah. The first Mishna in the Gemarah of Megillah- based on 'to fulfill these days of Purim in their times'- instructs that there are five possible days when the Megillah may be recited- the 11th (of Adar), the 12th, the 13th, the 14th, and the 15th- no earlier, and no later.

Now, the 15th is reserved for those cities which were surrounded by a wall from the time of Yehoshua (even if that wall does not exist anymore). Throughout the Persian Empire, the Jews fought their enemies on the 13th day of Adar, and celebrated Purim on the 14th. However, in the capital city of the Persian Empire- Shushan (a walled city)- they fought their enemies on the 13th and 14th days of Adar, and celebrated Purim on the 15th- or, Shushan Purim as we refer to it. Therefore, Jews living in un-walled cities have more of an affiliation with the Jews of the Persian Empire (14th), and Jews living in walled cities have more of an affiliation with the Jews of Shushan (15th).

However, Jews in the outer villages may have the Megillah recited for them early (these villagers were not expert in reciting the Megillah)- based on the Yom HaKenissah (day of entering). What exactly is this Yom HaKenissah? Monday and Thursday are each a Yom HaKenissah.

Rashi explains that the Batei Din (Rabbinical courts) in large cities would sit in session on Monday and Thursday, based on the Takanah (edict) of Ezra. The outer villagers would enter the large cities on Mondays and Thursdays to have their litigations settled by Bais Din. That is, these outer villagers had no expert Dayanim (judges) in their own communities, and depended on the Batei Din of the larger cities.

The Rabbeinu Chananel teaches that Mondays and Thursdays are always referred to as Yom HaKenissah, because the people of the outer villages did not have their own Minyanin- they could not necessarily gather ten men. Hence, on Mondays and Thursdays, these villagers would enter a large city to Daven with a Minyan, and hear the reading of the Torah.

Therefore, when the 11th, 12th, and 13th fall on a Yom HaKenissah, the Megillah is recited for these outer villagers on these days, and they are not inconvenienced to return to the larger cities on the 14th to hear the Megillah. Of course, if the 14th falls on a Monday or Thursday- when the outer villagers will be in the large cities in any event- the Megillah is not recited any earlier for them.

Continuing with the Chaishek Shlomo, we find that two of these five references of Purim in Esther are written in full form- with the Hebrew letter 'Vov' included. Three of the five references are written in partial form, without the letter 'Vov.' The two full references of Purim signify that there are really only two official days of Purim- the 14th (for the un-walled Jews) and the 15th (for walled Jews- Shushan Purim). The three partial references of Purim signify the 11th, 12th, and 13th- where only the recitation of the Megillah and Matanos Lo'Evyonim (gifts to the poor) take place- without any actual Simcha (joy)- which is only

reserved for the 14th and 15th, depending on location.

From a more elementary perspective, the name of the Holiday- Purim- imparts other fascinating information. In the Megillah we find, 'Therefore, did they call these days Purim after the name of Pur.....' (Esther 9:26) At first glance, this Pur (lottery) seemingly refers to the lots thrown by Haman HaRasha, to determine the best day for the destruction of the Jews in the Persian Empire. Now, this is very odd indeed, because Yomim Tovim are generally named after their most positive aspects, and after the redemption of Jews in those times. They are not named for the endeavors of our enemies to destroy us.

As an example, the other Rabbinical Yom Tov of Chanukah is not named for the enemy Antiochus, or for those Jews who Hellenized themselves at the time. Rather, its name refers to the dedication of the 2nd Bais HaMikdash from the contamination of the Greeks- a name of victory and redemption. Pesach is named for the fact that the houses of the Bnai Yisroel were 'passed over' on the night of Makkas Bechoros (slaying of the first born of Egypt). The Yom Tov is not named after the bondage of Bnai Yisroel to Mitzrayim (Egypt). Why then, is Purim named after the evil lottery of Haman HaRasha? Could not a more positive name be utilized- something that would signify Mordechai and Esther- the source of the entire salvation from this very lottery?

The Midrash Yosiphun teaches however, that the singular form- 'Pur' (one lot of the lottery) appears three times in Megillas Esther. ".....They cast the Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman....." (Esther 3:7) ".....And had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them....." (Esther 9:24) "Therefore, did they call these days Purim after the name of the Pur....." (Esther 9:26)

In the first two instances of Pur, the Megillah writes, 'that is the lot'- a reference to the endeavors of Haman HaRasha. However, in the last instance of Pur, there is no mention of any lottery against the Jews- and no definition of what the word Pur means. And, in this case the word Pur does not mean or refer to any such lottery, as it does in the Persian language (Ibn Ezra). Rather, the word Pur can be translated into the Hebrew for 'making void'- as the Torah refers to someone voiding a Neder (an oath). When a husband hears his wife making a Neder that he does not wish her to keep, the Torah states, ".....Then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that she uttered with her lips, with which she bound her soul, void....." (Bamidbar 30:9) Hafarah- the voiding of Nederim- is of the same root in Hebrew as Pur.

And so, continues the Midrash Yosiphun, while Haman HaRasha cast his own Pur to destroy the Jews of Persia, HaKadosh Baruch Hu enabled His own Pur- His voiding the intentions of Haman- into play. That is why the Yom Tov is named Purim- not for the destructive lottery of Haman, but rather for the voiding of Haman's harmful intentions. And here, as in other Yomim Tovim, the day is named for its positive aspects- for its redemption of Persian Jewry.

In the third chapter of Esther, Haman, in an attempt to vilify the Jews, says to Achashveirosh, "There is a certain nation (the Jews) scattered and strewn amidst the other nations throughout your kingdom, their religion is different from all the people, and they do not abide by the king's laws....." (Esther 3:8) The Midrash Rabbah notes that the Hebrew word in this Passuk for 'there is'- is 'Yeshno'- a derivative of Shainah- or sleep. According to the Rabbah, what Haman actually related to the king was, "He, of Whom it is said, '.....HaShem is one' (Devarim 6:4), is actually asleep to His people." However, when HaKadosh Baruch Hu heard this, He stated, "There is no sleep for Me, as is stated, 'He does neither slumber nor sleep, the guardian of Yisroel' (Tehillim 121:4)- and you say that sleep does affect Me! As you live, I will awake (from the semblance) of sleep against you, and destroy you from the world!" And so it is written, "Then HaShem awaked as one asleep.....and struck His enemies backwards." (Tehillim 78:65- 66)

And that is one of the essential lessons of Purim- that the vigil of HaShem in protecting His nation is continuous- without interruption. May we constantly merit this protective vigil, and may we see the Geulah Shelaimah speedily in our days.

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**Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:**

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

**In My Opinion :: Rabbi Berel Wein  
*Zachor / Purim***

The current spate of anti-Semitic media cartoons, op-eds and boycott movements serve to remind us that Amalek is alive and thriving as usual. There was a short period of time a few decades ago when many Jews were lulled into thinking that all of this baseless hatred and nastiness was a thing of the past. Even the most naive among us today realize that this is unfortunately not the case. Therefore, remembering Amalek is a relatively easy commandment to fulfill today - one need only read the newspaper or listen to the radio or TV or view the internet to meet Amalek face to face, live and in person.

How to counteract and deal with Amalek has been a continuing and never ending problem throughout Jewish history. Apparently, no satisfactory and permanent solution to the problem has ever been found. Perhaps that in itself is the basic lesson of the commandment of remembering Amalek. We have to remember that the problem is constant and continuing and that it has remained insoluble for millennia. We should not be surprised or even overly discouraged by its sinister presence in our lives and world today. We must do everything possible to combat it but we should always remember that it is not given to pat solutions or wishful thinking. It is apparently part of the Jewish condition - our very terms of existence.

The story of Purim is the story of Amalek contained, but not completely defeated and destroyed. Haman is hydra-headed and has always had disciples and followers. Haman and his sons were thwarted and hanged but that did not prove to be much of a deterrent to all of the Hamans that have followed throughout history.

In terms of the destruction of Jews, Hitler was far more successful than was Haman having killed six million Jews in five years of hate and terror. Yet Hitler destroyed Germany completely as well, with far more Germans than Jews being killed in that terrible and tragic war.

So again, one would think that the lesson of Amalek would have been learned by now. But the reality of Amalek is that it defies logic, self-interest and history and its lessons. Purim is our only hope in containing Amalek. Purim is always hidden, unpredictable, surprising and unexpected. Yet it is also a constant in Jewish life and history.

The survival of the Jewish people remains as the miracle of all history and that miracle is omnipresent in our current world. The existence and accomplishments of the State of Israel is an offshoot of this constant and continuing miracle. Israel and its achievements give us a sense of Purim every day of the year. The miracle may not be superficially visible but it is certainly present and alive.

The Talmud's statement about the inability to distinguish between Haman and Mordechai is indicative of the mystery of Purim. Purim is not always what it appears to be at first glance. It is the hidden part of Purim that fascinates and confuses us. Our salvation is always unexpected and many times defies any form of human wisdom and expertise.

Purim tells us never to despair or lose hope regarding our current difficulties and uncertain future. It is easy to fall into a funk when viewing all of the difficulties that surround us. Purim preaches to us that such a dark attitude is inconsistent with Jewish faith and Torah values.

That is why the rabbis stated that only Purim is the only eternal holiday on the Jewish calendar.

We will always need Purim and its message to continue to function and achieve. For without Purim present and operative, we fall into fearing that Amalek may yet, God forbid, triumph. So let us rejoice in the knowledge that Purim is here with us and all will yet be well for the nation and people of Mordechai and Esther.

Shabat shalom  
Purim samech

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

The Torah ordains that the olive oil used to light the eternal menorah - candelabra - must be of the purest and best available. There is obvious logic to this requirement. Impure oil will cause the flames to stutter and flicker. Impure oil also may exude an unpleasant odor and make the task of the daily cleaning of the oil lamps difficult and inefficient. Yet I feel that the basic underlying reason for this requirement of purity of the oil lies in the value that the Torah advances in the performance of all positive things in life - the necessity to do things correctly, enthusiastically and with exactitude.

In 'halachic' parlance this is called 'kavanah' - the intent to perform the commandment and deed properly and in the best possible way. That is the story of the pure container of oil that is the core of the miraculous story of Chanuka. The Hasmonians could have used regular, even impure oil and still not have violated any strong 'halachic' stricture. Yet the idea of 'kavanah', of doing the matter in the best way possible, introduces an element of special dedication and holiness into what otherwise would be an event of rote and habit. This is what drives the spirit of holiness and eternity that accompanies the performance of 'mitzvot.' So the requirement of the Torah for the purest possible oil to fuel the holy and eternal menorah - candelabra - is readily understandable when the concept of 'kavanah' is factored into the value system of the Torah.

The light of the menorah has never been dimmed over the long history of the Jewish people. Though the menorah itself has long ago disappeared from the view of the Jewish public - it was no longer present even in Second Temple times - the idea of its light and influence has continued to be present in Jewish life. The flame is not a tangible item - it is, in reality, an item of spirit more than of substance.

It provides light and warmth and psychological support in very difficult times and circumstances. Yet, its influence and support is somehow directly connected to the investment into actually kindling it. That is the import of the words of the rabbis in Avot that according to the effort invested so is the accomplishment and reward.

All things spiritual are dependent upon the effort invested in creating that sense of spirit - the purer the oil, the brighter and firmer the flame. This simple yet profound message forms the heart of this week's 'parsha.' It also forms the heart of all values and commandments that the Torah ordains for us.

The 'parsha' of 'Tetzave' speaks to all of us in a direct and personal fashion. It encompasses all of the goals of Judaism and is, in itself the light of spirituality that lights our souls and lives.

Shabat shalom

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**From Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>  
To weekly@ohr.edu  
Subject Torah Weekly**

**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Tetzaveh  
For the week ending 23 February 2013 / 12 Adar I 5773  
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com**

## Insights Star Billing

### ***"And now, you shall command the Children of Israel..." (27:20)***

It always amazes me how many people it takes to make a movie – all those names that roll down in the titles at the end.

There's the "third assistant grip". "Poodle manicure services by..." "Beers chilled by..." A vast and determined army has come together to create two and a half hours of armchair illusion.

And that's only the end titles. The opening titles are usually a showbiz lawyer's nightmare (or dream, really, when he bills his client).

Who goes first, the Director or the Star? Is it "Sheldon Shmendrick presents Rock Jaw" or should it be "Starring Rock Jaw in A Sheldon Shmendrick production"? What about the pecking order of the lesser actors? Is it "with Gilly Arayos" or should it be "featuring Gilly Arayos as Brenda." And then of course there are the TV trailers and the print ads. Have you ever seen so many names in so many typefaces in so many different point sizes grace a piece of printed material as the average Hollywood blockbuster poster?

If Hollywood is about anything, it's about prestige. Or as it's called in Hebrew — Kavod. Honor-seeking in Judaism is one of the things that "removes a person from this world". It puts him into a non-real world where he becomes a legend in his own lunchtime. Kavod is something that a Jew runs a million miles from.

There's a fascinating section of the Talmud which describes a conversation between the Almighty and Yerovam ben Navat. Yerovam was a Jewish King, a great and brilliant scholar, who was ultimately responsible for turning the Jewish People to idol worship. It was he who caused the division of the twelve tribes into the Kingdoms of Yisrael (the 'ten tribes') and Yehuda (the other two tribes). Those ten lost tribes, the vast majority of the Jewish People, are now vanished, invisible and lost to the Jewish People. That was Yerovam.

What can cause someone who was so great to fall so far? The Talmud (Sanhedrin 102a) gives us a telling insight into Yerovam's character:

Rabbi Abba said, "the Holy One, Blessed is He, grabbed Yerovam by his garment and said to him 'Return to your former self and I and you and Ben Yishai (King David) will walk in Gan Eden'. He (Yerovam) said, 'Who's going to be at the head?' 'Ben Yishai will be at the head.' 'If so, I don't want'."

Why did Yerovam ask the Almighty who would be first? He already told him. G-d said "I and you and Ben Yishai will walk in Gan Eden." He already told him that he would be first. If G-d put Yerovam ahead of King David, why then did Yerovam ask who would be at the head?

Yerovam wanted a billboard fifteen stories high with his name in lights. He wanted G-d to spell it out.

This was the granddaddy of disputes over billing. It wasn't enough that he would go first. Yerovam wanted his billing locked into the contract.

If Kavod — seeking honor — is something so despicable and lowly, its reverse is the greatest treasure. Humility is the greatest prize that man can aspire to. The praise of the greatest Jew who ever lived was that he was the humblest of men. That man was Moshe, our teacher.

From his birth until Sefer Devarim (Deuteronomy), Moshe's name appears in every Torah portion except one — this week's parsha. The Vilna Gaon explains that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar. This date usually falls in the week of Parshat Tetzave. So just as Moshe was removed from this world during the date of this week, so too his name was 'removed' from the parsha of this week.

The words of the tzaddik can have a power beyond their immediate context. When G-d wanted to destroy the Jewish People after their infidelity with the golden calf (next week's parsha), Moshe pleaded with G-d, saying "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 this week's parsha.

The question remains however, why this week's parsha? Moshe's name could have been omitted from any of the other parshiot in the Torah. The answer is the G-d 'delayed' omitting Moshe from the Torah as long as He could, as it were. For next week's parsha deals with the golden calf and Moshe will again make the statement "Erase me from your Book that you have written." So this parsha was G-d's last chance, so to speak, to leave out Moshe's 'billing' from the Torah.

Sources: Ba'al HaTurim, Nachal Kadmonim, Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz

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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 command Bnei Yisrael and they shall take pure olive oil, crushed, for illumination, to light the eternal light. (27:20)***

Yirmiyahu HaNavi says: Yaviv raanan yifei pri toar kara Hashem sheimeich. "A flourishing olive tree, a beautiful and shapely fruit Hashem has called Your Name" (Yirmiyahu 11:16). What did Yirmiyahu see that catalyzed his comparison of our ancestors to an olive tree? All types of liquids mix with one another, but oil stands by itself. So, too, Klal Yisrael does not mix with the non-Jews. As it says, V'lo sischatein - "You shall not be married to them." The Sfas Emes explains that oil's nature prevents it from mixing with water. Hashem has made the unique nature of the Jewish People similar to that of oil. Even when we sully ourselves with sin, we remain distinct from our non-Jewish neighbors. This is supported by the prohibition against intermarriage. The Torah does not just prohibit the act of intermarriage. The prohibition is written in the reflexive form, implying that one cannot bring himself into a union created by the marriage of a Jew and non-Jew. It is not simply forbidden; it cannot work. One will always remain separate. When oil is mixed with water, it will eventually rise to the top. So, too, the Jewish People cannot intermingling with the nations. Pure oil - even when crushed and mixed with its dregs - retains its separate nature.

To put the above into simple perspective, the following will have to suffice. The institution of marriage is a secular term used to describe what is supposed to be a lasting relationship between a man and a woman, in much the same way that the secular world terms it, "tying the knot." Then there is the Torah perspective of Kiddushin, a holy relationship, a bond based upon kedushah, a consecration.

Jewish marriage is more than a relationship - it is a spiritual union between man, woman and G-d. If the couple brings Hashem into the equation, it becomes a sanctified relationship. The marriage functions not only on a physical level, but it also includes a spiritual component.

In his highly acclaimed manual for marriage, "The River, the Kettle and the Bird," the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ner Israel, Horav Aharon Feldman, Shlita, teaches us the three stages of marriage. The initial stage is much like a river which connects two cities, serving as a channel by which merchandise can be shipped from one city to another. It is the bridge that connects the two communities. A couple/ man and woman, begin their marriage with good relations between one another. They remain two separate entities with a bridge/river that allows them to fulfill one another's needs. In the secular world, this bridge is called love. Perhaps it is love of oneself, because, in truth, this is no more than a business relationship. The two people do not even have a common goal, similar to a business relationship in which each member is out to take care of himself.

The second stage of marriage is like a kettle of water resting on the stove. The fire on the stove and the water in the kettle work together to create boiling water or steam. Each one needs the other. The fire on the stove without the water is static, much like the water in the kettle without the fire. Water and fire, however, cannot coexist. Thus, the kettle separates them, allowing them to coexist and function in such a manner in which they can achieve the mutual goal of creating boiling water. Likewise, a couple, over time, work together towards achieving a mutual goal. They each have a distinct task; they remain individuals; their goal, however, is mutual and can be realized only when they work together. The kettle has "one over" the river in that the two principals work toward a common goal.

The third stage of marriage - and perhaps the rarest - is likened to a bird. The bird has two ways of propelling itself forward: its legs and its wings. There is a time and place for each to function. At times, the bird needs to walk; then it uses its legs. Other circumstances require the use of its wings. The legs and wings have disparate functions and different goals, but they are both organs of the same body. The wings and legs are always together as part of the same body. Indeed, a bird that is missing either one of these vital organs is blemished. Likewise, in the marriage relationship, husband and wife have varied functions and individual goals, but they are united through matrimony and love as one body. Perfect unity is the goal of a Jewish marriage. This can only be achieved when the spiritual component of marriage is realized.

In his book, "Perfect Strangers," Rabbi Avraham Jacobovitz observes that such marriages are rare. I am not sure that they are rare, but they are certainly unique and clearly ideal. While there are couples who live out their lives in complete harmony - no fights - peace and tranquility reign in their home, they are still not yet wed in the spiritual sense. They are compatible with one another, like the river or the kettle that serve as conduits between two separate communities/entities. Thus, they provide emotional and physical support for one another. Nonetheless, they are not one unit. Their souls are not united. Unless the "Hashem component" is entered into the relationship, the souls will never unite; the marriage will never achieve kedushah.

This paper is not a manual for marriage, but rather, it is an exploration of why the matrimonial relationship of a Jew and gentile can never achieve the level of unity required in a Torah-sanctioned marriage. When the foundations of the religions are as different as night and day, when one is compared to oil and the other to water, it just becomes quite impossible to create a symbiotic fusion between the two components.

The Menorah is lit from the purest and finest oil, which is derived from the first drops after the olive has been broken open. A second oil is derived after the olive has been crushed and ground. While this second oil is not used for the Menorah, it is used for the Menachos, Meal-offering. The Midrash comments, "Just like the olive... that is harvested and pounded, and then ground and afterwards surrounded with ropes and pressed by rocks, and, after all of this, it gives its oil, so, too, the Jewish People. The gentiles come and pound and drive them from place to place, imprison and place them in chains, surround them with soldiers and afterward, they (the Jews) repent, and Hashem answers them." A fascinating Medrash which is explained by the Sfas Emes. The two types of oil are a reference to the Jewish People during two periods in their nascency. The "first drops" - the extra-pure oil, free of dregs and impurities, came when, at Har Sinai, Klal Yisrael declared, Naase v'Nishmah, "We will hear and we will listen." It was then that they revealed their total commitment to Hashem, their desire to carry out His will. The secondary oil, with its impurities and dregs, symbolizes the Jews, but at a later time - a few weeks later when they descended to the depths of turpitude following the sin of the Golden Calf. Their pure beginning was tainted by sin, just as their pure hearts were blemished by the introduction of the yetzer hora into their lives. Yet, Yirmiyahu HaNavi called the nation a thriving olive tree - even at their time of sin, at their point of degradation. To find favor in Hashem's eyes, explains the Sfas Emes, we must squeeze out the oil from dregs. This can only be executed through teshuvah, the process of repentance and return.

The secondary oil was not used in the Sanctuary for the Menorah. It lacked sufficient purity. Outside, however, in the Temple Courtyard, it was used as part of the Menachos. The Flour-offering was unique in that it was the Korban offered by the ani, Jew stricken by poverty. An animal or fowl was beyond his meager budget. A flour-offering mixed with the specific quota of oil would suffice. This offering symbolizes a Jew who has lost his way, who has fallen from his initial lofty spiritual perch. Nonetheless, through our connection with the pure oil inherent within the dregs, we retain a ceaseless capacity to raise an eternal light l'haalos ner tamid - always. Even during those times that we are lowly, the Jew still has within him a drop of pure oil.

***They shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination. (27:20)***

There were two forms of olive oil. First was the oil which was used for the Menorah. This was pure without sediments, derived from the first pressing. The olives were picked from the top of the tree, where they received the most sunshine. They were then pressed with a mortar - rather than ground in a mill. The second oil, which was the product of grinding and included within it tiny pieces of sediment, was appropriate only for the Menachos, Meal-offerings. Kassis la'ma'or, pressed for illumination; v'lo kassis la'Menachos, not pressed for the Menachos, say Chazal. The oil used for the Menachos did not require the quality inherent in oil processed through kassis, pressing with a mortar.

In the Talmud Megillah 6b, Chazal make a fascinating statement concerning limud haTorah, Torah study. If one states, Lo yagati u'matzasi, "(Despite the fact that) I did not toil in learning, yet I achieved success", Al taamin, "Do not believe him." The reason for this, explains the K'sav Sofer, is that Torah can only be acquired through exertion. If one toils in pursuit of Torah knowledge, he will succeed. Without toil, there is no success. The K'sav Sofer applies Chazal's exposition regarding the oil, kassis la'ma'or, v'lo kassis l'Menachos, in order to explain the distinction between Torah study and other academic disciplines.

Kassis la'ma'or; one must press himself and toil in order to achieve the light of Torah. This illumination does not come easy. One must expend effort. V'lo kassis la'Menachos; for a livelihood (minchah is a meal-offering - meal symbolizes parnassah, livelihood), he does not have to exert himself. Whatever hishtadlus, endeavoring, he applies will be sufficient. The rest is derived from Hashem's blessing. One can work minimally, yet amass great wealth. Others may work day and night and barely eke out a living. His toil is not the key to success.

***And make holy garments for your brother, Aharon, for honor and distinction. (28:2)***

Seeing the Kohanim resplendent in their Bigdei Kehunah, Priestly vestments, must have been a glorious sight. These garments were similar to those worn by monarchs. Indeed, in the Yom Kippur Musaf, a prayer describes the appearance of the Kohen Gadol. Emes mah nehedar hayah Kohen Gadol, "True! How majestic was the Kohen Gadol." I have always wondered how it was that this wondrous sight did not impact all of Klal Yisrael. Some Jews, albeit a minority, did not buy into the program. After seeing such majesty and splendor, one should be enthusiastically filled with exceptional pride. Yet, we see that this was not always the case. Why? Perhaps it is because, in order to be impressed, in order to be impacted, one must take note; one must see. One who does not perceive the greatness of the image before him is either sightless or refuses to look. One who refuses to look, to delve into the spectacle before him, will not be moved by its wonder. With the power of cognitive perception one is able to envision the beauty of an experience even though all that stands before his eyes are simple, mundane allusions to the greater

experience. Please bear with me as I explain with a captivating story, which was related by my Rav, Rabbi Aharon Dovid Lebovics, in his Shabbos morning drashah.

The story was actually relayed on a tape by Rabbi Fishel Schachter. Rabbi Schachter related his family's experience with a baalas teshuvah, a young woman who had embraced Torah observance. Sadly, as the yetzer hora, evil inclination, would have it, as soon as she became frum, observant, everything started going downhill. She sustained a serious brain injury in an accident. Her health began to deteriorate. To add insult to injury, her mother vehemently opposed her decision to adopt the Orthodox way of life. Rather than giving her support in her time of need, her mother would rub it in that all of this had happened because she had become observant. This is neither the forum nor the venue for critiquing the mother's parenting skills, but let it suffice to say that the young woman was in the hospital alone and scared.

Somehow, the mother contacted Rabbi Schachter and the Rav and his family became regular visitors in the hospital, encouraging the girl and empathizing with her ordeal. Then the dread news came: she required life-sustaining surgery, which might have a serious effect on her vision. The surgery to save her life could drastically impact her optic nerve. Confronting sightlessness is a tall order for anyone, especially a young baalas teshuvah who had already been through so much. One would have expected a number of horrible reactions, but what Rabbi Schachter heard from this girl was startling.

Rabbi Schachter visited her that day, and she told him about her crisis. She was frightened about the surgery and, for lack of something to say, he injudiciously asked her, "Why?" Her reply is what this story is all about: "Being cooped up in the hospital, sedated with pain killers, unable to move about freely, not knowing what tomorrow will bring, I have one thing to which I look forward every week. The Bikur Cholim girls visit every Friday and set up a little table with grape juice and challah. They provide me with an electric candelabra, so that I may experience Shabbos. This is my only moment of joy and reflection. If I lose my eyesight - how will I see Shabbos?"

Imagine, this young baalas teshuvah saw Shabbos! When the candelabra was lit and her little hospital table was bedecked with challah and grape juice, her perception of the holy day was beyond - indeed, way beyond - what the average frum Jew experiences. Her ability to see transcended the physical. An addendum to the story occurs six months later when, upon eating her Shabbos meal at Rabbi Schachter's house, she spilled horseradish on her dress. She saw the stain!

***And make holy garments for your brother Aharon, for honor and distinction... They shall cover Aharon and his sons when they enter into the Ohel Moed... to serve in the Sanctuary...It shall be a statute forever for him and for his descendants after him. (28:2,43)***

The idea of clothing making the man is a Madison Avenue stratagem. In truth, as we see from the Bigdei Kehunah, Priestly vestments, clothing is actually a reflection of the man. They do not make a person, but they do convey a message and allow us a window into the wearer's personality and character. The Bigdei Kehunah were an essential part of the character of the Kehunah, Priesthood. Their significance is evident from the instructions concerning their construction. The validity of the sacrificial service is dependent upon the priestly garments. Indeed, they are a chukas olam, statute forever, such that, without these garments, the Kohen is viewed as a zar, stranger, and may not serve in the Sanctuary. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, observes that the Priestly garments must be supplied and owned by the nation. This explains why only a Kohen dressed in these garments may be called a Kohen altogether. Only in this attire does he come forward to represent the nation as its noble servant. Only in this manner does the ritual he performs become that service which the nation was commanded to render to the Sanctuary. Only thus can the ideas - both esoteric and ritualistic - attain the character of a duty commanded by Hashem. Only then does the service which begins as an act of obedience transform into devotion symbolizing the nation's commitment to Torah.

Rav Hirsch explains that, without the Priestly vestments, the Kohen is merely an ordinary individual, with his ritual taking on the character of personal predilection - not the representative of the nation. Thus, he produces the very antithesis of the attitude which the Sanctuary is intended to foster. Rav Hirsch goes as far as to posit that without his Priestly garments, the individual personality of the officiating Kohen stands lacking, with all the human failings and shortcomings that can afflict even the finest and best among us. Without his garb, the Kohen might well present a defective version of the ideal which the sacrifices should symbolize.

When the Kohen stands before Hashem, radiant in his Priestly attire, he presents himself not in terms of the personality he might be, but rather, as the character he should have in accordance with the requirements as dictated by the Torah. By the very act of donning the garments for the express purpose of carrying out the service in the Sanctuary, he makes both himself and those whom he represents aware that, as a person, he is still inadequate regarding the demands symbolized by the Sanctuary.

Rav Hirsch posits that clothing per se is a reminder of man's moral calling. Indeed, it is the most conspicuous feature that characterizes a creature as a human being. Clothing was first given to Man when Hashem sent His children out of Gan Eden into the world, in which toil and renunciation were a way of life. The external mundane world, with its physicality and attendant moral dangers, presents constant obstacles which might lead man astray, thus causing him to descend to the level of beast. Clothing is his reminder.

In the Talmud Sanhedrin 94a, Chazal relate that Rabbi Yochanan Kari lei I'mani mechubadosai, the Tanna Rabbi Yochanan referred to his clothes as his honor guards. Indeed, the appropriate garments imbue a person with dignity and respectability, often signifying his station in life. Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita, adds that the manner in which a person dresses reveals the inner truth about himself. One who feels that he is an eved Hashem, a servant of the Almighty, dresses the part - with a clean, pressed shirt, tucked in, thereby presenting himself in a respectable manner which brings honor to the Torah world which he represents. In contrast, is the person who wants to feel free and unrestrained - unrestrained by convention and tradition. He may choose a hairstyle that fits in best in a bar or casino, and wear clothing that is provocative, which sends a foolish message or makes a negative statement. Some go so far as to mutilate their bodies. These practices are designed to shock spectators and project an image of living beyond normal human convention. These styles reflect the baseness of the human condition, the sad state of affairs and insecurity that the wearer presents about him/herself. Their lack of self-respect is evident. The only question is what prompted this tragic response.

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that every style of garment conveys a message. When a person wears clothing that identifies him as a ben Torah, he is heralding to those with whom he comes in contact that he belongs to a unique club. He is a member of a group of people who are dedicated to spiritual growth, whose relationship vis-a-vis the physical world in which they live coincides with the will of Hashem. Wearing clothes that are proper and modest in nature manifests respect for oneself and respect for others.

There are people who, by the clothing they wear, convey a false message. They present themselves as G-d-fearing, righteous individuals when, in fact, this could not be further from the truth. Their clothing and public demeanor are designed to fool the world, such as when an unsavory and immoral character dresses up like a holy person and portrays himself as such, while concealed behind closed doors he commits the most vicious acts of moral degradation. Indeed, there are even those who make use of their rabbinic garb to pass as distinguished scholars, thereby granting themselves license to commit acts of indiscretion, and to slander and malign those who have the nerve not to respect their "public" image.

Yes, clothes tell us something about a person. I have, over the years, come across a number of "wardrobe" stories, many of which I have used. I have two new such stories which convey a penetrating message. In "The Life and Times of Reb Rephoel Soloveitchik," the reader garners a glimpse into the lifestyle of the Brisker Rav, zl, his devotion to Torah, Klal Yisrael and family. The Brisker derech, way, in ehrlichkeit, integrity, is characterized by a lifestyle of pashtus, simplicity. They were mistapek b'muat, subsisted on the bare necessities, avoiding the luxuries and financial pursuits which undermine the struggle to achieve emes, truth. Rav Rephoel remembers that, as small children, he and his siblings were inculcated with instructions from their father regarding what is significant in life and what is not, what to place on the scale of values and what not. Rav Rephoel was wont to say, "I lack nothing." His wife and daughter attested: "We never craved luxuries, and we were neither attracted to nor influenced by the latest styles and merchandise in the display cases. Everything in our home was the most basic and simple in nature." Shortly after their marriage, Rav Rephoel and his Rebbetzin moved into their new apartment. It was not large; it was not lavish; it was simple, equipped with the very basics they needed to live. Rav Rephoel asked his father if he should make a Chanukas HaBayis, consecration of a new dwelling. The Brisker Rav replied that for the first meal which they eat in the new apartment, they should invite a poor man to share their meal. This would be their Chanukas HaBayis. We now have an idea of the type of individual Rav Rephoel was and his perspective on life. Rav Rephoel never owned a new suit until he married. Everything that he wore until that point was a hand-me-down from his older brothers. During the War of 1948, he had one suit which he wore both for Shabbos and during the week. When the suit needed cleaning for Pesach, he was informed by the dry cleaner that it could be cleaned easily at home by brushing it down with kerosene. He cleaned his suit with kerosene, but could not bring it indoors because of the odor. He stayed indoors all day, while the suit aired out on the balcony.

Rav Rephoel once received a suit from his brother that was made of strong, good quality cloth. It had become too frayed to wear. Rav Rephoel took it to the tailor who turned the material inside out and cut it down to size. When Rav Rephoel brought the suit home to show his father, the Brisker Rav said, Es iz tsu shain far dir, "It is too nice for you (to wear now). Put it away in the closet." He put it away until he became a choson. He wore this suit to his wedding.

The next story concerns Horav Michael Forschlager, zl, a talmid chacham, Torah scholar of repute, who lived in Baltimore, circa early twentieth century. He was a true Torah genius as attested to by such distinguished Roshei Yeshivah as Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, Horav Yitzchak Yaakov Ruderman, zl, Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, Horav Yisrael Gustman, zl, and the Satmar Rav, zl. His Rebbe, the Avner Nezer offered him semichah, ordination, at the age of eighteen. Rav Forschlager demurred, claiming that he did not want to practice rabbinics. Well before the age of thirty, he was considered to be among the most brilliant Talmudists in Europe. He spent his life engrossed in Torah study, writing brilliant novella. He shunned the limelight. His greatest enjoyment in life was speaking in learning with those who came to visit him. Our story, which was related by Rabbi Yechiel Spero in "Touched by a Story," is about one such incident and the lifelong impression it left on two yeshivah students.

The Rosh Yeshivah of Ner Israel, Horav Yitzchak Yaakov Ruderman, would send older students to Rav Forschlager's home on Erev Shabbos to speak in learning with him. One Friday afternoon, two bochurim, students of the Yeshivah, knocked on the apartment door of Rav Forschlager. When they entered the apartment, they felt they had walked into a different world. The apartment - if one could call it that - was sparsely furnished. Whatever furniture was there was old and chipped, the couch was thread bare, the floor covering was worn and cracked. This was, however, not the most striking aspect of the visit. It was the sweater which Rav Michael wore. The fabric was tattered, discolored and worn out. The mere fact that the sweater did not simply fall apart was incredible. They had never seen anyone wearing such a deteriorated garment.

Apparently, from the appearance of the small apartment, Rav Michael cared about only one thing: Torah. Seforim lined the shelves from floor to ceiling. The dining room table served as a place to eat, but, even more so, as a place to study. It was overflowing with seforim - some opened, others still closed, but about to be opened. Rav Michael made room at the table, so that the students could sit, but, before they began learning, he had to do one more thing. He left the room and, a few moments later, returned sporting another sweater - one that was slightly less torn, less discolored, and perhaps slightly more presentable. Rav Michael noticed the students sort of staring at him, so he took the time to explain his behavior.

"Let me explain why I changed sweaters. I own two sweaters: one for Shabbos and one for the weekday. Prior to your arrival, I was wearing my weekday sweater. After all, I am home alone. When I saw that I would be speaking with two bnei Torah, students of the Yeshivah, it was such a kavod, honor, I felt it important to change into my Shabbos sweater. After all, where would be my kavod haTorah?" This is how a gadol, Torah giant, understands kavod haTorah: to change sweaters in honor of two yeshivah students who came to speak in learning. Nothing but Shabbos "finery" could be sufficient for such distinguished guests.

### **Va'ani Tefillah V'Solicheinu komemius l'artzeinu. And lead us upright to our land.**

In his commentary to Parashas Bechukosai (Vayikra 26:13), Rashi interprets komemius (v'oleich eschem komemius, "and I will lead you upright") as b'komah zekufah, "an upright and erect posture." Clearly, there must be a deeper meaning to this. Perhaps it is true that our moral posture is significant, but, concerning our physical posture, is it necessarily a blessing to be able to stand straight? In his Baruch She'amar, commentary to the siddur, Horav Baruch HaLevi Epstein, zl, explains that one's physical posture can be a reflection of a much deeper issue. It all depends on why one's posture is "failing." He cites Tosfos in the Talmud Kiddushin 36B, who comment that "one who eats from his friend's charitable hand is naturally ashamed to look in his face." When we enjoy the benefits graciously rendered to us from others, we have a slight feeling of embarrassment; - thus, we feel awkward in facing up to them.

We, therefore, ask Hashem to lead us upright into the land. We want to be deserving and our reward warranted. We do not want to be perceived as beggars who have accepted a gift. We want to be worthy to stand erect and upright, proud of our service and commitment to the Almighty. It might be a "tall" order, but the alternative is standing stooped over, announcing that we are undeserving of Hashem's graciousness.

L'zechar nishmas ha'isha ha'chasuva Glicka bas R' Avraham Alter a"n niftara b'shem tov 8 Adar II 5760 - In loving memory of MRS. GILKA SCHEINBAUM BOGEN by her family

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**Orthodox Union / www.ou.org  
Rabbi Weinreb's Parsha Column, Parshat**

**"Clothes Make the Man"**

Whenever I think of people I knew who dressed impeccably, I recall three of my favorite people. One was my maternal grandfather, a businessman who was firmly dedicated to religious observance, but who chose his clothing carefully and was proud of his collection of cufflinks, tie clips, and colorful suspenders.

The other was my predecessor in the pulpit of the synagogue I served in Baltimore. He was known for his elegant demeanor and dress, and I will always treasure the image of him entering the synagogue on the eve of the major Jewish festivals. He wore a gray rabbinic frock, a gray Homburg hat, and a gray tie with a splash of red in it.

I can never forget the 90-year-old woman philanthropist, who single-handedly financed a summer camp for those who were then called "the underprivileged," where I served for several years as head counselor. She visited the camp daily, and walked from table to table making sure that the children she loved were well fed and happy. She always wore a dark blue or purple outfit, appropriate to her advanced age, with a fresh flower pinned to her blouse. The fact that it was an ordinary weekday, and that she was sure to have the dress soiled during her visit to the camp kitchen, did not prevent her from always looking her best.

It has been said that "clothes make the man", and in these politically correct times we must hasten to add, "and clothes make the woman." Our clothing makes a statement about us, and in the case of my grandfather, my predecessor, and the elderly philanthropist, that statement was all about dignity, a sense of self-worth, and, yes, respect for all those with whom they came into contact.

You may wonder, "What does Judaism have to say about clothing? Is there any spiritual significance to what a person wears?"

In this week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10), we discover that Judaism has a lot to say about clothing and that there is indeed great spiritual significance to what a person wears.

It is in this Parsha that we learn about the special garments which the Priests were to wear during their service in the Temple, and the very special garments which were assigned to Aaron, the brother of Moses, and to all subsequent High Priests throughout the history of the holy Temple.

These are the instructions which Moses received from the Almighty:

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

The design, the colors, and the materials for these vestments are described in exquisite detail, and that long description concludes with the verse, "They shall be worn by Aaron and his sons when they enter the Tent of Meeting... It shall be a law for all time for him and for his offspring to come." (Exodus 28:43)

The message here is unambiguous: when one is engaged in the service of the Lord he or she must be dressed in a manner which befits that role, and which projects, if not the image of Majesty, then surely the image of pride and dignity. To the extent that all of us are engaged in the service of the Lord, in one way or another, in much of what we do, we must be mindful of our physical appearance, and we must dress in a manner which is dignified, which reinforces our sense of the important tasks that we are about, and which impresses upon others that we take their opinion of us into consideration, and care about the impression we make upon them.

It is no wonder then that the Talmud (Sabbath 114a) severely condemns individuals in religious public positions who dress sloppily, and who thus project a lack of dignity. The "talmid chacham", the rabbi or yeshiva student, "upon whose clothing a greasy stain is found" is castigated in extreme terms by our sages.

This year, the Sabbath during which we read the Torah portion of Tetzaveh is soon followed by the joyous festival of Purim. Immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbat we read the book of Esther, the Megillah.

Interestingly, we find additional support for the importance of clothing in that very book.

The hero and heroine of the Megillah are of course Mordechai and Esther, and whereas we imagine that Esther, as a Queen, was certainly bedecked with the finest clothing, it is the clothing worn by Mordechai that is highlighted by the Megillah. We learn that Mordechai wore two starkly contrasting sets of clothing.

In the early chapters of the narrative, which describe the dire straits in which the Jews found themselves because of the wicked Haman's genocidal decree, we read:

"When Mordechai learned all that had happened, Mordechai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, until he came in front of the palace gate; for one could not enter the palace gate wearing sackcloth." (Esther 4:1-2)

How significant it is that Mordechai expressed his grief and concern by changing his clothing. If it is true that "clothes make the man", then it is equally true that the clothing we wear gives voice to the emotions we feel and to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Mordechai's clothing gave voice to his people's pain.

Our sages suggest that it is precisely because he empathized so strongly with his brothers and sisters that he was ultimately privileged to don a different sort of clothing altogether. Hence, toward the end of the Megillah, when the evil decree is revoked and a new decree proclaimed, we read:

"Mordechai left the king's presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool. The city of Shushan rang with joyous cries." (Esther 8:15)

When the Jewish people suffer, the very clothing which our leaders wear expresses our suffering. When the Jewish people celebrate their redemption, that redemption is embodied in the garments those leaders choose to wear.

The book of Esther is but one of the five books of the Bible to which the name Megillah applies. The word Megillah means a scroll, and there are five such scrolls within our holy Scriptures. Besides the book of Esther, they are: The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, and Kohelet or Ecclesiastes. In this latter work we find the following "mitzvah":

"Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy... Let your clothes always be freshly washed, and your head never lack ointment..." (Ecclesiastes 9:7-8)

This verse is especially apt as we celebrate the joyous festival of Purim. We feast, eat our bread and drink our wine in gladness. But our clothes, the external manifestation of our human dignity, must always be "freshly washed" – or to translate the Hebrew literally, "always white".

We must never sully our behavior, even in moments of great joy, by celebrating in an excessive and unbecoming manner. We are entitled, in celebration of the victories of the Jews in ancient Persia, to wear "royal robes of blue and white", but we must wear them with the same dignity and humility with which Aaron and his offspring wore their sacred garments.

Yes, clothes make the man and the woman, but it is they who must make their clothes, and their demeanor, appropriate expressions of propriety and modesty. A lesson for Purim, certainly. But a lesson as well for the rest of the year.

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**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Tetzaveh**

***Menorah 7 – Allowing US To Leave The Light On For HIM***

Parshas Tetzaveh begins with the mitzvah of kindling the Menorah. There is a famous Medrash which teaches: "The Almighty states: "It is not that I need their light for illumination. I am the Light of the World. Rather I am giving you an opportunity to provide light for Me just as I

provided light for you." This means that when the Jewish people were in the wilderness for 40 years, there was the Pillar of Cloud which provided light for them throughout their travels. The Medrash compares this to a blind person and a person with full sight who were walking together. The person with vision told the blind person "Grab onto me and I will lead you along the way." When they entered the house, the person with vision asked the blind person to turn on the lights for him.

The goal in both situations is so that the recipient of the favor (Klal Yisrael / the blind person) will not feel that they owe a favor to their benefactor. They were provided the opportunity to "return the favor" so to speak: "I took care of you when you could not see; now you turn on the light for me so I can see."

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, the Mirer Mashgiach in his sefer Daas Torah says that the Almighty is teaching us a very important and a very common lesson: When we do someone a favor and he comes to us later and tells us "You did me a tremendous favor, how can I pay you back?" our natural reaction is to respond "Think nothing of it. Do not worry about it." Offhand, we think we are being very nice by giving such a response. However, a greater act of kindness would be to respond, "I will tell you how you can pay me back. Can you do this and that for me?" This is a great kindness because it removes the sense of indebtedness that will be hanging over the person who received the favor. It is not good to feel beholden to someone. In truth, many people are happy when people feel indebted to them. They like the fact that they "have something on them" and that they can "lord it over on them".

The kindest way to do a favor to someone is to let him pay you back! This is the lesson of lighting the Menorah in the Mishkan, according to the above referenced Medrash.

### ***The Tail of Vashti and the Tale of Truman: G-d's Hand in History***

We all know the story. Achashverosh made a grand party. When he was good and "happy," he commanded his wife Queen Vashti to appear before those assembled to show off her beauty. Vashti refused to come. According to the Talmud [Megilla 12], her refusal to come was not based on any sudden sense of modesty on her part, rather the Angel Gavriel came and put a tail on her.

Often, when the Talmud relates an incident of Aggadic nature such as this, the Gemara is not to be taken literally. The Gemara is teaching a message with this story. We do not need to assume that Vashti literally grew a tail. The Chofetz Chaim suggests that the Gemara means something else.

The Talmud teaches [Sanhedrin 96] that Nevuchadnetzar, King of Babylonia, was not born into royalty. How did he become King? The Gemara relates that Chizkiyahu, King of Judea, became very sick and he was miraculously saved. The Almighty wanted to publicize the fact that the King of Judea was miraculously healed so he made a second miracle – namely, the day that King Chizkiyahu was cured lasted 18 hours! That got people's attention! The whole world realized that it was a miraculous day.

The King of Babylonia at that time was a person named Biladan. Biladan said, I need to send congratulatory remarks to the King of Judea. "He is so righteous that the Almighty changed nature for him, I must send him a letter of congratulations and admiration." He ordered his scribe (who at the time was Nevuchadnetzar) to draft the letter for him. However, that day, for whatever reason, Nevuchadnetzar was not there. So, the other scribes went ahead and drafted a letter without the input of the chief scribe, Nevuchadnetzar.

The letter salutation was as follows: "Peace unto you King Chizkiyahu; peace unto Jerusalem; and peace unto the Mighty G-d." Nevuchadnetzar returned from wherever he was and asked to review a copy of the letter. When he saw the salutation he objected that the honor of the Mighty G-d should have been placed first not third in the letter. However the other scribes told him that the original had already been sent off.

Nevuchadnetzar ran after the messengers to try to stop them so as not to send the letter with such a "blasphemous" salutation. The Talmud says that he ran 4 steps in the direction of the courier. He wanted to stop him

and reverse the salutation by rewriting it according to proper protocol: "Peace to the Almighty G-d; peace to the city of Jerusalem; and peace to King Chizkiyah."

However, the Talmud in Sanhedrin teaches that after he ran those four steps (according to an alternate version in the Yalkut he ran only 3 steps) to stop the letter, Gavriel came and stopped him in his tracks so that he would not be able to run any further. The Talmud comments that had Gavriel not come and limited the merit Nevuchadnetzar was gaining for himself by showing G-d this honor, "there would not have been left a remnant of the enemies of the Jewish people" (a euphemistic way of saying the Jewish people would have been totally wiped out). The Gemara asks, "So what did Nevuchadnetzar get as reward for his walking the 4 steps?" The Gemara answers that he saw himself and 3 generations after him become royalty. The 4 generations were Nevuchadnetzar, Evil Merodach, BalShezzar, and Vashti. Vashti was a great-granddaughter of Nevuchadnetzar.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that there is actually no dispute between the version that says Nevuchadnetzar ran 4 steps and the version that says he ran 3 steps. He actually ran 3 full steps. In the middle of the fourth step Gavriel came and stopped him before he had a chance to complete the fourth step. It was cut off in the middle.

That is why the Gemara testifies that if he would have taken four whole steps the Jewish people would have been wiped out! The Chofetz Chaim interprets: Since he did not take a complete fourth step, the reign of his fourth descendant (Vashti) was terminated prematurely. Had Vashti remained on the throne, Esther would never have been in a position to save the Jewish people and they would have been wiped out in the time of Haman.

The Chofetz Chaim states further that this is what it means that Gavriel (the same Angel who stopped Nevuchadnetzar from taking that fourth step) came and placed a tail upon Vashti. The term "zanav" (tail) alludes to the fact that it was the tail end of the dynasty of Nevuchadnetzar.

The lesson of this story is that this is how the Almighty runs his world. The incident with Gavriel happened in the time of Chizkiyahu King of Judea – many years before the era of Haman and Achashverosh. Because of what took place then, Klal Yisrael was saved many years later in the time of Purim.

Events happen or do not happen for a myriad of reasons, but behind the supposed motivations of people, the Almighty is manipulating history to carry out His Will. Behind the curtains, the Master of the Universe is pulling the strings.

When I was in Mexico City, I heard a true story (which appears in the historical archives of the Knesset) from Rabbi David Ordman. Rav Shlomo Lorenz (a former Knesset member of Agudas Yisrael) once met Harry S. Truman, President of the United States. President Truman told Rabbi Lorenz, "You should know that when I agreed to recognize the State of Israel, it went against the advice of my advisors and it was against every political instinct that I have. But I will tell you why I did it..."

The conventional wisdom is that Harry Truman recognized the State of Israel in 1948 because he had a Jewish partner in the haberdashery business in Independence Missouri many decades earlier who came to him in the White House and asked him for this favor. This is conventional wisdom. Now you will hear the rest of the story from Harry Truman himself."

President Truman told Rabbi Lorenz "I was a little boy growing up in the United States and every little boy growing up in the United States dreams of becoming president. That was my dream. I'll tell you something else. I was a good Christian boy and I learned my Bible. My hero in the Bible was Cyrus (Koresh, who was a descendant of none other than Queen Esther). This Koresh is the one who let the Jewish people go back to their homeland and build their Temple (Bais HaMikdash). I said, if I ever become President of the United States, I want to imitate my hero and if I ever get the opportunity to let the Jewish people go back to their country and rebuild their Temple that is what I am going to do." "And that", he concluded, "Is why I recognized the State of Israel."

This is the same story: The Hand of G-d at work. Just like with Vashti – we do not know what on earth possessed her to disobey her husband and not come as he ordered. Somehow the Almighty "sent an Angel" and made it happen, so that Klal Yisrael should be saved. So too, Harry Truman had this 'mishugaas' – he wanted to emulate Koresh. There is probably not another person in the world whose main Biblical hero was Koresh, but that was the idiosyncrasy of Harry Truman. Because of that, the rest is history.

A Freilechen Purim!

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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## The Weekly Haftorah

By: Reuben Ebrahimoff - The Haftorahman

The Haftorah for Parshat Zachor

*The Haftorah from the book of Shmuel Aleph (Samuel 1), 15:1-34.*

The Killing of Agag, the Amalekite King

The connection of the Haftorah to Parshat Zachor: This week is Shabbat Zachor, remembrance. On the Shabbat before Purim we read from the Torah about the commandment to destroy the memory of the Nation of Amalek. Why? Because when the Israelites miraculously left Egypt, all the nations of the world revered and feared them. All, except the Amalekites, who attacked, because of their jealousy of Hashem's chosen people. As the saying goes, "the only thing worse than losing, is winning." Envy breeds the poisonous attitude, "If I can't be on top, then I'll just take you down". This national "mentality" was despised so much by Hashem that he commanded the Israelites to kill all the Amalekites. With the upcoming holiday of Purim, we are reminded to destroy the memory of Amalek, as Haman descended from Amalek.

### *The storyline of this week's Haftorah:*

Shmuel, the last of the Shoftim, Judges of Israel, appoints Shaul the 1st king of Israel. The nation of Israel was given three commandments to fulfill upon entering the land of Israel: 1) Appoint for yourselves a king. 2) Kill all the Amalekites. 3) Build a Holy Temple for Hashem.

The Prophet Samuel commands King Saul to wipe out the Nation of Amalek, and to destroy all of its men, women, children & even all of its animals. Why the animals? Because the Amalekites knew sorcery and were able to "morph" themselves into animals to avoid danger. Just before Saul is about to attack the Amalekites, he warns the Kainim to run for their lives. The Kainim were a tribe of semi-nomadic metalworkers. Moses' father-in-law Yitro was a Kenite. Yael, (who killed Sisera by driving a spike through his head) was a Kenite. While killing off most of the Amalekites, Shaul has his doubts, and decides not to do the job completely. The Haftorah reminds us of the mitzvah to decimate Amalek. Shaul neglects to fully execute many of the animals. And worse, he didn't kill the King of the Amalekites, Agag! This turns out to be Shaul's big blunder. That night, Hashem appears to Samuel in a "vision" at night and informs him to dethrone Saul. Afterwards Samuel couldn't sleep. The next morning Shmuel asks Shaul why he didn't finish the job completely. Shaul tries to "blame shift" it on his soldiers, but Shmuel sets him straight and says that as king he was responsible to make sure the job was completed. As Shmuel turns to walk away, Shaul tears the corner of the robe of Shmuel so as not to let him go. It was symbolic of the Kingship being ripped away from Shaul. The Haftorah ends when Shmuel kills Agag, the king of Amalek himself.

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by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

## Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

### *Purim Issues*

Question: Are women obligated to go to shul to hear the Torah reading of Parashas Zachor?

Discussion: There is a mitzvah min ha-Torah to read Parashas Zachor from a Sefer Torah once a year. Although the Rabbis have instituted that Zachor be read in public on the Shabbos before Purim, the mitzvah can technically be fulfilled by performing it at any time during the year. Several poskim, therefore, consider the reading of Parashas Zachor to be a mitzvah which is not time-bound, thus making it obligatory upon women.<sup>1</sup> Other poskim disagree, however, and consider the reading of Zachor a time-bound mitzvah from which women are exempt.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, there is an opinion that holds that women are exempt from Zachor for a different reason. Making mention of the evil perpetrated on us by Amalek is a mitzvah that is limited to those who can and will fight against Amalek. Since women do not bear arms and go out to war, they are exempt from the mitzvah of mentioning the treachery of Amalek.<sup>3</sup>

There are conflicting views among the poskim as to the practical halachah. Some rule that women are obligated to hear Parashas Zachor in shul<sup>4</sup> while other poskim note that it is commonly accepted that women do not go to shul to hear Parashas Zachor.<sup>5</sup> Since there is no clear-cut ruling,<sup>6</sup> it is commendable for women to make the effort to go to shul to hear the public reading of Zachor.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in many congregations it is the accepted practice for women to do so.

It is questionable if a Sefer Torah may be taken out of the Aron ha-Kodesh specifically to read Zachor for women. While the custom is some communities is to permit this practice,<sup>8</sup> other poskim do not permit taking out a Sefer Torah for women only.<sup>9</sup>

Men or women who are unable to go to shul should read Parashas Zachor aloud for themselves from a Chumash since, according to some poskim, one can fulfill the mitzvah in this fashion.<sup>10</sup>

Question: Is a son required to listen to his father's strict orders not to become inebriated on Purim?

Discussion: Generally, a child is not allowed to listen to a parent's command if the parent tells him to do something which is in any way contrary to the halachah. Since the halachah obligates one to drink on Purim until he can no longer distinguish between baruch Mordechai and arur Haman,<sup>11</sup> it would seem that a son should disregard his parent's request not to get drunk on Purim.

Harav S. Z. Auerbach,<sup>12</sup> however, ruled otherwise. He explained that the halachah does not require one to become inebriated to the degree of ad delo yada. Rather, as the Rambam and Rama<sup>13</sup> hold, one can drink just a bit of wine (a little more than his customary daily amount), and then go to sleep. This is enough wine to fulfill the mitzvah, since in his sleep one is certainly not able to distinguish between "blessed be Mordechai" and "cursed be Haman." Since the son can fulfill the mitzvah in that manner, he has no right to ignore an explicit command from his father prohibiting him to get drunk.

Question: Who should recite the berachos when a man, who has already read or heard the Megillah in shul, reads the Megillah for a group of women?

Discussion: The preferred method depends on several factors:

\* If there are fewer than ten women present, then each woman should recite the berachos herself.<sup>14</sup>

\* If there are ten or more women, there are two options: Either one woman recites the berachos and exempts the rest of the group,<sup>15</sup> or each woman recites her own berachos.<sup>16</sup> Either way is l'chatchilah.<sup>17</sup>

\* If the women do not know how to recite the berachos, then the man reading the Megillah recites the berachos for them.<sup>18</sup>

Question: If there is no man available to read the Megillah for a woman who was unable to go to shul, may another woman read the Megillah for her?

Discussion: A woman may read the Megillah for another woman but only if she herself has not yet fulfilled her obligation of hearing the Megillah. If she has already fulfilled her own obligation, she may not read it again in order to exempt another woman.<sup>19</sup>

Question: Do mishloach manos need to be delivered via a messenger or may the sender deliver it directly to the recipient?

Discussion: The poskim are divided on this issue. There are three opinions:

\* Shulchan Aruch and most poskim<sup>20</sup> do not state a preference. The basic halachah follows this view.<sup>21</sup>

\* Some poskim<sup>22</sup> hold that the word "mishloach" suggests that the manos must be "sent" via a messenger.<sup>23</sup> The messenger may be a minor or a non-Jew.<sup>24</sup>

\* A minority opinion holds that mishloach manos should l'chatchilah be delivered directly and not via a messenger.<sup>25</sup>

In order to satisfy both opinions, is it appropriate to send mishloach manos both ways — once via a messenger and once directly.<sup>26</sup>

Question: What is the proper amount and type of food that should be sent for mishloach manos?

Discussion: Mishloach manos can be any combination of two kinds of food,<sup>27</sup> or one food and one beverage,<sup>28</sup> or two kinds of beverages.<sup>29</sup> Although two pieces of the same food are considered as one food,<sup>30</sup> the top (white meat) and bottom (dark meat) parts of a chicken are considered two kinds of food.<sup>31</sup> Some poskim<sup>32</sup> specify that the foods be ready to eat and require no further cooking, while others<sup>33</sup> allow even uncooked foods to be sent.

L'chatchilah, one should send foods which could be eaten at the seudas Purim.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, one does not fulfill the mitzvah properly if all he sends is a small piece of food, etc. since manos is defined as a portion which is considered worthy of serving others. Some poskim suggest that the minimum amount of mishloach manos is a meal's worth, about 6-7 fl. oz. of food.<sup>35</sup> Other poskim require that one send no less of a meal (in volume) than one would normally serve a guest.<sup>36</sup>

A wealthy person who sends inexpensive items of food does not fulfill the mitzvah properly, for in order for mishloach manos to be considered as an expression of friendship, its cost must be relative to the sender's wealth.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, one who sends inexpensive food items to a wealthy person does not fulfill the mitzvah properly, since such items are worthless in his eyes and unappreciated by him.<sup>38</sup>

1 Minchas Chinuch 603.

2 See Avnei Nezer, O.C. 509 and Marcheshes 1:22

3 Sefer ha-Chinuch 603.

4 Binyan Tziyon 2:8, quoting Rav Nosson Adler; Yeshuos Malko, O.C. 50; Maharil Diskin (Kuntres Acharon) 5:101; Minchas Elazar 2:1-5; Chazon Nachum 85.

5 Toras Chesed 1:37; Arugos ha-Bosem 205; Divrei Chayim 2:14; Chazon Ish, quoted by Rav C. Kanievsky (Ta'ama d'Kra); Rav M. Feinstein, quoted in Kovetz Halachos, pg. 13.

6 Many major poskim—Chayei Adam, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan—do not address this issue altogether.

7 See Yechaveh Da'as 1:84.

8 See Minchas Yitzchak 9:68.

9 Mikra'ei Kodesh (Purim, 5); Rav M. Feinstein (oral ruling, quoted in Mo'adei Yeshurun on Purim, pg. 47; Kol ha-Torah, vol. 54, pg. 24; Koveitz Halachos, pg. 15); Kinyan Torah 7:53; Shraga ha-Meir 6:116. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv is quoted (Halichos Bas Yisrael, pg. 296) as ruling that a minimum of ten men must be present for such a reading to take place.

10 See Yismach Yisrael 3:15.

11 O.C. 695:2.

12 Halichos Shelomo 2:19-25.

13 O.C. 695:2 and Mishnah Berurah 5.

14 Based on Mishnah Berurah 689:15 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 692:13. See Minchas Yitzchak 3:53-14.

15 Recommended by Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo 2:19-3).

16 Recommended by Minchas Yitzchak 3:54-38; 8:63.

17 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Balaylah Hahuh, pg. 8)

18 Mishnah Berurah 692:10.

19 Beirur Halachah 689:1, s.v. venashim.

20 Chayei Adam, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and Aruch ha-Shulchan do not mention the concept of a messenger at all.

21 Chazon Ish (Dinim v'Hanhagos 22:8). See also She'arim Metzuyanin b'Halachah 142:1.

22 Mishnah Berurah, quoting Teshuvos Binyan Tziyon 44.

23 There are a number of suggestions as to the reason behind this requirement: 1) It is derech kavod to deliver gifts via a messenger; 2) It is greater pirsumei nisa since an additional person is involved; 3) To free the sender from time-consuming deliveries, thereby giving him more time to celebrate Purim.

24 Chasam Sofer (Gittin 22b).

25 Eishel Avraham, O.C. 695; Salmas Chayim 1:105.

26 See Kaf ha-Chayim 695:41 and Halichos Shelomo 2:19-14, note 44.

27 O.C. 695:4. The opinion of the Ben Ish Chai (Tetzaveh 16) not to place the various kinds of foods on one plate or bowl, since the plate or bowl combines them into one kind of food, has not been accepted by the poskim; Halichos Shelomo 2:19, Orchos Halachah, note 36; Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:346.

28 Mishnah Berurah 695:20. Water or seltzer are not considered beverages concerning mishloach manos; Koveitz Halachos 17:9.

29 Aruch ha-Shulchan 695:14. Other poskim recommend that at least one of the items be a food.

30 Aruch ha-Shulchan 695:14. See Tzitz Eliezer 14:65; 15:31.

31 Halichos Shelomo 2:19-12. See Mikroei Kodesh, Purim 38.

32 Magen Avraham 695:11; Ma'asei Rav 249; Chayei Adam 135:31; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:2; Aruch ha-Shulchan 695:15.

33 Peri Chadash, O.C. 695; Ha'amek Sh'eilah 67:9; Shevet Sofer, O.C. 23; Yechaveh Da'as 6:45. Mishnah Berurah 695:20 quotes both views without rendering a decision.

34 This is because the main purpose of mishloach manos is so that everyone will have a proper Purim meal; see Ma'asei Rav 249.

35 Zera Yaakov 11, quoted by Sha'arei Teshuvah 694:1.

36 Rosh Yosef, Megillah 7b; Eishel Avraham 695; Aruch ha-Shulchan 695:15. See Tzitz Eliezer 14:65.

37 See Sedei Chemed, Purim 8.

38 Beirur Halachah 695:4, s.v. chayav, based on Ritva and Chayei Adam.

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**By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

**Matanos La'evyonim**

**By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Megillah 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 (Megillah 7b).

**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 the mitzvah of 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 define only 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 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'EVYONIM 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 making the poor person 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 as possible happy.

**MAY MATANOS LA'EVYONIM 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, one can assume that virtually all his 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'EVYONIM 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'EVYONIM?

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'EVYONIM?

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'EVYONIM?

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'anuyim," "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 quarter to each of two other paupers and thereby fulfill the mitzvah.

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

One may not use money collected for matanos la'evyonim for a different tzedakah (Gemara Bava Metzia 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 more 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).