

reTive ז'ס



Aish עמו"ש

An old, crotchety torah newsletter that can't be bothered with all these young WHIPPERSNAPPERS!

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

Tetzaveh, with its elaborate description of the "sacred vestments" which the Priests and the High Priest wore "for glory and for splendour," seems to run counter to some fundamental values of Judaism. The vestments were made to be seen. They were intended to impress the eye. But Judaism is a religion of the ear more than the eye. It emphasises hearing rather than seeing. Its key word is Shema, meaning: to hear, listen, understand and obey. The verb sh-m-a is a dominant theme of the book of Devarim, where it appears no less than 92 times. Jewish spirituality is about listening more than looking. That is the deep reason why we cover our eyes when saying Shema Yisrael. We shut out the world of sight and focus on the world of sound: of words, communication and meaning.

The reason this is so has to do with the Torah's battle against idolatry. Others saw gods in the sun, the stars, the river, the sea, the rain, the storm, the animal kingdom and the earth. They made visual representations of these things. Judaism disavows this whole mindset.

God is not in nature but beyond it. He created it and He transcends it. Psalm 8 says: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have set in place: what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him?" The vastness of space is for the psalmist no more than "the work of your fingers." Nature is God's work, but not itself God. God cannot be seen.

Instead, He reveals Himself primarily in words. At Mount Sinai, said Moshe, "The Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice" (Deut. 4:12). Elijah, in his great experience on the mountain, discovered that God was not in the wind, the earthquake or the fire, but in the kol demamah dakah, the "still small voice."

Clearly, the Mishkan (the Tabernacle), and later the Mikdash (the Temple), were exceptions to

this. Their emphasis was on the visual, and a key example is the Priests' and High Priest's sacred vestments, bigdei kodosh.

This is very unexpected. The Hebrew for "garment," b-g-d, also means "betrayal," as in the confession we say on penitential days: Ashamnu bagadnu, "We have been guilty, we have betrayed." Throughout Genesis, whenever a garment is a key element in the story, it involves some deception or betrayal.

There were the coverings of fig leaves Adam and Eve made for themselves after eating the forbidden fruit. Jacob wore Esau's clothes when he took his blessing by deceit. Tamar wore the clothes of a prostitute to deceive Judah into lying with her. The brothers used Joseph's bloodstained cloak to deceive their father into thinking he had been killed by a wild animal. Potiphar's wife used the cloak Joseph had left behind as evidence for her false claim that he had tried to rape her. Joseph himself took advantage of his Viceroy's clothing to conceal his identity from his brothers when they came to Egypt to buy food. So it is exceptionally unusual that the Torah should now concern itself in a positive way with clothes, garments, vestments.

Clothes have to do with surface, not depth; with the outward, not the inward; with appearance rather than reality. All the more strange, therefore, that they should form a key element of the service of the Priests, given the fact that "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Equally odd is the fact that for the first time we encounter the concept of a uniform, that is, a standardised form of dress worn not because of the individual wearing them but because of the office he holds, as Cohen or Cohen Gadol. In general, Judaism focuses on the person, not the office.

Specifically, there was no such thing as a uniform for Prophets.

Tetzaveh is also the first time we encounter the phrase "for glory and for splendour," describing the effect and point of the garments. Until now kavod, "glory," has been spoken of in relation to God alone.



HEY, SPEAK UP A BIT SO WE CAN HEAR YOU!
RE-TIRE US AISH IS A PARSHA NEWSLETTER THAT'S BEEN AROUND
FOR AWHILE BUT CAN STILL HIT THE SPOTS! IF NOTHING ELSE, IT'LL
GET THE OLD GREY MATTER POPPING AND CRACKING JUST LIKE NEW!



I always wonder if anyone reads this part of this newsletter. Really. Like who reads the "fine print" anymore? But there are MUCH more important things to discuss. Like where did the word whippersnappers come from? Aha! YOU were thinking it too! So apparently the original meaning referred to someone who had no ambition or "get up and go" (I learned this from Reb Google). I can relate to that because many days I feel like my get up and go actually got up and went. If you happen to see it wandering about please send it home. Happy Purim!

And if you're still reading, there's nothing else here. Really.
Go away.

Now human beings are to share some of the same glory.

Our parsha is also the first time the word tiferet appears. The word has the sense of splendour and magnificence, but it also means beauty. It introduces a dimension we have not encountered explicitly in the Torah before: the aesthetic. We have encountered moral beauty, for instance Rivka's kindness to Avraham's servant at the well. We have encountered physical beauty: Sarah, Rivka and Rachel are all described as beautiful. But the Sanctuary and its service bring us for the first time to the aesthetic beauty of craftsmanship and the visual.

This is a continuing theme in relation to the Tabernacle and later the Temple. We find it already in the story of the binding of Yitzchak on Mount Moriah which would later become the site of the Temple: "Avraham named the place 'God will see.' That is why it is said today, 'On God's mountain, He will be seen'" (Gen. 22:14). The emphasis on the visual is unmistakable. The Temple would be about seeing and being seen.

Likewise, a well-known poetical prayer on Yom Kippur speaks about Mareih Cohen, "the appearance of the High Priest" as he officiated in the Temple on the holiest of days: "Like the image of a rainbow appearing in the midst of cloud... / Like a rose in the heart of a lovely garden... / Like a lamp flickering between the window slats... / Like a room hung with sky blue and royal purple... / Like a garden lily penetrating the thorn-weeds... / Like the appearance of Orion and Pleiades, seen in the south..."



These lead to the refrain, "How fortunate was the eye that beheld all this." Why was it that specifically in relation to the Tabernacle and Temple, the visual prevailed?

The answer is deeply connected to the Golden Calf. What that sin showed is that the people could not fully relate to a God who gave them no permanent and visible sign of His presence and who could only be communicated with by the greatest of Prophets. The Torah was given to ordinary human beings, not angels or unique individuals like Moshe. It is hard to believe in a God of everywhere-in-general-but-nowhere-in-particular. It is hard to sustain a relationship with God who is only evident in miracles and unique events but not in everyday life. It is hard to relate to God when He only manifests Himself as overwhelming power.

So the Mishkan became the visible sign of God's continual presence in the midst of the people. Those who officiated there did so not because of their personal greatness, like Moshe, but because of birth and office, signalled by their vestments. The Mishkan represents acknowledgement of the fact that human spirituality is about emotions, not just intellect; the heart, not just the mind. Hence aesthetics and the visual as

a way of inculcating feelings of awe. This is how Maimonides puts it in *The Guide for the Perplexed*: "In order to raise the estimation of the Temple, those who ministered therein received great honour; and the Priests and Levites were therefore distinguished from the rest. It was commanded that the Priests should be clothed properly with beautiful and good garments, 'holy garments for glory and for splendour' (Ex. xxviii. 2)... The Temple was to be held in great reverence by all." (*Guide*, Book III, ch. 44)

The vestments of the officiants and the Sanctuary/Temple itself were to have the glory and splendour that induced awe, rather as Rainer Maria Rilke put it in the *Duino Elegies*: "For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, which we still are just able to endure." The purpose of the emphasis on the visual elements of the Mishkan, and the grand vestments of those who ministered there, was to create an atmosphere of reverence because they pointed to a beauty and splendour beyond themselves, namely God Himself.

Maimonides understood the emotive power of the visual. In his *Eight Chapters*, the prelude to his commentary on tractate Avot, he says, "The soul needs to rest and to do what relaxes the senses, such as looking at beautiful decorations and objects, so that weariness be removed from it." Art and architecture can lift depression and energise the senses.

His focus on the visual allows Maimonides to explain an otherwise hard-to-understand law, namely that a Cohen with a physical blemish may not officiate in the Temple. This goes against the general principle that

Rachmana liba ba'i, "God wants the heart," the inner spirit. The exclusion, says Maimonides, has nothing to do with the nature of prayer or Divine service but rather with popular attitudes. "The multitude does not estimate man by his true form," he writes, and instead judges by appearances. This may be wrong but it was a fact that could not be ignored in the Sanctuary whose entire purpose was to bring the experience of God down to earth in a physical structure with regular routines performed by ordinary human beings. Its purpose was to make people sense the invisible Divine presence in visible phenomena.

Thus there is a place for aesthetics and the visual in the life of the spirit. In modern times, Rav Kook in particular looked forward to a renewal of Jewish art in the reborn land of Israel. He himself, as I have written elsewhere, loved Rembrandt's paintings, and said that they represented the light of the first day of creation. He was also supportive, if guardedly so, of the Bezalel Academy of Art, one of the first signs of this renewal.

Hiddur mitzvah -- bringing beauty to the fulfillment of a command -- goes all the way back to the Mishkan. The great difference between ancient Israel and ancient Greece is that the Greeks believed in the holiness of beauty whereas Judaism spoke of hadrat kodesh, the beauty of holiness.

I believe that beauty has power, and in Judaism it has always had a spiritual purpose: to make us aware of the universe as a work of art, testifying to the supreme Artist, God Himself. *Covenant and Conversation 5780 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l ©2020 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org*

"The paper sent a reporter to interview me on my 90th birthday. "What's the secret to longevity?" he asked. "Simple," I said. "Keep breathing"



RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"Now you bring near to yourself Aaron your brother and his sons with him.... to minister to Me. You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aaron your brother, for honor and splendor" (Exodus 28:1,2) The two leaders during this interim "desert" period of 40 years were Moses the prophet and Aaron the kohen-priest. Moses's main task was to bring the Word of God to instruct the Israelites how to behave with each other as individuals and families and how to interact with the world at large as a nation; Aaron's main task was to maintain the religious ceremonies and celebrations in the sanctuary in order to serve as the guardian over how the Israelites were to serve their God.

From this perspective, there seems to have been a fairly clear line of demarcation between affairs of state and affairs of religion. Nonetheless,

because it was God who was the Ultimate Architect of every realm of life as well as the Ultimate Source for the laws of their governance, there could never be more than a fairly transparent curtain separating the two; after all, serving the will of the One God of compassionate righteousness and moral justice had to be the operating goals of both religion and state, respectively and together, as we are mandated by the Bible again and again.

However, there is one crucial distinction: Although there must be fundamental and absolute principles of justice governing all affairs, still changing conditions in the social and economic spheres as well as differences between the two individuals standing before the judge must certainly influence the outcome of the judgment; justice dare not be blind (see Babylonian Talmud, Bava Metzia 83). Hence it is very rare that two cases, even if similar to each other, will be adjudicated in the exact same way, and a great deal of latitude must ultimately be given to the individual rendering judgment.

This is not the case in ritual law as expressed in the Sanctuary or the synagogue, as I believe we may derive from the opening verses of our biblical portion, which is dedicated to the priesthood and its functions. For example, it is fascinating how Aaron is introduced together with his two sons, and is then presented with the special garments he must wear when serving in the sanctuary.

Unlike Moses and the prophets throughout the generations, the priesthood (kehuna) is indeed transmitted from father to son; unless the priest is properly garbed in his special vestments, he may not enter the Temple precincts. The kohen-priest, you see, is entrusted with transmitting the outer form of Judaism, its external structure from generation to generation; it is the task of the charismatic prophet to remind us the inner fire and internal spirit of our faith. External garb may be inherited and ritual performance may be taught; but inspiration of the Holy Spirit is a divine gift and an individual acquisition which is totally independent of genealogy.

To be sure, there can be no meaningful religious experience without the sense of the Divine in the here and now, without the spirit of the prophet; but neither can religion be maintained without the continuity of the kohen-priest. And this continuity is equally crucial to the religious-ritual experience. From the earliest times of the pre-Socratic philosophers, humanity has desperately sought for constancy in a world of change, for continuity in a world of flux, for the ability to participate in that which was here before I was born and which will still be here after I die.

This, too, is an important aspect of the quest for God, the search for the Divine. And so we have the human need to maintain time-honored traditions, to repeat familial customs, to pray not from an ever-changing

loose-leaf but rather from an ancient text which is wine-stained and tear-worn from feasts and fasts, which go back centuries and even millennia.

After the Yom Kippur War, Prime Minister Golda Meir went to New York for a dinner in her honor sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of American Organizations. As the young president of a fledgling Center for Russian Jewry at the time, I was invited and seated two tables away from the Prime Minister. I was fascinated by the undisguised boredom on her face as she was forced to sit through the unending litany of inane and sycophantic speeches, the evident relief she exuded when at long last the dinner was being served, and the ambidextrous grace she exhibited in balancing knife, fork and cigarette as she elegantly began to eat and smoke at the same time.

And then, to her obvious annoyance, an un-programmed "private" presentation of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's interpretation of the Haggada was handed to her just as she was taking her third bite. I know of the Kaplan Haggada, a sincere attempt to make the seder more relevant by substituting the Holocaust for the Egyptian enslavement and the establishment of the State of Israel for the desert experience, and they presented it to her with great pride and flourish.

She seemed a bit exasperated, put down her utensils and flipped through the Haggada, and then, in true Israeli fashion, returned it, saying, "Thank you very much, but I'm not really interested."

The delegation of two looked shocked. "But Madam Prime Minister, surely you're not an Orthodox Jew and this Haggada brings the story up to date, to the State of Israel."

"No," said Golda, "I'm not an Orthodox Jew and I'll never be one. But I do make a Pessah Seder, especially for my grandchildren. And what is most important to me is that my grand-daughter intone at my Seder the same words that my grandmother said at her Seder." That is the eternity of Israel! © 2020 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

"You know you're getting older when you're told to slow down by your doctor, instead of by the police." - Joan Rivers



RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The Torah reading of this week establishes for us the commandment of having an eternal flame burn in the Mishkan and later in the Temple in Jerusalem as well. This commandment is repeated regarding the Alter in the Mishkan and in the Temple where an eternal flame was also to be present on the Alter of sacrifices. The concept and symbol of an eternal

flame has been repeated throughout Jewish history and is found to be present in all Jewish synagogues throughout the world and throughout the ages.

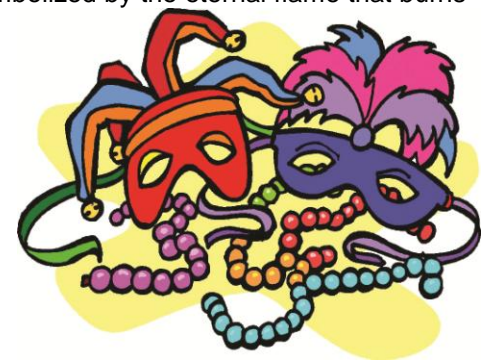
I have often wondered as to the significance of a flame of fire somehow representing eternity. I think that this has to do with the fact that the Torah instructs us to imitate our Creator to the extent that is humanly possible. The first creation of God, so to speak, was light, energy, fire if you will. The first invention of man according to Midrash was at the conclusion of the Sabbath when human beings first learned how to create fire. It is the origin of our custom in the Havdala service to have a fire lit, over which we bless God for allowing us to create this most necessary of all human inventions.

Fire is a double -edged sword. It warms and lights and it damages and destroys. Like all human inventions, especially those of our modern world over the past century, the use of all inventions contains ambivalence. The invention can be used for great and good things and it also can destroy all that has been accomplished.

Fire therefore represents the human capacity for good and for evil. The Torah teaches us that this capacity is an eternal one and that the challenge of having good triumph over evil never disappears. Good provides eternal energy and drives the engine of morality and holiness. Evil also contributes to the advancement of civilization though it must always be controlled and dominated by the good sense of morality that is innate within us.

Most advancements in medicine have occurred through discoveries made in trying to heal the wounds of war and violence and the prevention of the spread of plagues and epidemics. In effect, the fire of creativity that is the hallmark of human beings, from infancy onwards, is an eternal gift that the Lord has bestowed upon us. This is perhaps part of the symbolism of the eternal flame described in this week's Torah reading.

Our sense of creativity is symbolized by the eternal flame that burns in our houses of worship. But that flame also burns deep within the the soul of human beings. It is that internal flame that can and should be converted to an eternal flame by good deeds, moral values, and good intentions. Human beings require symbols to actuate noble values and ideas. All the symbols that appear in the Mishkan come to reinforce the value system that the



Torah teaches us. An eternal flame represents much more than the burning wick of a candle. ©2020 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

A well dressed, debonair man in his mid nineties enters an upscale cocktail lounge and finds a seat next to a good looking, younger woman in her mid eighties, at the most. Trying to remember his best pick-up line, he says, "So tell me, do I come here often?"



RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

The Torah tells us in this week's portion that on the hem of the priestly robe (ephod) bells will be sewn. As the priest enters the sanctuary with the bells on his robe, a voice will be heard ("ve-nishma kolo"). (Exodus 28:33-35) What is the significance of these bells? And whose voice is the Torah referring to?

On its simplest level, the voice refers to that of the bells. Among his many duties, the priest would offer atonement for his own sin. As it would be embarrassing for others to be present during this personal teshuva process, the bells signal that those present should leave, allowing the priest private moments with God.

An important teaching emerges. There are times when we must allow others, even our most righteous and pious, personal space to grieve, to rejoice or to reflect.

Another idea: With many people in the sanctuary, it was only fair that they know when the priest was entering so they not be taken by surprise.

A significant lesson can be derived. Whenever entering into a room, it's important in the spirit of the priestly bells to knock, protecting the privacy of those inside. Privacy is so important that Jewish Law tells us that one should be careful to knock before entering anywhere -- even one's own home or a child's room. (Pesachim 112a.)

Yet another thought. If the small priestly bells could be heard, it tells us that the atmosphere of the holy sanctuary was serene -- there prevailed the kind of decorum, the kind of quiet necessary for reflection.

Once again, a key message. In a place of holy worship it is important to maintain a level of silence in order for people to dialogue with God.

One final observation. The bells were placed aside pomegranate shaped objects. Midrashic literature teaches that since the pomegranate is so full of seeds it is symbolic of the capacity of even the greatest sinner to sprout forth goodness. Hence, when entering the sanctuary, the bells could

be heard ringing out as they clang with the pomegranates to teach that even the most wicked could wake up and reconnect.

This concept can help us to understand whose voice was heard in the bells. The term ve-nishma kolo is initially found in the Torah when Adam and Eve hear the voice of God in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:8) All firsts in the Torah, teach us the real meaning of the term. From this perspective, it could be argued that the voice present in these verses refers to God. It was God's voice that can be heard in the hearts and souls of everyone -- even a wrongdoer.

Some think a synagogue is meant only for the most pure. But this is not the case. A synagogue is a spiritual hospital where all of us, with our imperfect souls, come to be healed. The bells clinging to the pomegranates is a soft call telling each of us that no matter how far we've strayed, we have the capacity to hear His voice, the inner voice of God, and return. ©2020 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

A senior citizen is driving on the highway. His wife calls him on his cell phone and in a worried voice says, "Herman, be careful! I just heard on the radio that there is a madman driving the wrong way on Route 280!"

Herman says, "I know, but there isn't just one, there are hundreds!"



ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

Adar Rishon & Sheni

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

When there is a leap year and we add a second Adar to the calendar, our Sages ("Tanaim") in the Talmud are divided as to which month we are referring to when we simply say "Adar". Rabbi Yehudah states that when we use the term "Adar" alone, we are denoting the first Adar (Adar Rishon) and when referring to the second Adar (Adar Sheni) we must indicate "Adar Sheni". Thus when signing a document on a leap year, if we are referring to the first Adar we would only write Adar and when we refer to the second Adar we must indicate "Adar Sheni".

Rabbi Meir disagrees and states that on a leap year, when we refer to Adar alone, the reference is to the second Adar (Tractate Nedarim 63a). Most of our sages however, follow the previously stated view of Rabbi Yehudah. The Rambam (Maimonides) however follows the view of Rabbi Meir. In any case, when writing a divorce (Get) both Adars are referred to by name, either "Adar Rishon" or "Adar Sheni".

This controversy impacts on many situations. For example, if a person rents a house during a leap year, does the lease expire on the first or the second Adar? The renter might claim that it is the second Adar, but

the owner could insist that it is the first Adar. In such a situation some Rabbis advise them to split the second month, while others state that the owner has the upper hand, since the property belongs to him. Thus the burden of proof is on the renter that the lease is referring to the second Adar (Hamotzi M'chavero Alav Haraya).

This controversy would also affect when a person would commemorate a Yahrzeit (the day on which a father or mother or any close relative died and the traditional Kaddish is said); hence, the tradition of some to recite "Kaddish" on both "Adars"

There is some indication in our literature that when we memorialize the death of our teacher Moses on the seventh of Adar, we refer to the second Adar because of its close proximity to the holiday of Purim.

One can ask as well, how do we announce the new month in the synagogue the Shabbat prior to Rosh Chodesh (the beginning of the month)?

In short, in all the cases cited, there seem to be different opinions and the prudent thing to do is to indicate in each instance, what month we are referring to; "Adar Rishon" or "Adar Sheni". ©2018 Rabbi M. Weiss and Encyclopedia Talmudit

*A reporter was interviewing a 104 year - old woman:
"And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?"
the reporter asked. She simply replied,
"No peer pressure."*

RABBI JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

Migdal Ohr

"**A**nd they shall be upon Aharon and on his sons when they enter... and they shall not bear sin and die..." (Shmos 28:43) What sin are we talking about here? Rashi says that if the Kohain is not wearing all his special garments, he is liable for death. All the commentaries question this because we have another source that already says they need all their garments when they serve. If they are not wearing their special uniform they are not "wearing" their priesthood, and they are like non-Kohanim who serve, who are liable for the death penalty.

Several commentaries say that this posuk refers specifically to the michnasayim, the linen shorts the Kohanim wore under their other clothing. The posuk is teaching us that these pants, though primarily meant for modesty, to cover the private areas of the Kohain's body, are also included in the Bigdei Kehuna and not wearing them would make one deserving of

death for having performed the Avodah without the proper garments as above.

The Haamek Davar elaborates on this a bit. He says that the michnasayim were of lesser sanctity than the other garments. While the others imparted holiness to those who wore them as the parsha tells us, "to sanctify him to serve Me," the pants were only to conceal their private parts. While Moshe dressed them in their uniforms, they put the breeches on by themselves. The other vestments were put on in the courtyard, but these were put on outside the Mishkan or Bais HaMikdash.

With this in mind, we can now understand why there might be a special necessity to teach us that failure to wear the pants would result in a sin worthy of the death penalty. Because they do not impart holiness to the wearer, one might treat them cavalierly. He might think it's just a "nice" thing to ensure that his body is not exposed even to the stones beneath his feet but not consider it a huge offense.

However, our service of Hashem is not limited to rituals and ceremonies. It includes thoughtfulness and respect of others, to the same degree that Hashem wants us to be respectful of His mitzvos. Were we to downplay the importance of respecting others and minimize the severity of offending them, we would be missing out on a crucial aspect of Judaism and Avodas Hashem.

Haman said we were a scattered nation. Carefully monitoring our behavior lest we hurt anyone in any way shows that we are unified and united under the banner of Torah.

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l would generally leave the Yeshiva during the lunch break, and a different boy was honored each day with escorting him down the steps to a waiting car. One day, the boy, not realizing that the Rosh HaYeshiva was not settled in the car, slammed the door on R' Moshe's fingers.

He let out not a peep. A few blocks away, R' Moshe asked the driver to pull over, whereupon the sage opened the door and released the bloody fingers of his frail hand. The driver realized what had happened and exclaimed, "Why didn't the Rosh Yeshiva say something earlier?!"

R' Moshe explained that if he had cried out in pain, or even opened the door immediately, the boy who had done it to him would have felt terrible about what was clearly an accident. He therefore controlled himself not to react in any way, lest he cause pain to another. He had trained his body to check with his soul before acting. ©2020 Rabbi J. Gewirtz and Migdal Ohr

"At my age, I don't buy green bananas!" - George Burns



RABBI DAVID LEVINE

Kohein's Clothing

Parashat Tetzaveh contains the commandments concerning the bigdei Kahunah, the clothes of the Temple Priests, which were required to be worn whenever a Kohein was serving in the Beit Hamikdash. There was one set of the special garments for the Kohein Gadol (Aharon) and the other set for all Kohanim. The four garments worn by every Kohein were the (1) michnasayim, the short trousers, (2) kutonet tashbeitz, a tunic which covered the upper body and extended to the part of the legs not covered by the michnasayim, (3) the avneit, a girdle, and (4) the m'il, an over-tunic. The Kohein Gadol had four other garments called the bigdei zahav, the golden clothes. These consisted of (1) the eiphod, like a bib with an apron, (2) the choshein, a square pocket which lay on the heart and is often called a breastplate, (3) the tzitz, a band of gold on which was written kodesh laHashem, Holy unto Hashem, and was worn across the forehead, and (4) the mitznefet, or turban which was bound by the tzitz from which several bands of t'cheilet, a royal blue, were used to attach and bind the tzitz to the mitznefet.

HaRav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains that the garments "form such an essential presentation of the priestly character on which the validity of the offering depends, that, without them the priest is regarded as a zar, foreigner, towards the Sanctuary and, as such would fall under the dictum "all foreigners who bring near (sacrifice before the altar) will die." The clothes had to be from the general population so that the Kohanim represented the people in all their work. It is only when he is wearing the garments which were donated by the people that he indicates that he is performing a mitzvah that was commanded to all the people. Without these clothes, the Kohein appeared as an individual rather than part of the whole community."

Each of the garments has additional messages. The trousers were made of white linen of six-ply threads. "They accordingly clothe in purity the whole vegetable nature of Man (nourishment and reproduction) in accordance with the idea for which it was created." The Gemara in Yoma describes the flax for linen growing up in straight, unbranched stems. Its message: that one must grow up straight with an unwavering ascent to the holiness of Hashem and the purity of His Torah. The upper tunic represented the animal nature of man as it clothed the upper parts of the body that were not covered by the trousers. This garment covered areas of man's lust and allurements. What made this garment even more unique was a feature which was woven in small box settings (a basket pattern) sunken squares for inseting stones. This raised the garment from

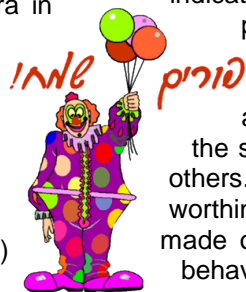
the idea of turning away (from evil) to a new level of readiness and the higher sphere to perform holy tasks.

The girdle represents girding oneself to be ready for action. The girdles of both kinds of Kohein contained the four types of materials, the two reds, the sky-blue wools, stitched onto a white linen ground. This represented striving for perfection by using all one's forces to achieve this goal. The four colors also lend credence to the idea of joining all one's forces: White was the symbol of purity, the two reds (one darker and brighter than the other) are a symbol of Life, the upper and lower life, human life and animal life, sky-blue is the godly element in Man. These colors indicate a full human existence with purity as its base.

The large tunic, covered the entire body and laid over the pure areas with another layer of sky-blue, the godly element of Man. Every aspect of Man was now covered in the color of Heaven. The tunic enclosed the throat and extended all the way to the heel in a continuous closed seam. The pomegranate was the symbol of fruitful seed and was placed on the bottom of the garment to indicate that the blessing will come to Man through the fulfillment of Hashem's mitzvot. There were also bells at the bottom so that all could hear the movements of the Kohein Gadol. Hirsch indicates that the Kohein Gadol was performing his duties on behalf of the community and "hearing" the Kohein Gadol was not only for the purpose of making sure that he was still alive but that the people should hear him performing that task.

Hirsch explains that all four colors are used in the breastplate and the bib. "The parts of the body covered by these two garments recognize the higher side of the human being: feelings (the back), will (the breast), action (the shoulder joint), and power (loins)." Here the threads were not woven into their usual six-ply thread but now gold was added so that the threads were now seven-fold. The gold thread was symbolic of "solid, unaltering nobility." Seven was the symbol of "completion, perfection, the joining of the visible created-six to the One invisible Creator."

The Urim v'Tumim are an "unapproachable secret, but the words themselves indicate an 'enlightenment' and 'moral perfection'." Ur is an indication of light and warmth while the Tumim are an indication of perfection and completeness. The clothes therefore help man to progress through the stages of tzedek, right, justice, moral and social development, to the stage of tzedakah, the positive actions of righteousness and doing right in the eyes of Hashem, to the stage of chesed, the Godly ideal of kindness and compassion for others. The turban and the miters were signs of distinction and worthiness similar to a crown. For the regular Kohein the turban was made of fine, white linen reminding him to raise his thoughts and his behavior from base instincts and impure thoughts. The turban of the



Kohein Gadol had the blue strands of Heaven indicating Godly devotion leading to a base of gold, the tzitz, reminding him of his unaltering nobility as he was dedicated to Hashem. This tzitz had the unique ability to purify and exact atonement. This was the quality of total devotion to Hashem.

We have seen that the clothes of the Kohanim were not only special in their appearance, but each carried the ability to direct our thoughts and the thoughts of the Kohanim towards higher moral behavior. Our immoral and irresponsible behavior has led us to the destruction of the two Temples and the abandonment of the special clothes of the Kohanim which would enable us to improve our thoughts and our behaviors. May we soon be worthy of the reinstatement of the Temple and the service of the Kohanim in the meaningful bigdei Kahunah. ©2020 Rabbi D. Levine

*What do you call it when you have your Grandma on speed dial?
Instagram!*

RABBI MORDECHAI SCHIFFMAN

Psyched for Torah

How often do you feel awe, admiration, and elevation while witnessing beauty and excellence? Appreciation is one of the twenty-four character strengths and virtues outlined by psychologists Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman that enhance well-being. They define appreciation as the "ability to find, recognize, and take pleasure in the existence of goodness in the physical and social worlds." Peterson and Seligman make an important distinction between three different types of goodness that one can feel and show appreciation for: 1) physical beauty, 2) skill or talent, 3) virtue or moral goodness. Mara Luisa Martinez-Mart and her colleagues reported in a recent study that individuals who score high on an Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence scale (which includes all three types of appreciation) generally report higher senses of well-being, life-satisfaction, purpose, and hope. They also report more impactful spiritual experiences, and are more empathetic, sympathetic, and concerned for the well-being of others.

It is clear from the sheer number of verses related to the construction of the Mishkan, its vessels, and the clothing of the Kohanim, that the Torah is deeply interested in transmitting a theology of beauty. Moshe is commanded in the beginning of Parshat Tetzave to make holy garments for his brother Aharon "Iekavod u-le-tifaret" -- "for honor and for beauty" (Shemot 28:2). The commentators differ on the exact meaning of the verse. Elements of the dispute rest on a textual ambiguity, which perhaps also reflects a deeper spiritual message.

Textually, it is unclear which noun "for honor and beauty" is modifying. Some understand that the clothing itself must be honorable and

beautiful, so that if it is ripped or worn out, it would be invalid (Ralbag). Others argue that it is the Kohen Gadol who is being honored and beautified by the clothing, as the garments described were also worn by royalty (Ramban). Still others argue that it is not the clothing, nor is it the Kohen Gadol, who is being honored, but it is G-d (Sforno) or the Mishkan (Rambam) that is being beautified by the special clothing. Regardless of which approach we take, it is evident that there is an inherent value in magnifying and glorifying the physical beauty as it relates to deeply sacred rituals. The spiritual experience is enhanced by the surrounding physical beauty.

Yet, the sense of awe and appreciation is not limited to the realm of just physical beauty. Inherent in witnessing and experiencing the presence of the Kohen Gadol was also an appreciation of skill and talent. As is evident from the verses describing the performance of the sacrificial rituals, especially in the context of Yom Kippur, the work of the Kohen Gadol was complicated and required practice, precision, and determination. No doubt, spectators witnessing the Kohen Gadol (and even modern readers imagining the ancient scene) feel a sense of awe and appreciation of the skill and talent required to successfully execute the rituals.

In his commentary, Aderet Eliyahu, Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, better known as the Ben Ish Chai, adds the final dimension of appreciation into the mix, namely, virtue and moral goodness. He argues that clothing cannot be an inherent symbol of character. If someone who is known to demonstrate low moral fortitude wears royal or regal attire, the contrast between his or her internal flaws and the external pretense, makes the wearer even lower in the eyes of others. It is only if the onlookers know for certain the pristine character of the wearer of the garments that the clothing can enhance his or her stature. There is a Talmudic tradition that the Kohen Gadol could only emerge from the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur if he was of high moral character. Therefore, when the Kohen Gadol emerged on Yom Kippur, everyone was aware of his virtue. The beauty of his priestly garments was integrally intertwined with the beauty of his virtue, character, and moral goodness.

The Mishkan, and particularly the role of the Kohen Gadol within it, provides a paradigm for us to nurture our own sense of appreciation.

If we can learn how to cultivate this trait within a spiritual paradigm, combining an appreciation of beauty, talent, and virtue, we can enhance and deepen our relationship with ourselves, with others, and with G-d. ©2020 Rabbi M. Schiffman



Poo-rim Samayach!