

Toras



Shades

The future's so bright, we need shades!

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"L

Covenant & Conversation

Beethoven rose each morning at dawn and made himself coffee. He was fastidious about this: each cup had to be made with exactly sixty beans, which he counted out each time. He would then sit at his desk and compose until 2:00pm or 3:00pm in the afternoon. Subsequently he would go for a long walk, taking with him a pencil and some sheets of music paper to record any ideas that came to him on the way. Each night after supper he would have a beer, smoke a pipe, and go to bed early, 10:00pm at the latest.

Anthony Trollope who as his day job worked for the Post Office, paid a groom to wake him every day at 5:00am. By 5:30am he would be at his desk, and he then proceeded to write for exactly 3 hours, working against the clock to produce 250 words each quarter-hour. This way he wrote 47 novels, many of them 3 volumes in length, as well as 16 other books. If he finished a novel before the day's 3 hours were over, he would immediately take a fresh piece of paper and begin the next.

Immanuel Kant, the most brilliant philosopher of modern times, was famous for his routine. As Heinrich Heine put it, "Getting up, drinking coffee, writing, giving lectures, eating, taking a walk, everything had its set time, and the neighbours knew precisely that the time was 3:30pm when Kant stepped outside his door with his grey coat and the Spanish stick in his hand."

These details, together with more than 150 other examples drawn from the great philosophers, artists, composers and writers, come from a book by Mason Currey entitled *Daily Rituals: How Great Minds Make Time, Find Inspiration, and Get to Work* (New York, Knopf, 2013). The book's point is simple. Most creative people have daily rituals. These form the soil in which the seeds of their invention grow.

In some cases they deliberately took on jobs they did not need to do, simply to establish structure and routine in their lives. A typical example was the poet Wallace Stevens, who

took a position as an insurance lawyer at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company where he worked until his death. He said that having a job was one of the best things that could happen to him because "It introduces discipline and regularity into one's life."

Note the paradox. These were all innovators, pioneers, ground-breakers, trail-blazers, who formulated new ideas, originated new forms of expression, did things no one had done before in quite that way. They broke the mould. They changed the landscape. They ventured into the unknown.

Yet their daily lives were the opposite: ritualised and routine. One could even call them boring. Why so? Because -- the saying is famous, though we don't know who first said it -- genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration. The paradigm-shifting scientific discovery, the path-breaking research, the wildly successful new product, the brilliant novel, the award-winning film, are almost always the result of many years of long hours and attention to detail. Being creative involves hard work.

The ancient Hebrew word for hard work is *avodah*. It is also the word that means "serving God". What applies in the arts, sciences, business and industry, applies equally to the life of the spirit. Achieving any form of spiritual growth requires sustained effort and daily rituals.

Hence the remarkable aggadic passage in which various sages put forward their idea of *klal gadol ba-Torah*, "the great principle of the Torah". Ben Azzai says it is the verse, "This is the book of the chronicles of man: On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God" (Gen. 5:1). Ben Zoma says that there is a more embracing principle, "Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." Ben Nannas says there is a yet more embracing principle: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Ben Pazzi says we find a more embracing principle still. He quotes a verse from this week's parsha: "One sheep shall be offered in the morning, and a second in the afternoon" (Ex. 29:39) -- or, as we might say nowadays, *Shacharit*, *Mincha* and *Maariv*. In a word: "routine". The passage concludes: The law follows Ben Pazzi. (The passage is cited in the Introduction to the



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commentary HaKotev to Ein Yaakov, the collected aggadic passages of the Talmud. It is also quoted by Maharal in Netivot Olam, Ahavat Re'a 1.)

The meaning of Ben Pazzi's statement is clear: all the high ideals in the world -- the human person as God's image, belief in God's unity, and the love of neighbour -- count for little until they are turned into habits of action that become habits of the heart. We can all recall moments of insight when we had a great idea, a transformative thought, the glimpse of a project that could change our lives. A day, a week or a year later the thought has been forgotten or become a distant memory, at best a might-have-been.

The people who change the world, whether in small or epic ways, are those who turn peak experiences into daily routines, who know that the details matter, and who have developed the discipline of hard work, sustained over time.

Judaism's greatness is that it takes high ideals and exalted visions - image of God, faith in God, love of neighbour -- and turns them into patterns of behaviour. Halakhah, (Jewish law), involves a set of routines that -- like those of the great creative minds -- reconfigures the brain, giving discipline to our lives and changing the way we feel, think and act.

Much of Judaism must seem to outsiders, and sometimes to insiders also, boring, prosaic, mundane, repetitive, routine, obsessed with details and bereft for the most part of drama or inspiration. Yet that is precisely what writing the novel, composing the symphony, directing the film, perfecting the killer app, or building a billion-dollar business is, most of the time. It is a matter of hard work, focused attention and daily rituals. That is where all sustainable greatness comes from.

We have developed in the West a strange view of religious experience: that it's what overwhelms you when something happens completely outside the run of normal experience. You climb a mountain and look down. You are miraculously saved from danger. You find yourself part of a vast and cheering crowd. It's how the German Lutheran theologian Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) defined "the holy": as a mystery (mysterium) both terrifying (tremendum) and fascinating (fascinans). You are awed by the presence of something vast. We have all had such experiences.

But that is all they are: experiences. They linger in the memory, but they are not part of everyday life. They are not woven into the texture of our character. They do not affect what we do or achieve or become. Judaism is about changing us so that we become creative artists whose greatest creation is our own life. (A point made by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in his essay, Halakhic Man.) And that needs daily rituals: Shacharit, Mincha, Maariv, the food we eat, the way we behave at work or in the home, the choreography of holiness which is the special contribution of the priestly dimension of Judaism, set out in this week's parsha and throughout the book of Vayikra.

These rituals have an effect. We now know through PET and fMRI scans that repeated spiritual exercise reconfigures the brain. It gives us inner resilience. It makes us more grateful. It gives us a sense of basic trust in the Source of our being. It shapes our identity, the way we act and think. Ritual is to spiritual greatness what practice is to a tennis player, daily writing disciplines are to a novelist, and reading company accounts are to Warren Buffett. They are the precondition of high achievement. Serving God is avodah, which means hard work.

If you seek sudden inspiration, then work at it every day for a year or a lifetime. That is how it comes. As every famous golfer is said to have said when asked for the secret of his success: "I was just lucky. But the funny thing is that the harder I practice, the luckier I become." The more you seek spiritual heights, the more you need the ritual and routine of halakhah, the Jewish "way" to God. *Covenant and Conversation is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl zt"l*
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My wife was in labor with our first child. Things were going pretty well when suddenly she began to shout, "Shouldn't, couldn't, wouldn't, didn't, can't!"

"Doctor, what's wrong with my wife?"

"Nothing. She's just having contractions."

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

One of the main garments that the High Priest of Israel donned was the jewel-bestudded breastplate -- choshen -- that he wore upon his chest.

This breastplate contained twelve precious jewels of different colors and on each of the stones was engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

In addition to these stones there were two large elongated diamond stones that were embedded in the shoulder straps of the apron -- eiphod -- that the High Priest wore. Engraved on those shoulder strap stones were the names of the Patriarchs of Israel and a reference to all of the tribes of Israel. Thus all of the twenty two letters of the Hebrew alphabet were to be found on these stones in the breastplate and on the shoulder straps.

This allowed these stones and their engraved letters to serve as the urim v'tumim -- the means of prophecy by which important national issues could be decided with Divine help and intervention. Though the letters of the answer shone on the stones, the ability to string the letters together correctly and coherently into the necessary words and message depended upon the prophets of Israel who "read" the urim v'tumim accurately.

This was symbolic of the symbiotic relationship, so to speak, of God and the Jewish people in pursuit of the national and spiritual goals of Israel. Only by this interaction of Heaven and humans could the message of the urim v'tumim have any constructive meaning. Heaven alone never completely determines our future. We must also work and strive, interpret and analyze, study and act in order to see our future realized successfully.

In the pocket of the choshen there was inserted a piece of parchment with the ineffable name of the Lord written upon it. This was the engine that powered the miracle of the urim v'tumim. Without its presence the choshen was a lifeless collection of jeweled stones. This significance is part of Jewish tradition.

Beauty and expensive value are only relevant when they are somehow inspired and created for a lofty purpose of spirit and service. King Solomon wisely said that "if the Lord builds not the city then those that have constructed it have toiled in vain."

In Second Temple times the choshen was present on the breast of the High Priest. But the urim v'tumim was no longer in effective operation. The human element of service and dedication was already lacking. There were no longer prophets present amongst Israel and the choshen therefore

was merely an ornament, part of the uniform of the High Priest but no longer a Godly guide to the future and a source of instruction to the people of Israel.

Because of this, the great men and rabbinic leaders of Second Temple times in the Land of Israel recognized early on that this Temple was ultimately doomed to be destroyed. The necessary interplay of Heaven and earth, of God and His creatures were no longer present. In such an environment, no matter how beautiful the structure or how handsome the jewels may have been, the whiff of eternity upon which all Jewish life is based was absent. It is our task to somehow restore the very same urim v'tumim in our personal and national lives. © 2023 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory.

*A woman got on a bus holding a baby. The bus driver said,
"That's the ugliest baby I've ever seen."*

In a huff, the woman slammed her fare into the fare box and took an aisle seat near the rear of the bus. The man seated next to her sensed that she was agitated and asked her what was wrong. "The bus driver insulted me," she fumed.

The man sympathized and said,

"Why, he's a public servant and shouldn't say things to insult passengers."

*You're right," She said. "I think I'll go back up there
and give him a piece of my mind."*

"That's a good idea," the man said. "Here, let me hold your monkey."

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“You shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven; do not forget!” (Deuteronomy 25:19). Each year on Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath that precedes the festival of Purim, we read from a selection in the Book of Deuteronomy about the need to remember the vicious attack on the most vulnerable of the Jews by the nation of Amalek. Interestingly, however, there is another record of the battle that appears elsewhere in the Torah, containing additional elements of the incident.

That account is in the Book of Exodus, which we read on Purim morning prior to the Megillah: “And then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Refidim... And God said to Moses, ‘...I will blot out (“emche”) the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven!” (Exodus 17:8-16). It is important to note that this section appears in its historical context, following the exodus and prior to the giving of the Torah.

This is not so in Deuteronomy, where the reference to Amalek appears without warning and is out of historical context. “Remember what Amalek did to you by the way, when you were coming out of Egypt; how he met you by the way, and smote your hindmost: all that



were feeble in the rear, when you were faint and weary; and they did not fear God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, to possess it, you shall blot out (“timche”) the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven; do not forget!’ (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

A number of questions arise from these passages. First, the account in Deuteronomy provides many more details about the attack in question, greatly enriching our understanding of the contemporaneous account in Exodus. Why separate the dissemination of details into two sections?

Second, since the commandment is to blot out the memory of Amalek, what do its two different verb forms signify? In Exodus, God informs Moses, “I will blot out (“emche”) the memory of Amalek”, whereas in Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people, “YOU shall blot out (“timche”) the memory of Amalek”. Who is to actually do the job?

Finally, why is there a need for a special Sabbath dedicated to remembering Amalek’s genocide attempt, when only several days later, we will celebrate Purim, which records the destruction of Amalek’s infamous descendant, Haman?

To answer these questions, we turn to Maimonides’ Laws of Kings, where he codifies the commandment regarding the destruction of the seven indigenous nations in the land of Canaan. He concludes that this directive is no longer feasible, as “their identity and memory have been lost,” due to a policy of mass population transfer ordered by King Sancherib of Assyria, which “mixed the nations” that he conquered (BT Brachot 28a). However, in the following paragraph, as Maimonides codifies the mandate to destroy Amalek, he omits mention of its identity having been lost (Laws of Kings, 5:4-5).

On this basis of this critical difference, my revered mentor, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, z”l, cited his grandfather, Rav Chaim of Brisk, who distinguished between the physical nation of Amalek and the ideology of Amalek. The former once lived near Canaan (and which has since been rendered indistinguishable by Sancherib’s population transfer), while the latter’s goal is to destroy Israel and our unique message of compassionate righteousness and moral justice for the world.

Indeed, the ideology of Amalek exists in every generation, with many different identities, from Sparta-Rome, to the Ottoman Empire, to Nazi Germany, to ISIS and to modern-day Iran. They each believed that to the powerful victor belong the spoils; they each maintain that might makes right!

With this in mind, our two passages can be better understood. The verses in Exodus describe the nation of Amalek

attacking the Jewish People with the aim of nothing less than total genocide. Even as we took up arms in self-defense, the Almighty promises that He will finish the job for us (“I will blot out Amalek”).

But Amalek is not merely a specific nation at a specific moment of Jewish history. It is an ideology, Amalek-ism, if you will: the denial of the Israelite mission promised to Abraham the first Hebrew, that we will eventually teach all the families of the earth God’s without design of a world of peace and universal love.

From this perspective, the passage in Deuteronomy that we read on the Sabbath before Purim deals with the larger issue of Amalek-ism, not simply with the ancient nation of Amalek. It is no wonder, then, that this command to destroy Amalek is not within the historical context of the exodus from Egypt. Rather, it is in the context of commandments, the means by which we are distinct and through which we will ultimately become a light unto all the nations, when everyone will accept at least the moral commands of our holy Torah, when all peoples will beat their swords into ploughshares and will make love instead of war (Isaiah 2).

Therefore, it is specifically on Shabbat – a taste of the idyllic World to Come – before the holiday when we bested the original Amalek, that we are commanded to “blot out” not only Amalek but Amalek-ism, by eventually converting all nations to the acceptance of Jewish morality, at the very least!”

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Proudly showing off his new apartment to a friend late one night, the drunk led the way to the bedroom, where there was a big brass gong.

"What's that brass gong for?" asked the friend.

"It's not a gong. It's a talking clock," the drunk replied.

"A talking clock? How's it work?"

"Watch this," said the drunk. He took a hammer, gave the gong an ear-shattering pound and waited. Someone on the other side of the wall screamed:

"Hey, you jerk. It's 3:00 in the morning!"

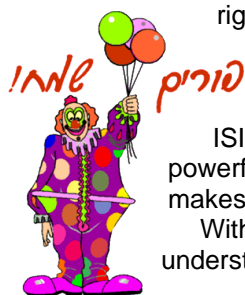
RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

Cross-Currents

Most agricultural oils are produced from seeds. The olive is one of the few fruits that produce oil. And olive oil plays a major role in the Mishkan and Beis HaMikdash.

It is a component of menachos, the flour-offerings that are required in a number of situations and consigned in part to the mizbe'ach, with the remainder, in most cases, consumed by kohanim.

And, of course, olive oil is the fuel the Torah requires for the menorah that stands in the kodoshim, the penultimate holiest place in the Ohel Mo'ed and Beis HaMikdash.



Which purpose opens parshas Titzaveh, where "pure olive oil derived from thorough crushing" is to serve "to illuminate" (Shemos 27:20).

Rashi comments that such purity is only required for the oil used in the menorah, but that which is used for menachos needn't be of that highest quality.

Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin sees menachos as representing physical nourishment and the menorah's light as representing mind nourishment, "illumination" in its nonliteral sense.

Many unhealthy substances in food can be tolerated by bodies, he notes. But foreign, untrue ideas are a more subtle, and hence more dangerous, threat to minds.

Moreover, he continues, efforts are needed to attain both our physical and spiritual sustenances. Our "daily bread" requires labor, and grasping Torah truths is earned only through mental work ("If someone says... 'I didn't labor but attained [Torah]' -- don't believe him" [Megilla 6b]).

But, says Rav Zevin, there is a difference in those respective efforts. When it comes to physical sustenance, we are enjoined to labor only to the extent that yields us our needs; we are not justified in making "earning a living" some sort of high sacrament and giving it our "all." When it comes to ascertaining truth, however, to studying Torah, we must apply our entire selves, our "hearts and souls," to the task.

And that, he contends, is what is telegraphed by the acceptability of second-tier purity oil for menachos, but only perfectly pure oil for the menorah.

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"What would men be without women? Scarce, mighty scarce." – Mark Twain

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

The Torah states that the priestly garments were worn by the priest for "kavod" (honor). In the words of the Torah, "and you shall make Holy garments for your brother Aaron, and they shall be for honor [kavod] and glory" (Exodus 28:2).

But honor seems contrary to the Torah ideal. Rabbi Eliezer Hakapar states: "Jealousy, desire, and honor take a person from the world" (Ethics of the Sages 4:28). Shouldn't the Torah, therefore, request a priest to aspire to achieve the highest level of humility rather than honor? The answer may lie in a deeper understanding of the Hebrew word kavod. Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik argues that the word kavod contains within it the root of the etymologically linked word kaved (heavy). In concrete terms, heaviness is determined by the pull of gravity upon an object. In conceptual terms, weight is determined by the degree of responsibility one has. The greater the



responsibility (kaved), the greater the potential honor once those obligations are fulfilled.

Counterintuitively, kavod is sometimes translated "soul" or "essence," as the Psalmist proclaims, "So that my soul [kavod] may sing to You and not be stilled" (Psalms 30:13). With this juxtaposition, the meaning of our verse is illuminated. The goal of the priestly garments is not honor but rather to serve as a reminder that the priest has a greater responsibility to soulfully impact the community. Notwithstanding its relationship with kaved, kavod alone can still be productive. While honor can sometimes lead to bloating of the ego, which, in turn, can interfere with real accomplishments, it can also be a powerful tool to greater achievement.

The Mishnah explains the relevant verse "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Berachot 9:5). The rabbis

point out that the word lev (heart) is written in the plural, levavcha. Since the heart symbolizes human nature, the use of the plural here is viewed as meaning that God is to be worshipped with both the good and bad inclinations. In this vein, the natural human tendency to enjoy being honored can spur us to undertake beneficial efforts on behalf of people in need. While our initial approach sees honor as an outflow of doing good, the latter sees honor as a catalyst to do better.

More than four decades ago, my saintly mother reflected these teachings in remarks she offered at an awards ceremony in her honor. It was the only time in her life she allowed such recognition. In humble, simple terms, Ima said, "To do things for the mere purpose of the honor which it may bring is a false attitude. But, if one dedicates oneself to a noble cause, honor may result... honor can also serve as a reminder that we have standards to maintain."

Thus, if one's goal is solely about honor, something is amiss. But as a contributing factor to doing good, honor may have its place. Note that the verse states that Aaron's garments "shall be for honor and glory." In other words, channeling honor for the right purpose brings glory not only to the high priest but, more importantly, to God and to the people the priest is serving.

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Why do they lock gas station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will clean them?
-George Carlin

RABBI DAVID LEVIN

The Investing of the Kohein

Parashat Tetzaveh begins with a description of the clothes worn by the regular Kohein and the special additional clothes that were worn by the Kohein Gadol, the Head Priest. After this detailed description, the Torah continues with the miluim, the inauguration process, of the Kohanim. This

process involved two main parts: korbanot (sacrifices) and mishcha (anointing). This procedure would be repeated for the seven days of the inauguration process, followed by the eighth day on which the Kohanim would begin their service to Hashem in His Temple.

“And this is what you will do to them (the Kohanim) to make them holy to serve as priests for me; take one young bull and two rams without blemish. And matzah bread, and matza cakes thoroughly mixed with oil, and matza wafers anointed with oil, out of fine wheat flour shall you make them.” The different forms of the matzot were placed in a basket and brought with the animals. Aharon and his sons would go to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting where they would bathe. Aharon would then get dressed in the golden garments and be anointed with oil. His sons would then dress in their garments, and Aharon and they would place their hands on the bull sacrifice. The blood of the sacrifice was placed on the altar, the fat which covered the entrails, the diaphragm, and the liver and kidneys were placed on the altar, and the flesh, skin, and dung was burned outside of the camp, following the regular instructions of the chatat offering, the sin offering.

One of the rams was then placed before Aharon and his sons so they could place their hands on its head. The ram was slaughtered, its parts separated, and the parts and its entire flesh was placed on the altar as an olah offering, an elevating offering. The second ram was then brought to Aharon and his sons: “You shall take the second ram; and Aharon and his sons shall lean their hands on the head of the ram. You shall slaughter the ram, and you shall take some of its blood and put it on the tenuch (middle part) of the ear of Aharon and on the tenuch of the ear of his sons – the right one – and on the thumb of their right hand and the big toe of their right foot, and you shall toss the blood upon the altar all around. You shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointment oil and sprinkle on Aharon and his garments and on his sons and the garments of his sons with him; he and his garments, and his sons’ garments with him, shall become holy.”

It is clear from this section of the Torah that there must be some significance both to the objects used in this inauguration (the young bull, the two rams, the oil, the blood, and the clothing) and the process (bathing, dressing, laying on of the hands, the sacrifices, anointing, and sprinkling). Rashi explains that the young bull comes to atone as a chatat offering for the sin of the Golden Calf. HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin asks why Aharon’s sons had to place their hands on the bull since they did not sin at the Golden Calf. He explains that Aharon’s sons also were subject to the punishment.



Aharon’s involvement in producing the idol, even though as a stalling measure, caused him to be punished with the loss of his sons. Moshe prayed on his behalf and Hashem agreed to spare the younger two sons to serve with Aharon in the Mishkan. The two rams were separated, one as an olah offering and one as a shelamim offering. The olah, elevating offering, was burned entirely on the altar. The shelamim, completing or peace offering, was eaten as a privilege and advantage only by the Kohanim. The one difference between this inauguration offering and a regular shelamim is the placing of the right thigh on the altar. This was usually given to the Kohein, but here it is representative of the Kohein’s right hand and right foot in the service of Hashem. HaRav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains, “the bull chatat offering has the office (of the Kohein) in mind, the ram olah offering, the honor (of the position), with reference to its influence, and the ram of the inauguration, the shelamim, the honor with reference to its privileges and advantages.”

According to Rashi, the anointing oil was poured over Aharon’s head and then smeared onto his head in the form of the Greek letter chi (similar in appearance to our X). Oil was placed on Aharon’s head and in his eyelashes, and then connected like the chi, using a finger. Abarbanel explains that only Aharon was smeared with pure olive oil, whereas Aharon’s sons were smeared with a mixture of pure olive oil and the blood of the sacrifice. Hirsch explains that the anointing oil indicated a separation, much like the separation of oil and water. Aharon’s separation was complete, his oil alone raised him to a higher level. Aharon’s sons were anointed with oil and blood, indicating a slightly lower separation. Aharon had two major restrictions that mirrored this additional separation: he was not to become impure, even for his parents’ deaths, and he was not to marry a widow even though this was permitted to a regular Kohein.

One must ask why the Torah designated the right ear, the right thumb, and the right large toe of the Kohanim as the places where the blood of the second ram was placed. HaRav Sorotzkin explains that the Kohein was dressed from head to toe in special garments which made him Holy. Without these garments he was not permitted to serve in the Temple. The Kohein’s face, hands, and feet were not covered by these garments as they were needed to perform the service, and any covering would be considered a barrier between the Kohein and the act he was performing. First, Aharon had two drops of oil placed on his head which trickled down and remained in his beard. Moshe was then commanded to place the oil and the blood mixture on the ear, which would hear the commands of Hashem, the hand, which

would perform the service of Hashem, and the foot, which would transport each Kohein to the places where he was to serve.

Hirsch explains that the Kohein had to give up his entire self to Hashem. The slaughtering of the animal was the “giving up living just for oneself.” The throwing of the blood from the olah offering indicated striving up to the heights of the altar. Some of that blood which was accepted by the altar was sprinkled on the ear, hand, and foot of each Kohein who was to “be made conscious of the dignity and honor to be bestowed on him.” In order to become like the sacrifice itself, which was in total service to Hashem, the Kohein’s personality had to be invested with the honor of serving Hashem completely.

We do not have the Temple today, nor are we invested with the service of the Kohein. But we, too, can strive to devote ourselves to serve Hashem completely with dignity and honor. ©2023 Rabbi D. Levin

Dr. Leroy, the head psychiatrist at the local mental hospital, is examining patients to see if they're cured and ready to re-enter society.

"So, Mr. Clark," the doctor says to one of his patients, "I see by your chart that you've been recommended for dismissal. Do you have any idea what you might do once you're released?"

The patient thinks for a moment, then replies, "Well, I went to school for mechanical engineering. That's still a good field, good money there. But on the other hand, I thought I might write a book about my experience here in the hospital, what it's like to be a patient here. People might be interested in reading a book like that. In addition, I thought I might go back to college and study art history, which I've grown interested in lately."

Dr. Leroy nods and says, "Yes, those all sound like intriguing possibilities."

The patient replies, "And the best part is, in my spare time, I can go on being a teapot."



Rabbi Meir disagrees. He maintains that during a leap year, if someone refers simply to Adar, he can be assumed to be speaking of the second Adar (*Nedarim* 63a). While most of the halachic authorities accept the view of Rabbi Yehudah, the Rambam follows the view of Rabbi Meir. In any case, when writing a bill of divorce we always specify during which Adar the document was written, *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Shenii*.

This disagreement has many ramifications. For example, if a person rents a house during a leap year, and the lease expires in Adar, does this mean the start of the first Adar or the start of the second Adar? The landlord would likely claim the lease ends with the start of the first Adar, while the renter would likely insist it ends with the start of the second. In such a case, some rabbis suggest that the renter pay half for the second month (in effect splitting the difference). Others state that the landlord has the upper hand, as he owns the property. Accordingly, the burden of proof is on the tenant (to prove that the lease was meant to extend through the end of the first Adar). This is because there is a principle that “*Ha-motzi mei-chavero alav ha-re'aya*.” This means that whoever wishes to extract something (here the right of tenancy) from its current owner must prove that he is entitled to it.

The controversy also affects the commemoration of a *yahrzeit* (the day on which a relative died). For example, let us say someone passed away on the tenth of Adar. During a leap year, some recite the Mourner’s *Kaddish* on the tenth of both the first Adar and the second Adar.

When it comes to the *yahrzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu on the seventh of Adar, there are indications that it should be commemorated during the second Adar, close to Purim (which during a leap year is celebrated in the second Adar).

On the Shabbat preceding the start of a new month in the Jewish calendar, a prayer is recited in *shul*, ushering in the new month by name. It is questionable which name we should use to usher in each Adar during a leap year.

In short, the disagreement about this topic extends to many areas. Therefore, the prudent thing to do is to always clarify which Adar we mean, by specifying either *Adar Rishon* or *Adar Shenii*. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and *Encyclopedia Talmudit*

A rabbi, a minister, and a priest were playing poker when the police raided the game. Turning to the priest, the lead police officer said, "Father Murphy, were you gambling?"

Turning his eyes to heaven, the priest whispered, "L-rd, forgive me for what I am about to do." To the police officer, he then said, "No, officer; I was not gambling."

The officer then asked the minister, "Pastor Johnson, were you gambling?"

Again, after an appeal to heaven, the minister replied,

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Adar Rishon & Adar Shenii

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

The Jewish leap year, which occurs seven times in a 19-year cycle, has 13 months instead of the regular year’s 12. The additional month is added after Adar and is known as *Adar Shenii* (the second Adar). The question arises: During a leap year, if someone simply refers to Adar without specifying the first or the second, what does he mean? The *Tannaim* (Mishnaic Sages) disagree. Rabbi Yehudah says that if someone simply refers to Adar, we assume he means the first Adar. Thus, if a legal document is written during a leap year, when it is written during the first Adar the month may be written simply as Adar; if it is written during the second Adar, it must be specified that the month is the second Adar.

"No, officer; I was not gambling."

Turning to the rabbi, the officer again asked, "Rabbi Goldstein, were you gambling?"

Shrugging his shoulders, the rabbi replied, "With whom?"

THE BOLOGNA REBBE

Halacha MiDisney

While Disney World does maintain daily minyanim throughout the park, many poskim have declared it forbidden to pray with them. They proclaim that mice cannot serve as shlichei tzibbur, and it is well known that this practice is common at Disney synagogues. However, the chancellor of Disney World has ruled that mice are acceptable as agents, as long as they have taken upon themselves the obligations of daily tfilah. Mishlei states that there are no atheists in mouseholes.

Furthermore, on Shabbat, dwarves receive all seven aliyot. Dwarves reading from the Torah damages k'vod hatzibbur, even if all of the women are asleep (or rather, even if they appear to be dead, after swallowing a restrictive psak). Incidentally, Sleepy maintains that he is a kohen, based on family tradition passed from father to son since the days of Aharon. Other dwarves recall that Sleepy is a descendant of Honi M'agel, and hence cannot be a kohen— but this is circular reasoning.

However, even those who permit aliyot for dwarves forbid them to serve as shlichei tzibbur. Apparently, dwarves are incapable of reciting the prayers properly, as they always whistle through their avodah—even Grumpy! Someone who hears this whistling and responds "Amen" is not yotze.

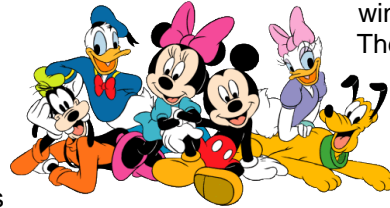
Disney synagogues also count mermaids in a minyan, in an obvious end-run around the age-old regulations to keep women barefoot. Since mermaids have no feet, they (technically) cannot stand for the Amidah, even though they remain shoeless. Yesh raglayim ladavar.

Heaping scandal upon scandal, mermaids, crickets, mice and ducks all sit on the same side of the mechitzah with wooden boys—clearly violating the prohibition against kilayim.

Sometimes after a tough day working the crowds through a steamy Florida afternoon, many of the regulars prefer to daven at home over a stiff drink. To ensure a minyan for Minchah, the Disney rabbis even count singing tableware and kitchen implements. Although this pushes the halachic envelope, each piece can cite a klal [general principle] whereby it must be included in the minyan:

The spoon counsels us "dan chaf b'zchut" [judge a spoon with merit].

The knife cites "sakin b'adam shelo b'fanav" [a knife (serves) in (stead of) a person when (a person is) not present].



The candlesticks remind us that "ner mitzvah, v'Torah or" [a candle (can do any) mitzvah, but the Torah is only leather].

The goblet intones "kos yayin malei k'virkat Adoshem" [a full cup of wine is equivalent to blessing Hashem].

The frying pan sings "laKel yeratzu k'minchah al machavat" [to Hashem it is as pleasing as Minchah davened by a pan].

The teacup refrains "sefel tov l'chol oseihem" [a cup is as good as anyone (who) does (it for) them].

The wine bottle chides "al tistakel b'kankan, elah b'ma sheyesh bo" [don't look at the bottle, rather see what's inside

it].

The clock chimes in "tfilah mitzvah shehazman grama" [prayer is a mitzvah that time begins].

Several others declare "va'ani tefilati" [I am my prayer].

Still others quote R' Hillel: "b'makom she'ayn anashim hishtadel lihiyot ish" [In a place where there aren't (enough) men, strive to be a man].

Several of the most stringent authorities complain that Disney World is open on Shabbat, so all Disney characters who are union members are prohibited from serving in public synagogue roles because they are mechalelei Shabbat b'fantasia. Lenient sources justify their work as melachah she-aynah tzricha l'Goofy. R' Bambi says "hakol kasher l'tzvi" [anything to make a buck].

This Purim Torah is codified in the sefer Iyunei Achbarim v'Anashim [Of Mice and Men] of R' Don Yitzchak Abarvazel. R' Abarvazel was an ancestor of the Katchke Rebbe. To properly grasp the full depth of his insights, one must be at least 40 years old and have raised children—and even then, it is advantageous to first fulfill the mitzvah of ad lo yada yada yada.

M-I-C (See you in costume.)

K-E-Y (Why? Because it's Purim!)

M-O-U-S-E! © Rabbi Michael b. Velvel of Anaheim

Totally cool people say...

Happy Purim!

