

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT TEZAVEH-ZACHOR · 9 ADAR 5772 · MAR. 3, 2012 · VOL. 19 NO. 20

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### FANCY DRESS

*“for glory and for splendor” (28:2)*

In light of the critical economic situation here in Israel, the government has been cutting back drastically on renewing visas for foreign workers and summarily deporting those who are here illegally.

A few years ago we had a cleaning lady from Romania called Valerica. Her mode of dress was the standard Romanian generic stonewashed Levis topped with a T-shirt that proclaimed the megatour of some Heavy Metal Band like Blind Widow or some other denizen of the musical illiterati.

A couple of days ago my wife happened to be walking down Shmuel Hanavi Street when she saw a lady who bore a striking resemblance to Valerica. However, this lady was dressed in a long skirt, a modest blouse and her hair was covered with a beret. My wife looked again and said “Valerica? Is it you?” “Yes, it’s me” she replied. My wife’s curiosity was piqued, “But what? What happened? Did you become Jewish?” With a malignant snort she replied, “Of course not! It’s only for show. If I don’t dress up like this, the police will spot me and kick me out of the country!”

I couldn’t help but be struck by the irony: Some sixty years ago Jews were afraid to walk the streets of Bucharest unless they were dressed as conspicuous Romanians, and some sixty years later this Romanian was afraid to walk the streets of Jerusalem (obviously with far more benign consequences) unless she was dressed like a Jew.

Clothes conceal, but they also reveal.

This week’s Torah portion starts with a description of the clothes of the *kohanim*. The Torah uses two abstract nouns to define the purpose of these garments: “for glory and for splendor.”

The Malbim says that the “glory” of the garments of the *kohanim* was that they revealed the innate holiness that G-d had given to the *kohanim*. However, these clothes were also

for the “splendor” that would come from the efforts of the *kohanim*.

“Glory” refers to the gifts G-d gives man. “Splendor” refers to what we can achieve by ourselves.

The reading of this week’s Torah portion comes just before Purim. On Purim there is a widespread custom to dress up in masquerade costumes. What is the connection between Purim and costume?

In Tractate Megilla (12a), the students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai ask him why the Jews of Persia at the time of Purim were judged to be worthy of destruction. He said to them “You tell me.” They said, “Because they had pleasure from the feast of that evil man (Achashverosh).” “However, if that were true, only the Jews of Shushan who participated in the feast should have been culpable, not every Jew in Persia.” So they said back to Rabbi Shimon, “You tell us.” He said, “Because they bowed to the idol of Nevuchadnetzar.”

“But they only did that for show.” They only bowed out of fear of being put to death, not because they were really worshipping idols

“They only did it for show, so G-d only did it for show. As it says in the passage, He did not answer from his heart.” G-d only allowed Haman’s genocide plan to proceed as far as it did to frighten the Jews into repenting and mending their ways.

Our dressing up on Purim is to remind us that this whole world is a type of show. That this whole world is a mask that hides the existence of G-d. The word for “world” in Hebrew, *olam*, has the same root as *ne’elam*, which means “vanished” or “hidden.”

What we see is not necessarily what is. It is our job to pry the mask from the face of the world and reveal Who is behind it.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**G**-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the *menorah* in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *bigdei kehuna* (priestly garments): a breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes

offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the *Mishkan*. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

## ISRAEL Forever

### THE BEST PROTECTION

**T**he threat of Iran achieving nuclear capability is a major concern of the international community, especially Israel whom the Iranians have publicly designated as their main target.

As we read this Shabbat about the war waged by the Amalekite nation against our ancestors on their way out of Egypt, we should take note of the name of the site of this battle aimed at the destruction of our people. "Refidim" is

seen by our Sages as a contraction of two words – "*rafah*" and "*yedayhem*" – which means that their hands lost their hold on Torah and they thus became vulnerable to attack.

While military experts in both Israel and the US publicly express doubts about the ability to prevent the Iranians from developing the dreaded bomb through military action, we must put our faith in the Torah study of our *yeshivot* as the best protector of Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

### BEERSHEBA – A SPRING AND AN OATH

**B**e'er means a spring and *Sheva* means an oath, and the two combine to form the name of the city that is known as the capital of the Negev of modern Israel.

Ancient Beersheba is where the Patriarch Avraham discovered a spring and where he made a



covenant with the Philistines which he sealed with an oath. The well built on this spring was eventually stuffed up by the Philistines until the Patriarch Yitzchak restored it to use. Like his father he also made a covenant with the Philistines and reinstated the name given to it, which became the name of the city that grew around it.

לע"נ

מרת פייגה בת ר' דוד ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the *menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen*, *ephod*, *me'il*, *ketonet*, *mitznefet*, *avnet*, *tzitz*, and *michnasayim*.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants, 2) The court's ruling, 3) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* — the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn. 2) The *Kohen Gadol* must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet*, *avnet*, *migba'at*, and *michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of *kehuna*.

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- Which animals can never achieve sacrificial status
- The status of offspring or exchange of a sacrificial animal
- If one designated a female animal for a sacrifice which requires a male
- The lost sin offering and its replacement

## TURNING THE TABLES

“A man poor in Torah knowledge meets a man with moderate knowledge” is how our *gemara* interprets a passage in *Mishlei* (29:13) and elaborates on the nature of their meeting. The poor man asks the other to teach him Torah. If he does so the result is the second half of that passage: “G-d brightens the eyes of both of them.”

Should he refuse to teach him, the result is described in another passage (ibid. 22:2): “The wealthy man and the poor one meet; G-d creates both of them.” This means that the Creator recreates both of them, making the ignorant man wise and the knowledgeable one foolish.

Maharsha explains that in the first case both teacher and

student grow in their wisdom in accordance with what the Sages say that one learns more from his students than he does from his teachers.

In the case where the wealthy man – the teacher – refuses to teach a poor man – the student – because he feels there is nothing he can gain from such an effort, he is denied by Heaven from gaining knowledge through any effort. The poor man who has such a desire to learn will be blessed by Heaven with success in gaining the knowledge he seeks.

The *gemara* goes on to apply the same to a poor man seeking financial help from a man of means. If he helps him he will be blessed with even greater wealth. But if he refuses the tables are turned by G-d Who creates rich and poor.

• *Temurah 16a*

## WHAT THE Sages SAY

“The Torah is not in Heaven!”

- *Yeshoshua* (when asked to petition G-d to restore the 3,000 *halachot* forgotten during the mourning for Moshe) *Temurah 16a*

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## OLIVES AND MEMORY

**From: Yehoshua**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Is there any problem with eating olives? Is there any need to eat olives with olive oil? I have heard that there is some problem with eating olives and memory. Is there a source for all this?*

Dear Yehoshua,

The Talmud (Horayot 13b) says, "There are five things which cause one to forget one's learning...[one of which is] regularly eating olives...There are five things which restore one's forgotten learning...[one of which is] regularly eating olive oil...This supports the teaching of Rabbi Yochanan who said, 'Just as olives cause one to lose seventy years of learning, so olive oil restores seventy years of learning'."

According to this, olives are harmful to one's memory, while olive oil is actually good for one's memory. One of the commentators on the Talmud, the Maharsha, notes that is actually suggested in the Torah. The verse enumerating the special produce of the Land of Israel states, "a Land of wheat, barley, figs and pomegranates, a Land of olive oil, and dates." Each species is referred to by the fruit itself, aside from olives which are mentioned by its juice. This is because the olive itself is harmful; rather the oil is praised because of its special benefit to memory.

Some latter commentators qualify the conditions under which olives cause this harm. Of these, some say it only applies to raw olives but not to olives which are salted, pickled or cooked. Others say it only applies if one eats them without proper intention and attention, but not if one eats them with focus on one's learning. Yet others suggest it applies only if one eats them regularly, but not if eaten only from time to time. However, it seems that the general cus-

tom is to be careful even regarding pickled olives eaten only occasionally.

This is the basis for making a special effort to eat olives together with olive oil. Since one eats them together, the potentially harmful quality of the olives will be nullified by the beneficial effect of the olive oil. According to some, this is the intention of the Talmud when recording the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan, namely that eating olives and their oil in conjunction is not a problem. Those who do so generally add only a relatively small amount of oil to even many olives.

Interestingly, an article in the "Independent" indicates that modern research corroborates the Talmud's ancient take on the benefits of olive oil:

"Making olive oil part of your diet could prevent memory loss and sustain mental agility, according to a study. The research, published in the journal 'Neurology', has shown that [it] protects memory performance and guards against decline of the cognitive processing functions that are often associated with ageing. 'It seems that in the ageing process there is an increasing demand for unsaturated fatty acids and a Mediterranean diet of...extra-virgin olive oil protects people from age-related cognitive decline,' said Antonio Capurso of the University of Bari, who carried out the study on 300 people aged between 65 and 84."

But before downing spoonfulls of straight olive oil, consider another teaching of the Talmud (Berachot 35b) regarding olive oil, namely that ingesting it on its own can be harmful in other ways, such that one who does so would not make a blessing when eating it that way. Rather, the Talmud says olive oil should be eaten together with other foods like bread or olives or with liquids like vinegar or soups. When one is primarily interested in ingesting the olive oil itself, for example when mixed with and imbibed with another liquid, the blessing to be made is "borei pri ha'eitz" (Sh. Ar. Orach Chaim 202:4). This illustrates its importance, and bears out the idea of the Maharsha cited above, namely that the oil itself is considered fruit.

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**D**aniel Olgin had a roommate in university who had never met a Jew before. As you can imagine, the boy had questions for this “living fossil”. The problem was that not only did Olgin not have the answers but he also had never even thought to ask the questions. This pushed him to the local Hillel House on campus, which had an Orthodox Rabbi at the time. Within a few years, it became clear that yeshiva was his destination after university. Ohr

Somayach became his home for two years, and then he became an advisor in NCSY, attended YU, and got his MA in Jewish Studies from Cleveland College.

His first Rabbi noticed his progress and offered to support him while learning in Kollel. Rabbi Olgin’s next move was back to Ohr Somayach’s Ohr Lagolah Program where he got his *smicha* ordination.

Needless to say, he can answer a question or two these days. He works in *kiruv* outreach back at his alma mater, Ohio State, helping Jews like him get back to the Source in the sources. He is married with seven beautiful children and looking forward to having you as a guest on Shabbat.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### BREAD OR TEHILLIM

**U**pon arrival in one of the DP camps in Europe shortly after the end of World War Two, Rabbi Eliezer Silver, one of the leading rabbis in the U.S., made an effort to lift the spirits of the pitiful surviving Jews by organizing a communal *Kabbalat Shabbat* prayer service. Noticing the refusal of one particular Jew to join the service, Rabbi Silver asked him for his reason.

When we were in the concentration camp, the fellow explained, there was one Jew who had a Sefer Tehillim. In their dark moments there were hundreds of Jews who wished to pour out their hearts to Heaven by reciting Tehillim psalms from his book. But he insisted on receiving

three slices of bread for each hour that his Tehillim book was used. If a religious Jew is capable of exploiting others in such a way I don’t want to be part of the religious community and their *Kabbalat Shabbat*!

Without hesitation the brilliant Rabbi responded. “Too bad that you look at it this way”, he said in a compassionate tone. “I see it in an entirely different light. Look how noble Jews are if hundreds of them were prepared to sacrifice their bread in order to say Tehillim!”

After a few moments Rabbi Silver and this Jew could be seen walking arm in arm towards *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

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# Purim Revisited & Revised

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

**P**ersia became Iran and Haman became the nuclear nuisance whose name is so hard to pronounce. But nothing seems to have really changed as regards the threat to Jewry posed by its enemies.

In the spirit of the season let us revisit Persia and Purim in the light of what is being done in our day regarding Iran. Let us try to imagine what would have happened then if Mordechai and Esther would have acted like Netanyahu and Obama.

**Scene One:** An appeal is made to representatives of all the 127 provinces ruled by Achashveirosh which form the United Nations of their era. No action is taken to halt Haman's planned violation of human rights and Haman is invited to address the world body on his favorite theme that the Jews must be destroyed.

**Scene Two:** Having failed to arouse the world, the Jews decide to independently apply sanctions against Haman and his cohorts by boycotting their businesses and refusing to use their oil. The sanctions fail to achieve their goal because there are enough anti-Semites buying their oil and otherwise supporting them.

**Scene Three:** The head of the Self-Defense Committee of the Jewish community in Shushan declares a "state of emergency" and mobilizes Jewish soldiers for possible preemptive military action. Every day the Jewish newspapers throughout the kingdom carry endless discussions by politicians and generals as to whether to attack or to continue with diplomatic efforts, but no one mentions the role of G-d.

**Scene Four:** After realizing that appeals to the world's conscience, sanctions and military action, will not save them, the Jews respond to the call of Queen Esther to gather in fasting, repentance and prayer to help her succeed in one last diplomatic effort of an appeal to the king.

**Scene Five:** Jews who have hitherto put their trust in the world community and their own self-defense capability now turn to Heaven for help. Their return is rewarded with a miracle as their enemies are vanquished and Haman is hung on the gallows he prepared for Mordechai.

"Thus, G-d, may all Your enemies be destroyed."  
Happy Purim!

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### WHERE TO SIT ON A "SICK VISIT"

**Question:** I recently visited a friend in the hospital. Noticing my difficulty in prolonged standing by his bed my friend suggested that I sit down. I hesitated to do so because I recalled once being told that this was improper. Can you tell me what is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** In his *Tehillim*, King David describes the attention that G-d pays to the sick person as "He supports him on his sick bed" (42:4).

From this our Talmudic Sages (*Mesechta Shabbat 12b*) concluded that the Divine Presence hovers over the bed of the sick person. We are also familiar with the way our Patriarch Yaakov showed his respect for his son Yosef after requesting that, as a powerful Egyptian potentate, he ensure that the burial of his father be in Eretz Yisrael. He bowed to him, reports the Torah (*Bereishet 47:31*), but he directed his bow towards the head of the bed. Rashi explains that he did so because he wished to simultaneously express his respect for

the Divine Presence that hovers over the head of a sick person's bed.

The halachic application of this is that if one visits a sick person he should not sit on a chair or bench in respect to the Divine Presence. The Rema (*Yoreh De'ah 335:3*) rules that this applies only to a situation in which the sick person is lying on the floor, so that if one sits on a chair he is assuming a position higher than the Divine Presence. In modern situations the sick person is lying on a bed so there is no problem with sitting on a chair near his bed.

One word of caution. Sometimes no chair is available in the hospital room and the sick person graciously invites his visitor to sit down on his bed. This invitation should be politely turned down because, even if accepting may not be technically considered sitting higher than the Divine Presence, sitting on a sick person's bed inevitably causes discomfort to him despite his good intentions.