

# Tiras Aish

**The Torah newsletter that claims to be cornier than all the rest!**

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l**

## Covenant & Conversation

**T**he sedra of Tetsaveh, as commentators have noted, has one unusual feature: it is the only sedra from the beginning of Shemot to the end of Devarim that does not contain the name of Moses. Several interpretations have been offered: The Vilna Gaon suggests that it is related to the fact that in most years it is read during the week in which the seventh of Adar falls: the day of Moses' death. During this week we sense the loss of the greatest leader in Jewish history -- and his absence from Tetsaveh expresses that loss.

The Baal HaTurim relates it to Moses' plea, in next week's sedra, for God to forgive Israel. "If not," says Moses, "blot me out of the book you have written" (32:32). There is a principle that "The curse of a sage comes true, even if it was conditional" (Makkot 11a). Thus for one week his name was "blotted out" from the Torah.

The Paneach Raza relates it to another principle: "There is no anger that does not leave an impression" When Moses, for the last time, declined God's invitation to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, saying "Please send someone else", God "became angry with Moses" (Ex. 4:13-14) and told him that his brother Aaron would accompany him. For that reason Moses forfeited the role he might otherwise have had, of becoming the first of Israel's priests, a role that went instead to Aaron. That is why he is missing from the sedra of Tetsaveh which is dedicated to the role of the Cohen.

All three explanations focus on an absence. However, perhaps the simplest explanation is that Tetsaveh is dedicated to a presence, one that had a decisive influence on Judaism and Jewish history.

Judaism is unusual in that it recognises not one form of religious leadership but two: the navi and Cohen, the prophet and the priest. The figure of the prophet has always captured the imagination. He (or she) is a person of drama, "speaking truth to power", unafraid to challenge kings and courts or society as a whole in the name of high, even utopian

ideals. No other type of religious personality has had the impact as the prophets of Israel, of whom the greatest was Moses. The priests, by contrast, were for the most part quieter figures, a-political, who served in the sanctuary rather than in the spotlight of political debate. Yet they, no less than the prophets, sustained Israel as a holy nation. Indeed, though Israel were summoned to become "a kingdom of priests" they were never called on to be a people of prophets (Moses said, "Would that all God's people were prophets", but this was a wish, not a reality).

Let us therefore consider some of the differences between a prophet and a priest:

- The role of priest was dynastic. It passed from father to son. The role of prophet was not dynastic. Moses' own sons did not succeed him; Joshua, his disciple did.

- The task of the priest was related to his office. It was not inherently personal or charismatic. The prophets, by contrast, each imparted their own personality. "No two prophets had the same style" (This, incidentally, is why there were prophetesses but no priestesses: this corresponds to the difference between formal office and personal authority. See R. Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Responsa Binyan Av, I:65).

- The priests wore a special uniform; the prophets did not.

- There are rules of kavod (honour) due to a Cohen. There are no corresponding rules for the honour due to a prophet. A prophet is honoured by being listened to, not by formal protocols of respect.

- The priests were removed from the people. They served in the Temple. They were not allowed to become defiled. There were restrictions on whom they might marry. The prophet, by contrast, was usually part of the people. He might be a shepherd like Moses or Amos, or a farmer like Elisha.

Until the word or vision came, there was nothing special in his work or social class.

- The priest offered up sacrifices in silence. The prophet served God through the word.

- They lived in two different modes of time. The priest functioned in cyclical time -- the day (or week or month) that is like yesterday or tomorrow. The prophet lived in covenantal





In other words, the garments seem to make the priest, an interesting variation on the famous sartorial advertisement: “Clothes make the man.” Is this not an undue emphasis on external dress?

Over the centuries many commentators have addressed themselves to the question of the priestly garb. In the Talmud (Arakhin 16a), R. Annani bar Sasson asks why the biblical portion of the priestly garments is next to that of the sacrifices. The answer given is that just as the sacrifices atone for sins, so do these garments atone for sins; the tunic for murder, the breeches for illicit sexual acts, the waist sash for one’s innermost thoughts, the ephod for idol worship, the robe for slander, the turban for haughtiness.

Nahmanides sees the priestly garments as regal robes in their own right. This garb need not be seen beyond its inherent beauty; the special clothing is one of the means by which we exalt the priest into the domain of the majestic. Our kohanim are our religious royalty, the majestic monarchs who preside over the Holy Temple precinct.

In the Sefer Hachinukh on the 613 commandments, first published in 1523, the author acknowledges that from a psychological perspective, a person’s inner being is affected by their outer garments. Thought follows action, and since a priest must have special thoughts when he performs the service, he must attempt to transform himself. Such a process of transformation begins with the act of getting dressed in special garb. To be sure, external change of costume does not necessarily create a change in inner motivation and thought, but it can, and often succeeds, in beginning the process. This is also why we are required to wear special garments on the Shabbat and on festivals. Special garments occasion special moods.

The Netziv in his Torah commentary follows the principle of the Sefer Hachinukh except that he switches the focus from the priest to the Israelites coming upon the glory of the priests in their ceremonial garb. Israelites enter the Temple precinct seeking inspiration and atonement. They want to be transported spiritually into the domain of the divine, into a world of repentance and atonement. The unique majesty and glory of the priestly garb, combined with the magnificence of the Holy Temple itself, will hopefully begin to uplift the Israelites and help them to feel that they have entered the kingship of God.

These explanations certainly illuminate the complex and varied role of the priestly garments. But I would suggest that if we look at the first time a garment is mentioned in the Torah, we discover that there is more to clothes than meets the hand or even the eye.

When Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden, the text tells us that the Lord God made for Adam and his wife, garments of skin, and clothed them (Gen. 2:21). God drives them out of the Garden of Eden, and because of the extreme nature of the punishment of exile, we tend to overlook

how unique it is that God Himself made these garments and Himself clothed the first couple.

After all, God had commanded humanity to conquer the world, “replenish the earth, subdue it and assume dominion” (Gen. 1:28). The world is pictured as a tabula rasa for the human to discover, unravel, invent, define – an imperfect cosmos which God created for the human to do and make, to repair and perfect. And indeed, people discover fire and bronze, wheels and windmills, electricity and atoms, apparently everything – except for the clothes on their back. And these they carry with them when they are banished. Why should the creation of the garments be relegated to God Himself? What can the Torah be teaching us?

Garments lie at the very root of what makes us human. Just as the Almighty created humans in His image, He also fashioned garments for the human being. Remember that, externally, only one thing distinguishes a human being from an animal, and that is that humans wear clothing, while animals do not!

It was the mocking seduction of the serpent which led to the banishment of Adam and Eve. Condemned to eat dust, the serpent remains naked. God fashions garments for human beings in order to teach them to rise above animals and above their animal natures. Naked animals follow their bare instincts; human beings must cover over and transform their naked essence in order to ennoble and sanctify themselves to become more like the divine who formed them. And since only human beings are capable of self-improvement and development, our very bodies contain a fundamental holiness which the animal world – not created in God’s image – lacks. But humans must work on their naked essence, must refine and ennoble, purify and sanctify the raw essence which is nakedness. This is the magnificent idea of circumcision, this is the essence of a system of 613 commandments, and this is the symbol of clothing.

If we glance at the more visible symbols of Jewish life, we see how sanctity is associated with a covering. Inside the synagogue, the Torah scroll is covered with its special garb; this is also the case regarding the table from which the Torah is read, and the ark in which the scroll stands. There is even a strict biblical prohibition that the Levite family of Kehat not look upon the uncovered holy objects of the Tabernacle, lest they die (Deut. 4:20). Everything holy needs a covering, and it all began with the human body.

Departing from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are taught the necessity of improving themselves, of sanctifying human nature, of covering their nakedness. Once they know this, they can go out and conquer the world, transforming themselves and the world around them in the process. But if they forget that the body is holy, then the world transforms them, and they live disastrously closer to their



animalistic nature. Since the priests function in the Sanctuary of the divine, devoting all of their activities towards bridging the chasm between heaven and earth, it stands to reason that they must wear unique clothing to remind them and the rest of the Israelites of their unique function of maintaining the Sanctuary so that God may truly dwell in every Israelite.

An inner holiness existed in the human being created in God's image, but with the fall from the Garden of Eden, this holiness became endangered. From the Jewish point of view, clothes do not make the person; clothes do, however, distinguish the human being, reminding us of the inherent sanctity of the human body, of the necessity of separating human from beast and, at least in function in Temple times, separating religious leaders from ordinary laymen. *The above article appears in Rabbi Riskin's book Shemot: Defining a Nation, part of his Torah Lights series of commentaries on the weekly parsha, published by Maggid and available for purchase at [bit.ly/RiskinShemot](http://bit.ly/RiskinShemot). © 2026 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

*What do you call a Frenchman wearing sandals?  
Philippe Philoppe!*

#### RABBI BEREL WEIN ZT"l

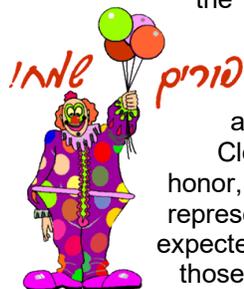
### Wein Online

The garments of the kohanim – the priests of Israel – occupy a great deal of space in this week's parsha. These garments were meant to bring "honor and glory" to those who donned them. But they were also meant to bring "honor and glory" to all of Israel. For when our religious leaders are objects of honor we, their followers and public supporters, also share and bask in that glory.

The garments of the kohanim represent their sense of devotion and service to the God and people of Israel. This sense of devotion and holiness was supposed to be for the kohein at all times and to become part of his personality and worldview.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch points out that this was the message of the rabbis that stated that nothing was to be between the actual body of the kohein and the clothing that he wore. The garments of "honor and glory" were to become the very being, the skin if you will, of the kohein himself. Only if he constantly operated on the lofty plane of service and honor to God and Israel could he meet the challenge of being a kohein.

Clothes may or may not make the man but the sense of honor, duty and loyalty that the garments of the kohanim represented certainly defined the sense of greatness that was expected from him. Once having had the privilege of wearing those holy vestments, the kohein was bound forever to the



concept of "honor and glory" that those garments represented and demanded.

Clothing plays a great role in current Jewish society. Certain sectors of our society identify their closeness to God and tradition in terms of the clothing that they wear. There is no doubt that clothing makes an impression upon those who see us and upon those who wear it. Research has shown that schools that have a dress uniform have an ability to deal with problems of student discipline more easily than the free and open schools of casual, whatever you like type of dress.

But there is a responsibility that comes with wearing special clothing. And that responsibility is to be people of "honor and glory." The Talmud states almost ironically that he who wishes to sin should travel to a place where he is unknown and to wear "black clothing" so that his behavior will not reflect on the whole of Israel.

There are differing interpretations of what "black clothing" means in this context. But it means a type of anonymous and casual clothing that will not reflect upon the Torah community and Judaism generally. One cannot wear the garments of "honor and glory" and behave in a fashion that contradicts those values. Wearing garments is something that should never be taken lightly. For with the garments come the responsibilities and challenges as well.

In the Second Temple when the anointing oil crafted by Moshe no longer existed, the rabbis stated that just donning the garments of the priesthood became the installation ceremony of the kohanim. I think that this is true in our world and time as well. © 2011 Rabbi B. Wein zt"l - 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](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)

*Why did the pirate go to the Caribbean?  
He wanted some arr and arr!*

#### RABBI JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

### Migdal Ohr

"You shall dress these [garments] upon your brother Aharon, and his sons with him, and anoint them, and sanctify them, and they shall serve Me." (Shemos 28:41) The Torah, in this week's Parsha, goes into great detail about the priestly vestments which Aharon and his children would wear to serve in the Mishkan. They were made in holiness and intended to bring out holiness in the Kohanim, in order that they be ready to serve as the Kohanim, the priests of Hashem.

But having the clothing wasn't enough. In the same breath that Moshe was told to dress Aharon and his sons in these special garments, he

was told that there was more to the equation. They had to be anointed, so that while wearing these clothes, they were uplifted and appointed.

They were to be sanctified to become Kohanim, which the meforshim offer different explanations of. Some say it was sanctified with words. They had to be designated verbally, and accept the designation. Letting them know they are holy and intended to remain that way, is an important aspect of their accepting the role as Kohanim, and being better prepared to fulfill them.

Some say it was through the offering of the korbanos, so their hands were literally “made full” by doing the job. Rashi mentions how an apprentice in France who became a master would be awarded a special glove or gauntlet, showing their proficiency, and thereby “filling their hands” with their roles. They were adjured not to be lazy or laid back in their service, but to be swift and act with alacrity, understanding the gravity of their roles.

What comes out of this posuk is the understanding that just dressing the part is not enough. You can wear the clothes, but do they affect you?

R’ Avigdor Miller z”l was famous for saying that a kid on the street might be violent and kill someone in a second. But if you put on him a police or fire uniform, he’ll risk his life to save yours. The clothes do make the man, if he understands what the clothes represent.

Hashem told Moshe, dress Aharon and his sons in these specially-made garments, and make sure they understand what they mean. That they are unique and elevated over their Jewish brothers not because they are inherently “better”, but because of their acceptance of the responsibility to be holy and take on a higher level of devotion to Hashem and His service.

This ability is not limited just to the Kohanim. Any of us who is willing to grow and desires to be closer to Hashem can accept upon himself to live up to a higher standard. He can don the garments of holiness that are available and choose ways to be better and greater than before. Esther and Mordechai each realized the places they were to play in history and accepted the responsibility to live up to them. The results were truly miraculous.

*“Fire! Fire!” a voice yelled, “Everyone get out!” People streamed from their doors and ran to the relative safety of the street. Firefighters arrived on the scene and began spraying water on the fire as the thick smoke billowed from the shattered windows.*

*“My baby!” cried a woman rushing over to a fireman, “he’s still in there!” The fireman assured her they would save the child, and were reviewing plans of the building to be safe.*

*One young man stepped forward and grabbed a respirator from the fireman. “I know that building and I know where the boy is. I’m going in.” With that, the stunned firefighter could only watch as he disappeared into the flaming hallways.*

*The Fire Chief who witnessed the exchange came running over. “Who was that man with city equipment?!” he bellowed. “He can’t use that, he’s not a firefighter!”*

*The speechless fireman slowly pointed to the soot-covered man emerging with the young boy in his arms. “Well, I guess he is today, Sir,” he replied softly. “He is today.” © 2026 Rabbi J. Gewirtz & Migdal Ohr*

*The bidding was proceeding furiously and strong when the Head Auctioneer suddenly announced, ‘A gentleman in this room has lost a wallet containing ten thousand dollars. If returned, he will pay a reward of two thousand dollars. There was a moment’s silence in the auction house and from the back of the room came a shout, ‘Two thousand five hundred.’*

## ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

# Adar Rishon & Adar Sheni

*Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss*

**T**he 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 Sheni* (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.

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 Sheni*.

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 Sheni*. © 2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and *Encyclopedia Talmudit*

*A boy was bagging groceries at a supermarket. One day the store installed a machine for squeezing fresh orange juice. Intrigued, the young man asked if he could be allowed to work the machine, but his request was denied. Said the store manager, "Sorry, kid, but baggers can't be juicers!"*

#### **RABBI AVI SHAFRAN**

### **Reflections**

**A**fter the Torah prescribes the details of the various vessels attendant to the mishkan (tabernacle), of the construction of the mishkan itself, of the mizbeach (altar), of the daily lighting of the menorah, of the bigdei kehuna (kohein vestments), of the procedure of the miluim (inaugural sacrifices) and of the tamid (the two daily sacrifices), it circles back at the very end of our parshah to something that would seem to have belonged at the beginning of the mishkan-description: the mizbeach haketores - the golden incense-altar that is to stand in the kodesh, the "Holies" part of the mishkan.

It is clearly a singular entity. Not only in its placement, directly facing the Holy of Holies (in fact, the final pasuk of the parshah calls the incense altar itself a kodesh kodashim, ["holy of holies"]), but in the fact that its main purpose is for something unique, a pure aroma-offering.

While animal and flour offerings are described as producing a rei'ach nicho'ach, an "aroma of contentment," only on the golden altar is the offering itself one of pure fragrance, the ketores.

The sense of smell is special too. It is ethereal, ill-understood by science (theories of how brains can distinguish among many thousands of



odors have come and gone, with no final clarity to date) and evocative of strong emotions. Think, on the one hand, of baking bread or lilacs blooming; and, on the other, of sewage or skunks. And evocative, too, of memories - Proust's tea and madeleine comprise literature's most famous example of olfactory-related sensory experience, but we've all had similar experiences.

There's a seeming paradox to smell. It is exquisitely sensitive, even in humans. And yet, it requires proximity to the odor-generator. One can see stars at a distance of thousands of light years, and hear a rumble of thunder from lightning that has struck miles away. But one cannot smell something unless it is relatively close.

But in truth there is no paradox there. Because our eyes and ears are perceiving only generated waves of light or sound; our noses are ingesting actual pieces of what we smell - microscopic ones, to be sure, but actual pieces all the same.

Odors, moreover, take a direct route to the limbic system, the deepest part of the brain.

Smell thus entails the penetration of the odor-source into the organ that makes us... us. As such, the ketores might symbolize relationship of the closest sort. The word "korban," so often translated as "sacrifice," in reality means "closeness-causing."

And so, the ketores may be the ultimate korban. In fact, the word ketores itself, whose simple meaning is "burning" or "smoking," in Aramaic can mean "knot" or "bond."

On the holiest day of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur, the holiest man of the people, the Kohein Gadol, brings an offering in the holiest place on earth, the Kodesh HaKodashim.

That korban, the only one ever offered in that place, is ketores. © 2026 Rabbi A. Shafraan and torah.org

*Why couldn't Dracula's wife get to sleep?  
Because of his coffin!*

#### **RABBI DAVID LEVIN**

### **Pure Olive Oil**

**M**ost students of Torah know that last week's parasha, Terumah, contains the commandments to build the Mishkan and all the Holy objects that were contained within it. They also know that this week's parasha, Tetzaveh, contains the commandments concerning the clothes of the Kohein Gadol, the High Priest, and the Kohanim hediotim, the common Kohanim who also served in the Temple. But there is a two-sentence interruption that almost disappears at the beginning of the parasha. The

Torah states, "And you will command the B'nei Yisrael that they shall take for you clear olive oil, crushed, for illumination, to light a lamp continually. In the Tent of Meeting, outside the Parochet that is near the Testimony, Aharon shall arrange it, with his sons, from evening until morning, before Hashem, an eternal decree for their generations, from the B'nei Yisrael." The Menorah gave light through the nighttime and was rekindled each evening. This was the Eternal Light because it was lit each evening, though it was cleaned each morning and not lit again during the day.

One of the first questions one must ask, whenever one comes upon a section of the Torah that appears to be out of place, is why this section appears here instead of its presumably normal place. Abarbanel asks this question with more detail: "Why did the Blessed One command here about the arranging of the lights of the Menorah as it was not necessary to command this until after the Mishkan (Temple) was built and the Menorah and all of the Holy Vessels of the Mishkan were in their places?" Abarbanel includes in this question the problem that Aharon and his sons have not yet been invested as the Kohanim, and only the Kohanim may light the Menorah.

Abarbanel explains that the purpose of this section of the Torah is to detail the clothes that were to be worn by the Kohanim. Yet the sentence, which precedes this set of commandments concerns the pure olive oil and the warning concerning the lighting of the Menorah each night to create a Ner Tamid, and Eternal Light. For that reason, Hashem said "And you will command," a command for the future. The B'nei Yisrael would make the pure olive oil, and the Kohanim would use that oil to light the Menorah each evening. This service could only be done by the Kohanim and only when dressed with the proper clothes for each Kohein. Abarbanel suggests that this interruption of these two sentences was to emphasize that the lighting of the Menorah could only be done by a Kohein wearing the appropriate garments, and for this reason Hashem stated, "and you will command," rather than "command the B'nei Yisrael," as it states throughout the Torah.

HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin brings a Midrash to explain why this mitzvah of the olive oil was inserted here before the laws of the clothing worn by the Kohanim. Originally, Hashem's plan was for Moshe to become the Kohein Gadol and Aharon to lead the Leviim. The Torah even stated that, "Aharon, you brother, the Levite." When Moshe was given the command to return to Egypt from Har Sinai and the Burning Bush, he appeared to be reluctant to face that responsibility. At that time, Hashem changed the roles of Aharon and Moshe, declaring Aharon to be the Kohein and Moshe to lead the Leviim. Since the lighting of the Menorah could only be done by Aharon and his sons as the Kohanim, it was appropriate to interject this mitzvah here



as a clear designation of Aharon and his sons taking over the responsibility of the Priesthood.

The Ramban explains that the Torah says, "they shall take for you pure olive oil," rather than "they shall make for you pure olive oil," because there was no way for them to make olive oil in the desert. Many of the items used to build

the Temple were either prepared before leaving Egypt or purchased from cities or caravans along the way. The Ramban clarifies that it was the princes of the tribes who brought the olive oil to Moshe upon Moshe's command. This mitzvah, to command the people, was given to Moshe and applied throughout the parasha, in spite of the fact that Moshe's name is not mentioned even once in this parasha.

Several commentators bring a Midrash to explain why Moshe's name is not mentioned in this parasha. (We must keep in mind that the Rabbis tell us that there is no chronological sequence of events in the Torah). For those who say there is no sequence, one Midrash speaks of Moshe's statement to Hashem after the Golden Calf, an event which does not occur until next week's parasha. Hashem told Moshe that He would no longer be among the People because of the great sin. Moshe complained to Hashem that if He would not forgive the People, Moshe asked that his name be erased from the Torah. Hashem forgave the People, but wiped Moshe's name from this one parasha as a fulfillment of a righteous person's request. That is one reason given by HaRav Sorotzkin for the missing sentence which normally occurs throughout the commandments to the B'nei Yisrael, "And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying." HaRav Sorotzkin also gives an explanation for excluding Moshe's name for those who do not believe that the chronological order of the Torah is sometimes different than the way it is written. Here, Moshe is punished for his reluctance to take the leadership role at Har Sinai and the Burning Bush because of his modesty.

Still, Hashem did not wish to separate any part of the Law from Moshe. The "You" in "You shall command" is obviously Moshe, even though his name is not recorded. But there was still another way that Moshe was to be connected to this parasha. The Rabbis instituted the reading of the Torah over a three-year cycle (later changed to one year), where each parasha was divided into three sections, part of which was read at its appropriate time of year. This parasha is always read during the Hebrew month of Adar. Moshe was born and died (after one hundred and twenty years) on the seventh of Adar, close to the reading of this parasha each year. In that way, Moshe is always associated with this parasha, in spite of the fact that his name does not appear.

Not every time the Torah mentions olive oil in the Temple did it require pure olive oil. This was designated here for the Menorah alone. Pure olive oil is without any sediment even from its origin. It did not have sediment

that was later filtered out. The purity of the oil should remind us of the commandments brought to us by Moshe, so that we may fashion our lives to be pure, like the oil. The oil gave us light, which is always compared to Torah. May we also fill our lives with Torah and purity so that we may be a light to the nations. © 2026 Rabbi D. Levin

*What is the difference between a Hippo & a Zippo?  
A Hippo is really heavy, but a Zippo is a little lighter!*

### 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. 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

## Hog Samayach!

