

Torah Weekly

ת"בס

February 26-March 4, 2023
5-11 Adar, 5783

Torah Reading:
Tetzaveh: Exodus 27:20 - 30:10
Zachor: Deuteronomy 25:17-19
Haftarah: Samuel I 15:1-34

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

The Kabbalah of Fashion

Is focusing on clothing superficial?

The Hebrew word for garment is *begeg*, which contains the same letters as the word for betrayal, *bagad*. Since the beginning of history, the garment has been intertwined with betrayal. The Torah tells us that garments became necessary only after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, when Adam and Eve betrayed their G-d, themselves and their innocence.

In addition to their emergence as a result of betrayal, the function of garments is also a form of betrayal and dishonesty. The very purpose of a garment is to conceal the inner core and portray an external facade. In fact, a rich person can dress as a pauper, and the pauper can dress as a rich person; a person who feels sad can dress in celebratory garments, and a happy person can don a mourner's garments, thus betraying the truth and projecting an external image inconsistent with one's inner feelings and reality.

Like the body, the soul too has "garments." The Kabbalah teaches that the soul has an inner "personality," its emotional and intellectual composition, as well as "garments," its ability to act, to speak and to think a given thought. Thought, speech and action

are called garments because they are not the soul itself and, like the body's garments, they can betray the inner makeup of the soul. A person can act, speak or think in ways that are inconsistent with and betray his inner self.

Yet, garments, and the betrayal they represent, are not all bad. In fact, another word for garment in Hebrew is *salmah*, which is spelled the same as *shelaimah*, "complete." The Hebrew language is conveying a deep truth: the garment, the ability to betray one's inner feelings and perspective, can and should lead a person to be wholesome and complete. That's because garments influence how we feel on the inside. The reason people spend so much on clothing is because clothing have an effect. Although initially donning clothing is an external act, the garment has the power to influence one's mood and feelings.

The same is true regarding the garments of the soul. A person can *feel* cruel, yet he can don a garment of kindness by taking a kind action. A person can feel sad, yet he can smile and act happy. Initially, that action is a betrayal of the inner feelings, but, over time, the betrayal leads to completion. The external action will affect the inner feeling.

This explains why the [Torah](#) commands that the High Priest wear eight beautiful garments when he performs the service in the Temple.

As [G-d](#) commands Moses in

this week's portion:

"You shall make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for honor and glory."

One may wonder why garments are critical to the service. Aren't beautiful garments superficial and a symbol of vanity? Why doesn't G-d focus on the priests' internal, emotional and spiritual state rather than on the external garments? The answer is that the garments represent thought, speech and action, the metaphorical garments of the soul. The Torah is teaching us that if we want to come close to G-d, we should don beautiful garments. We should focus on positive garments, on positive action, even if those garments are a betrayal of our internal feelings. Because, ultimately, the beautiful garments, the positive action, will bring wholesomeness and completion to the internal soul.

By Rabbi Menachem Feldman

Underrated Earth

A central focus of Jewish consciousness through the ages is the Temple in Jerusalem, the point where the world and G-d meet

almost tangibly. The Torah describes in detail the prototype of the Temple, the portable Sanctuary built by Moses and the Jewish people in the Sinai desert.

Last week's [Torah](#) portion described how the Sanctuary should be built. It depicted the Courtyard, with the Copper Altar for offerings. Then, in the west, the actual inner Sanctuary, with walls of cedar wood overlaid with gold and a roof formed of delicate tapestry. Last week's portion also described most of the sacred objects which were to be placed in the inner Sanctuary: the Golden Ark, containing the Tablets of the Law; the Golden Table; the seven branched Golden Menorah oil lamp. However, one important object was left out, as we shall see.

This week's Torah reading, *Tetzaveh* ([Exodus 27:20-30:10](#)), gives the details concerning the garments of the "priests," the officiates in the Sanctuary: Aaron and his sons. It then describes how the Sanctuary and the priests themselves should be sanctified with anointing oil, and how the services in the Sanctuary should begin.

At the very end of this week's Torah portion, one last item is described. This is the Golden Altar, on which the priest would offer incense twice a day, every morning and afternoon. It was placed in the inner Sanctuary, near the Golden [Menorah](#).

The sages ask a question: why is this important part of the Sanctuary left to the very end? Surely it belongs in last week's portion, in which all the other details of the Sanctuary were described?

One answer is: the Golden Altar is left to the end because it expresses the purpose of the entire Sanctuary. It is the climax.

This is because the service at the Golden Altar was solitary. Other services in the Sanctuary were public. The Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 5:2) states that when the priest entered the Sanctuary to offer incense on the Golden Altar, he was alone with [G-d](#).

This stresses the private, personal dimension of all Jewish observance. Because of the social warmth of Jewish life, we sometimes forget the joy and fulfillment which Judaism can give us as an individual. Each mitzvah (divine commandment) is a personal link with G-d.

We might carry out the [mitzvah](#) alone, or with a group of people. Yet there always is an intimate personal dimension. The focus on the Golden Altar in the Torah portion reminds us that through Jewish practice in our day to day world, every individual can enter the fragrant atmosphere of the Sanctuary and offer incense to G-d.

By Tali Leowenthal

Sunday, February 26, 2023 --- 5 Adar, 5783

Passing of R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro of Slavuta (1864)

R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro and his brother R. Pinchas managed the famed printing press of Slavuta, in what is now Ukraine. In 1835, they were falsely accused of arranging the murder of one of their workers (who had committed suicide). As a result, the government ordered the closing of all Russian Jewish printing presses (save for one press in Vilnius), and the brothers were incarcerated and flogged.

The brothers' tremendous piety and fear of Heaven followed them to their cells. It is related that while walking through the two rows of soldiers who were administering the flogging, R. Shmuel Abba's *kippah* (skullcap) fell off of his head, and he refused to proceed until it was returned, although he received additional blows as a result.

A miniature [Torah scroll](#) was smuggled into their cell during their incarceration to enable the brothers to study. This unique scroll later gifted to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, [R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson](#), who would dance with it every year on [Simchat Torah](#).

R. Shmuel Abba passed away on 5 Adar in the year 5624 from Creation (1864). Books printed in the Slavuta press remain prized collectors' items to this day.

Monday, February 27, 2023 --- 6 Adar, 5783

Passing of R. Shmaryahu Gurary (1989)

Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary ("Rashag") was born in 1898; his father, a wealthy businessman and erudite scholar, was a leading chassid of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneersohn (1860-1920). In 1921, Rabbi Shmaryahu married Chanah Schneersohn (1899-1991), the oldest daughter of the 6th Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950). When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak passed away in 1950, there were those who saw Rabbi Shmaryahu -- an accomplished Chassidic scholar and elder of the Rebbe's two surviving sons-in-law -- as the natural candidate to head the movement; but when the younger son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, was chosen as rebbe, Rabbi Shmaryahu became his devoted chassid. Rabbi Shmaryahu served as the executive director of Tomchei Temimim, the world-wide Lubavitch yeshiva system -- a task entrusted to him by his father-in-law -- until his passing on the 6th of Adar I in 1989.

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 --- 7 Adar, 5783

Moses' Birth & Passing (1393 and 1273 BCE)

Moses was born in Egypt on the 7th of Adar of the year 2368 from creation (1393 BCE). According to one opinion, the year of Moses' birth was a "leap year", and he was born in the first Adar.

Moses passed away on his 120th birthday -- Adar 7, 2488 (1273 BCE)

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 --- 8 Adar, 5783

Oath on Torah Permitted (1674)

In the 1660's the Jewish community of Barbados gained considerable importance. However, they had a decided disadvantage in that their testimony was not admissible in court due to their refusal to take an oath on a Christian Bible. In October 1669, the Jewish community presented a petition requesting permission to take oaths on the Five Books of Moses, the Jewish Bible.

Several years later, on Wednesday, February 14, 1674, Barbados passed a law granting the Jewish community the permission they requested.

Passing of R. Eliyahu HaKohen (1729)

R. Eliyahu HaKohen was a preacher and author who lived in Izmir, Turkey. He was known for his weekly sermons which inspired many people to [repentance](#), and for his efforts in collecting and distributing [charity](#) to the poor. His ethical work *Shevet Mussar*—only one of the thirty-plus works he authored—is widely studied and has been translated into multiple languages. He passed away on 8 Adar.