

Morahs



Aish

No more pencils, no more books! No more...oh, wait, we're the teachers, aren't we?

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

Rabbi Sacks zt"l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Office of Rabbi Sacks will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.

One of the most important Jewish contributions to our understanding of leadership is its early insistence of what, in the eighteenth century, Montesquieu called "the separation of powers." (The Spirit of Laws (Encyc. Britannica, 1952) Neither authority nor power was to be located in a single individual or office. Instead, leadership was divided between different kinds of roles.

One of the key divisions -- anticipating by millennia the "separation of church and state" -- was between the King, the head of state, on the one hand, and the High Priest, the most senior religious office, on the other.

This was revolutionary. The kings of Mesopotamian city states and the Pharaohs of Egypt were considered demigods or chief intermediary with the gods. They officiated at supreme religious festivals. They were regarded as the representatives of heaven on earth.

In Judaism, by stark contrast, monarchy had little or no religious function (other than the recital by the King of the book of the covenant every seven years in the ritual known as hakhel.) Indeed the chief objection to the Hasmonean Kings on the part of the Sages was that they broke this ancient rule, some of them declaring themselves High Priests also. The Talmud records the objection: "Let the crown of kingship be sufficient for you. Leave the crown of priesthood to the sons of Aaron." (Kiddushin 66a) The effect of this principle was to secularise power. (In Judaism, power, except that exercised by God, is not holy.)

No less fundamental was the division of religious leadership itself into two distinct functions: that of the Prophet and the Priest. That is dramatised in this week's parsha, focussing as it does on the role of the Priest to the exclusion of that of the Prophet. Tetzaveh is the first parsha since the

beginning of the book of Exodus in which Moses' name is missing. It is supremely the priestly, as opposed to prophetic, parsha.

Priests and Prophets were very different in their roles, despite the fact that some Prophets, most famously Ezekiel, were Priests also. The primary distinctions were: 1. The role of Priest was dynastic, that of Prophet was charismatic. Priests were the sons of Aaron. They were born into the role. Parenthood had no part in the role of the Prophet. Moses' own children were not Prophets.

2. The Priest wore robes of office. There was no official uniform for a Prophet.

3. The priesthood was exclusively male; not so prophecy. The Talmud lists seven women who were Prophets: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther.

4. The role of the Priest did not change over time. There was a precise annual timetable of sacrifices that did not vary from year to year. The Prophet by contrast could not know what his mission would be until God revealed in to him. Prophecy was never a matter of routine.

5. As a result, Prophet and Priest had different senses of time. Time for the Priest was what it was for Plato: the "moving image of eternity," a matter of everlasting recurrence and return. (Timaeus 37d) The Prophet lived in historical time. His today was not the same as yesterday and tomorrow would be different again. One way of putting this is that the Priest heard the word of God for all The Prophet heard the word of God for this time.

6. The Priest was "holy" and therefore set apart from the people. He had to eat his food in a state of purity, and had to avoid contact with the dead. The Prophet by contrast often lived among the people and spoke a language they understood. Prophets could come from any social class.

7. The key words for the Priest were tahir, tamei, kodesh and chol: "pure", "impure", "sacred", and "secular". The key words for the Prophets were tzedek, mishpat, chessed and rachamim: "righteousness", "justice", "love", and "compassion". It is not that the Prophets were concerned with morality while the Priests were not. Some of the key moral



HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
WHOEVER'S MAKING ALL THAT NOISE, PLEASE MUTE YOURSELF!
WAIT, WE CAN'T HEAR YOU, YOU'RE ON MUTE!
MORAHS AISH IS A PARSHA NEWSLETTER THAT'S BEEN ZOOMING AROUND
FOR A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR...A YEAR...A YEAR...A YEAR..
OH SORRY, MY ZOOM FROZE THERE FOR A SEC.
MY APOLOGIES, DID YOU ACTUALLY THINK THERE WAS GOING TO BE
SOMETHING MEANINGFUL HERE TO READ? HAHAAAA! GOOD ONE!



The Morahs Aish theme for our Purim parsha newsletter this year came from Leah Ayala the kallah! The ridiculous snippets are just things that made me laugh. Yes, believe it or not, I actually thought they were funny (scary, right? ☹) Chag Purim Samayach!
And if you're still reading, there's nothing else to see here. Really.
Go away.

imperatives, such as "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," come from priestly sections of the Torah. It is rather that Priests think in terms of a moral order embedded in the structure of reality, sometimes called a "sacred ontology." Prophets tended to think not of things or acts in themselves but in terms of relationships between persons or social classes.

8. The task of the Priest is boundary maintenance. The key priestly verbs are le-havdil and le-horot, to distinguish one thing from another and apply the appropriate rules. Priests gave rulings, Prophets gave warnings.

9. There is nothing personal about the role of a Priest. If one -- even a High Priest -- was unable to officiate at a given service, another could be substituted. Prophecy was essentially personal. The Sages said that "no two Prophets prophesied in the same style" (Sanhedrin 89a). Hosea was not Amos. Isaiah was not Jeremiah. Each Prophet had a distinctive voice.

10. Priests constituted a religious establishment. The Prophets, at least those whose messages have been eternalised in Tanach, were not an establishment but an anti-establishment, critical of the powers-that-be.

The roles of Priest and Prophet varied over time. The Priests always officiated at the sacrificial service of the Temple. But they were also Judges. The Torah says that if a case is too difficult to be dealt with by the local court, you should "Go to the Priests, the Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict" (Deut. 17:9). Moses blesses the tribe of Levi saying that "They will teach

Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel" (Deut. 33:10), suggesting that they had a teaching role as well.

Malachi, a Prophet of the Second Temple period, says: "For the lips of a Priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth" (Mal. 2:7). The Priest was guardian of Israel's sacred social order. Yet it is clear throughout Tanach that the priesthood was liable to corruption. There were times when Priests took bribes, others when they compromised Israel's faith and performed idolatrous practices. Sometimes they became involved in politics. Some held themselves as an elite apart from and disdainful toward the people as a whole.

At such times the Prophet became the voice of God and the conscience of society, reminding the people of their spiritual and moral vocation, calling on them to return and repent, reminding the people of their duties to God and to their fellow humans and warning of the consequences if they did not heed the call.

The priesthood became massively politicised and corrupted during the Hellenistic era, especially under the Seleucids in the second century BCE. Hellenised High Priests like Jason and Menelaus introduced idolatrous practises, even at one stage a statue of Zeus, into the Temple. This provoked the internal revolt that led to the events we recall on the festival of Chanukah.

Yet despite the fact that the initiator of the revolt, Mattityahu, was himself a righteous Priest, corruption re-emerged under the Hasmonean Kings. The Qumran sect known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls was particularly critical of the priesthood in Jerusalem. It is striking that the Sages traced their spiritual ancestry to the Prophets, not the Priests (Avot 1:1).

The Kohanim were essential to ancient Israel. They gave the religious life its structure and continuity, its rituals and routines, its festivals and celebrations. Their task was to ensure that Israel remained a holy people with God in its midst. But they were an establishment, and like every establishment, at best they were the guardians of the nation's highest values, but at worst they became corrupt, using their position for power and engaging in internal politics for personal advantage. That is the fate of establishments, especially those whose membership is a matter of birth.

That is why the Prophets were essential. They were the world's first social critics, mandated by God to speak truth to power. Still today, for good or otherwise, religious establishments always resemble Israel's priesthood. Who, though, are Israel's prophets at the present time?

The essential lesson of the Torah is that leadership



can never be confined to one class or role. It must always be distributed and divided. In ancient Israel, Kings dealt with power, Priests with holiness, and Prophets with the integrity and faithfulness of society as a whole. In Judaism, leadership is less a function than a field of tensions between different roles, each with its own perspective and voice.

Leadership in Judaism is counterpoint, a musical form defined as "the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in such a way that they establish a harmonic relationship while retaining their linear individuality." It is this internal complexity that gives Jewish leadership its vigour, saving it from entropy, the loss of energy over time.

Leadership must always, I believe, be like this. Every team must be made up of people with different roles, strengths, temperaments and perspectives. They must always be open to criticism and they must always be on the alert against groupthink. The glory of Judaism is its insistence that only in heaven is there one commanding Voice. Down here on earth no individual may ever hold a monopoly of leadership.

Out of the clash of perspectives -- King, Priest and Prophet -- comes something larger than any individual or role could achieve. *Covenant and Conversation 5781 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l*
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What's the difference between a teacher and a train?

The teacher says "Spit out your gum!" and the train says, "Chew, chew!"

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"**M**ake a forehead-plate of pure gold, and engrave on it... 'Holy to God'. Attach a twist of sky-blue wool to it" (Exodus 28:36-37) This week's portion of Tetzaveh, wherein Moses' name is not mentioned even once, exclusively belongs to Aaron, whose name appears more than 30 times. It is a portion devoted to the holy vestments and the consecration of Aaron's priestly descendents. This is the week of the Kohen-Priest but in actuality it is the week of the entire nation of Israel, a nation created to be wholly holy, an entire nation of priests, dedicated to God.

Such is the Divine charge to the Israelite nation immediately prior to the revelation at Sinai "and you shall be unto me a kingdom of Priest-Kohanim and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6); mark every word of the commentary of S'forno to this verse: "You shall be a kingdom of Priest-Kohanim to understand and to teach to the entire human race the necessity of the calling out in the name of the Lord, so that they might serve Him together... for from Zion shall come forth Torah(to the world)" (S'forno Adloc.).



The day of the observant Jew begins by expressing the innate "Kohen-dom" of every single member of our nation. Before the Jew does anything else he fills a large vessel with water, his left hand pours the water over the right, and the right hand pours the water over the left, for three cycles. Just as during the priestly ablutions in the Temple so is this act of ritual washing to be performed with Koach Gavra – from ones own vitality. The blessing we make as we wash, "Netilat Yadaim" refers to the lifting or consecrating of the hands. "They shall make me a Temple so that I may dwell in their Midst" – the world must become the Temple and our every action – as priests- must be consecrated to God.

Our "Kohen-Dom" continues with the two Blessings we make in which we thank God for giving us His Torah. Our commentaries explain that the first blessing refers to the Written Law and the second the Oral Law. After the blessings we must read two selections, one from the Written Torah and one from the Talmud. It is fascinating that out of all the verses of the Written Torah our Sages choose the Priestly Benediction – "May God bless you and keep you..." as the blessings which we recite. We begin the day with Priestly actions and Priestly words.

On Friday evening we greet the Sabbath by kindling the candelabrum-Menorah in every Jewish home, by reciting the blessing of sanctification over wine reminiscent of the wine libations at the alter, and bless our children once again with the Priestly blessing. Our special Sabbath Hallah-bread is our form of our Sanctuaries show-bread, and the salt in which we lightly dip the Hallah represents the salt at every sacrifice; this symbolizes the teaching just as salt never spoils, so will our covenant with God last eternally.

On Passover we dress in special white garb (kittel) at the seder, each family brought its own pascal lamb sacrifice in Jerusalem, and we even wash our hands before eating the vegetables dipped in saltwater; all of this is reminiscent of what the Priest did in the Holy Temple. On Yom Kippur we likewise wear the white robes and dramatically repeat each word of the Priestly words of confession and expiation in a dramatic re-experiencing of the words and actions of the High Priest in the Holy Temple.

And if the Priests conducted the sacrificial services in the Temple, every Jew is capable of conducting the services in our Temple. Individuals without any priestly lineage or Levitic Lineage can recite the Amidah for the congregation, cantillate the weekly Biblical portion and call people up to the Torah. Indeed, as our Biblical reading of Tetzaveh describes the High Priest's eight special garments, it emphasizes "the tzitz" – the pure gold forehead-plate, on which is written "Holy to God". A twist of royal, sky-blue wool (tkhelet) was attached to this forehead-plate, evidently expressing our

descent from the royalty of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

Today, the tzitzit – ritual fringes with a string of royal sky-blue wool – may be worn by every Jew, enabling the one who wears it to feel and act with the Majesty of the High Priest of old. There is no more democratic institution in our present day synagogue, where in everyone may be draped in a prayer shawl with ritual fringes, everyone together. Just ask an unJewish visitor to distinguish between the laymen and the Clergy and he will not be able to do so. We are all Kohanim-Priests and must continue to teach first Israel and then the world. ©2021 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

Why do geography teachers find mountains so funny?
Because they're hill-areas!



RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Parshat Tetzaveh deals with the garments of the high priest. While garments we wear can reflect who we are, they can also serve to hide our true personalities.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the word beged, which means clothing, can also be pronounced bagad which means betrayal. Colloquially, it is said, "clothes make the man," but in the same breath, clothes can also hide the person.

So, too, words. Words are the garments that mirror our inner feelings, our inner emotions. But words, like garments, have their limitations.

A chassidic observation notes that the aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, marks the beginning of articulation of speech. It is followed by three letters, bet-gimel-daled which together spell bagad. This teaches that speech is not a conduit through which one can express his or her thoughts fully. A level of concealment always remains.

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, in his book "Talks on the Parsha" notes, "Speech is the garment of thought, expressing the thought even as it veils its deeper dimensions."

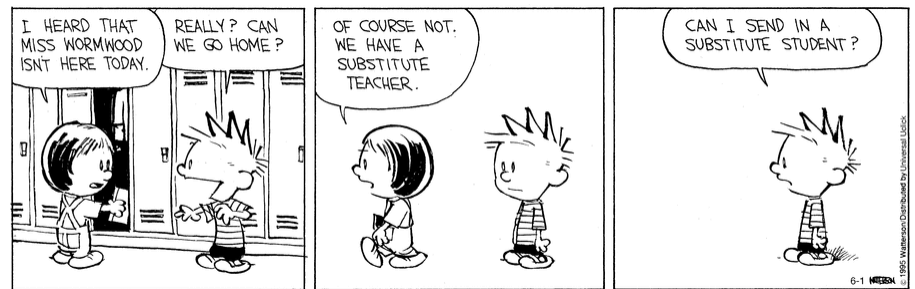
Ludwig Wittgenstein, the twentieth-century Austrian philosopher, in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus adds: "Language disguises the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognized."

One would imagine that the greater the eloquence of an individual, the greater the ability to articulate thoughts. The Israeli poet and writer Hayyim Nahman Bialik, a master of language with perhaps no equal, in his essay "Cedars of Lebanon: Revealmant and Concealment in Language"

suggests that no matter one's gift of language, as much as words display they veil; the inner thought, on some level, always remains hidden.

The matter is clear. Language, in all of its facets, does not allow us to enter its inner chambers, to get at the very essence [of the idea or feeling]. The reverse is the case. [Words] themselves are barriers [concealing what we wish to express].

Throughout the millennia, beautiful thoughts have been expressed about the symbolism of the priestly garments, which should be taken to heart. But on some level, their meaning remains hidden. Like language, as much as they reveal, they conceal. ©2021 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



RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

In this year of 5781 here in Jerusalem, the Torah reading of Tetzaveh coincides with the day of Purim itself. There seems to be great similarities between this Torah reading and the reading of the book of Esther on Purim. Throughout the entire Torah, we find that the name of our great teacher Moshe (after his birth) is found in each weekly portion, with one lone exception. In Tetzaveh Moshe's name never appears, even though we are aware that Moshe is the one who wrote this portion of the Torah and taught it to the Jewish people for all eternity. We are aware that Moshe is the hidden author, the director of events behind the scenes.

There are many comments by the scholars of Israel over the ages who try to explain why this is so. But for the purposes of this short essay, it is sufficient simply to realize that Moshe is the teacher of the Torah par excellence, who is hidden from us. As we will soon see, we are made aware of the value of people and ideas remaining hidden, and not always exposed to the light of human inspection and society. The ability of Moshe to remain

hidden and the benefit of his anonymity, is one of the blessings of his noble character and humble greatness.

In the same vein, we also find that in the book of Esther the holy name of God is not there. There is no reference whatsoever made of the intercession and interference of Heaven in the events described in the written record of the story and miracle of Purim. The book of Esther reads as an exciting, completely rational and understandable story of political intrigue, of psychologically damaged individuals, unforeseen salvation and as an example of the twists and turns that make a mockery of human certainties and predictions.

Once again, there is an unseen and unmentioned director of events that is controlling the narrative of this story. Purim is the holiday that commemorates this concept. There is no flash of lightning nor roar of thunder, no volcanic eruptions or plagues of locusts that mark this miracle. Yet, it is obvious that when we piece the whole story together, the miracle of the event becomes obvious and revealed, no matter how hidden it was while it was being enacted (read the words of the Rabbis in the Al Hanisim prayer recited on Purim). Perhaps this is the reason why Purim is such a day of unmitigated joy because it represents the joy of thousands who have discovered and unraveled a mystery, the solution of which was not originally understood by many. It is the delight of the discovery of the hidden Director that fills us with both merriment and joy. When a hidden treasure is revealed, humans are usually overcome with a feeling of happiness and achievement.

The great Chasidic master of Kotzk continually maintained that truth is always hidden from public view. He said that if it were revealed, it would be criticized, reviled, and discounted, for we live in a false world, to use the phrase that the Talmud chose to describe human existence. Ultimate truth can only be found within one's own self, and it takes an enormous amount of effort and searching to find it. Only the hidden eventually proves to be true, accurate, and eternal.

Falsehoods are wherever we turn. It is not only 'fake news' that confounds us, but it is also that we live in an era where society is shaped by the opinions of others, with their human weaknesses. The Torah wishes to give us a direction as to where truth can be found. It hid the name of Moshe in this week's Torah reading, and hid the name of God, again, in the book of Esther.

If one wishes to find God he or she needs to search within one's own self. The same is true of understanding and appreciating the Torah that

Moshe wrote, gave and taught us. The Torah shows us that we are not that distant from truth. But it cannot be found on the surface, but only within our own souls. So be it. ©2021 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

What do you say to comfort a grammar teacher?
"They're, there, their!"



RABBI JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

Migdal Ohr

"A golden bell and a (woolen) pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the hem of the me'il all around." (Exodus 28:34)
The Kohain Gadol had a number of special garments that he wear as part of his service in the Mishkan. The Me'il was a cloak or robe made of blue wool (techeiles) upon which were bells and pomegranates. The stated purpose of the noise-making bells was so that upon his entry to, and exit from, the Kodesh HaKedoshim, the Holy of Holies, the Kohain Gadol's presence would be "announced" to the Shechina, Hashem's countenance, as a sign of respect, much as knocking before entering a home.

The exact layout and purpose of the pomegranates and bells is up for discussion with various commentaries offering their own approaches. Rashi says the golden bells with their clappers and the hollow woolen pomegranates alternated around the bottom of the hem.

The Ramban questions this approach as the pomegranates serve no purpose. If it was for beauty, why not have golden apples or something else interspersed with the bells? He therefore suggests that hollow pomegranate shape was chosen so they could contain the bells. The bells were placed INSIDE the hollow pomegranates, and could be seen emerging from within them.

The Chizkuni's approach answers the Ramban's question of what the pomegranates were for by saying that when the golden bells hit the blue pomegranates, they would make their sound. According to that, though, the Ramban's suggestion of golden apples makes sense as the sound of metal striking metal would be louder than the bells hitting yarn.

Let's consider: why pomegranates, and why bells striking fabric rather than metal? The pomegranate is connected with mitzvos. Chazal say, "Even the 'empty ones' among you are as full of mitzvos as a pomegranate." That is to say, though one may not see it on the surface, if one seeks inside,



and goes through the various layers, he will find good deeds in each Jewish person, much as one finds the seeds in the pomegranate hidden from view.

It seems to convey a message of humility. Though you perform many mitzvos, don't praise yourself loudly for it, or broadcast this to those around you. Keep them inside and don't seek honor for the good deeds you do.

Similarly, though the bells needed to make a sound to announce the Kohain Gadol's arrival, the sound was muted a bit by the woolen pomegranates which activated them. The Kohain Gadol would be urged to consider that his arrival was not about his own prestige, requiring many bells and sounds, but rather about respecting and honoring Hashem, achieved by being humble, with a softer alert.

We should always strive to do mitzvos and follow Hashem's will, but in doing so we must remember the lesson of the woolen pomegranates. Be humble and remember that the pomegranates of the me'il are hollow, waiting to be quietly filled throughout our lives.

R' Moshe Feinstein z"l (Yahrtzeit 13 Adar) was asked how he became the accepted leader and posek (halachic arbiter) of the Jewish People around the world. In his humble way, R' Moshe smiled and replied that he hadn't been chosen for or appointed to the role. "There was no convention; no vote or caucus that elected me.

What happened was that someone asked me a question, and I answered it. More people asked, and I answered them too. Eventually," said R' Moshe with a humble shrug, "word got around that I was a pretty good person to ask." ©2021 Rabbi J. Gewirtz and Migdal Ohr



ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

The Urim VeTumim

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

WThe *Urim VeTumim* served as a vehicle to communicate with G-d. It helped answer such questions as whether Israel should go to war, how the Land of Israel should be apportioned among the various tribes, and whether the city of Jerusalem or the area around the Holy Temple should be expanded.

There are different opinions as to precisely what the *Urim VeTumim* was. Some say that the term refers to the precious stones of the Breastplate (*Choshen*), while others maintain that it refers to the ineffable name of Almighty G-d (*Shem HaMeforash*) that was kept between the folds of the *Choshen*.

Many do not include the *Urim VeTumim* among the eight garments that the *Kohen Gadol* was required to wear. However, the Rambam does include it. This leaves us with a serious question. During Second Temple times, there was no *Urim VeTumim*. This is stated by our Sages and confirmed by Josephus (1st century BCE), who states that "The *Urim VeTumim* disappeared two hundred years before I wrote this book."

If this is the case, then according to the *Rambam*, how could a *Kohen Gadol* have served in Second Temple times? It is forbidden for a *Kohen Gadol* to serve without the required eight priestly garments.

A possible explanation is that the *Urim VeTumim* did exist during the Second Temple period, and was worn by the *Kohen Gadol*. What changed was that it was no longer a conduit for divine messages. Josephus's words could be understood as indicating that the *Urim VeTumim* no longer had the power it once did. Alternatively, it is possible that the masses were not aware that the *Urim VeTumim* still existed, and that included Josephus even though he was a *Kohen*. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and Encyclopedia Talmudit

It was at the end of the school year, and a kindergarten teacher was receiving gifts from her pupils. The florist's son handed her a gift. She shook it, held it overhead, and said, "I bet I know what it is. Some flowers."

"That's right" the boy said, "but how did you know?"

"Oh, just a wild guess," she said.

The next pupil was the candy shop owner's daughter. The teacher held her gift overhead, shook it, and said, "I bet I can guess what it is. A box of sweets."

"That's right, but how did you know?" asked the girl.

"Oh, just a wild guess," said the teacher.

The next gift was from the son of the liquor store owner. The teacher held the package overhead, but it was leaking. She touched a drop of the leakage with her finger and touched it to her tongue. "Is it wine?" she asked.

"No," the boy replied, with some excitement.

The teacher repeated the process, taking a larger drop of the leakage to her tongue.

"Is it champagne?" she asked.

"No," the boy replied, with more excitement.

The teacher took one more taste before declaring, "I give up, what is it?"

With great glee, the boy replied, "It's a puppy!"



RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

Always Diber Tov al HaMelech

Transcribed by David Twersky

Technical Assistance by David Hoffman

How many times is Charvona mentioned in the Megillah? He is mentioned twice: Once in the beginning of the first chapter. He was one of the "kitchen cabinet" -- namely one of the seven advisors of

Achashverosh listed in the pasuk [Esther 1:10]. The second time Charvona is mentioned is when Haman finally met his downfall. "Then Charvona, one of the chamberlains in attendance before the king, said 'Furthermore, the gallows which Haman made for Mordechai -- who spoke beneficially about the king -- is standing in Haman's house; it is fifty cubits high.' And the king said 'Hang him on it.'" [Esther 7:9]

Charvona is mentioned a third time in the poem "Shoshanas Yakov" that we recite after the conclusion of the Megillah reading. We say there "And also Charvona, let him be remembered for good." (V'Gam Charvonah zachur l'tov).

Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer notes that the first time he appears in the Megillah, Charvona's name is spelled with an Aleph at the end and the second time he appears his name is spelled with a Hay at the end. Therefore, Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer claims they are not the same person! The real Charvona is the one mentioned in the first Perek. The "second Charvona" was really Eliyahu haNavi impersonating Charvona! Interestingly, the name Charvona in the Shoshanas Yakov poem is immediately followed by the expression "Zachur L'Tov" (let him be remembered for good). About whom else do we find this expression "Zachur L'Tov"? It is none other than Eliyahu HaNavi.

Rav Zalman Mintz told me that he once heard over a beautiful explanation of this from Rav Ephraim Waxman: The message emphasizes how and why the redemption occurred. The pasuk states "And Charvona, one of the officers before the king, said 'Also, behold here is the gallows that Haman made for Mordechai who spoke beneficially about the King standing in Haman's courtyard 50 cubits high.' The Geulah came because Mordechai never spoke ill of the Ribono shel Olam. Chazal say that every time it says the word "HaMelech" in the Megillah it is referring to the King of Kings. So too, in the expression Mordechai asher diber tov al haMelech -- it is referring to the Ribono shel Olam!

The Jews of that time, could very well have fallen into the trap of saying "What is the Almighty doing to us!" Haman came close to executing his plan to exterminate all the Jews -- men, women, and children. The Jews could very well have despaired and begin questioning the Justice of Heaven. "Excuse me! What did we do? Why do we deserve this?" Complaints against G-d were very likely being murmured. But Mordechai -- who spoke good about the King -- never complained and never questioned G-d's Justice. He never doubted that what was happening was fair and just. He was always "Diber tov al haMelech". He accepted the Talmudic principle that whatever G-d does is for the best (Kol mai d'Avid Rachmana, l'Tav avid) [Berachos 60b].

The message is that Purim, which is the paradigm of our hope for redemption, foreshadows the way it is going to happen for us again. To

ensure the speedy coming of this redemption, we must remember to always be "Diber tov al haMelech". After thousands of years of Jewish history and thousands of years of suffering -- both on a national scale and on a personal scale -- the key is to speak positively about the King and not to question and not to complain "Why is G-d doing this to us!"

This is sometimes very difficult, especially for people that lived through national trials and tribulations, lived through the Holocaust, lo aleinu. It is very hard for people who unfortunately have suffered tragedy and tzoros. It is a difficult nisayon. But Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer is telling us, Charvona is telling us, and Eliyahu haNavi -- who is going to usher in and announce the future redemption -- is telling us: The key is to act like Mordechai "asher diber tov al haMelech". If we continue to do that, then just as they merited "For the Jews there was Light, Gladness, Joy and Honor" [Esther 8:16] -- so too will it be for us, Im Yirtzeh Hashem. ©2021 Rabbi Y. Frand and torah.org



When asked for her occupation, a woman charged with a traffic violation said she was a schoolteacher. The judge rose from the bench and said, "Madam, I've waited years for a schoolteacher to appear before this court." Then he smiled as he said, "Now, sit down at that table and write 500 times, 'I will not pass through a red light.'"

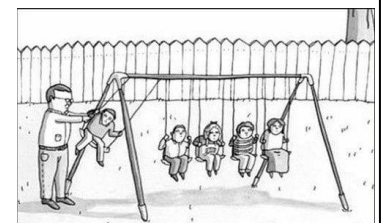
RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Lelamed Weekly Dvar

In its description of the priestly garments, the passuk (verse) describes the robe's bottom hem as having alternating pomegranates and bells (28:34).

However, when introducing the design, the passuk begins with the pomegranates' placement on the hem and continues with the golden bells' placement in between them (28:33). Why are the bells specifically described as being placed in the pomegranates' midst?

The Alshech (16th century) suggests that the pomegranates represent introspection and internal growth (as the shell shelters its many seeds), while the bells represent speech and outward interactions. He explains that the specific wording is meant to give us perspective on the physical actions that these items represent. Not every thought or personal development should be surrounded by actions or speech, while every utterance should be framed by introspection and contemplation. Considering our words carefully will facilitate the answering of our prayers and delivering us internal growth. © 2021 Rabbi S. Ressler & Lelamed, Inc.



Why science teachers should not be given playground duty.

THE BOLOGNAVA 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.

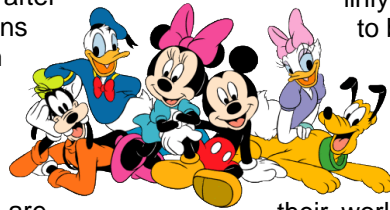
Heaping scandal upon scandal, mermaids, crickets, mice and ducks all sit on the same side of the mechitzah with wooden boys—clearly violating the prohibition against kilayim.

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 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

Why is the rum gone?



Pie-Rum Samayach!