

CELEBRATING OUR 25<sup>th</sup> YEAR!

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE • WWW.OHR.EDU

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT TETZAVE-KI TISA • 9-16 ADAR 5778 - FEB. 24-MAR. 3, 2018 • VOL. 25 NO. 21

**SPECIAL**

**PURIM**

**EDITION!**

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PURIM!



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## OHRNET SPECIAL

BY RABBI REUVEN LAUFFER

### Don't Be Childish! Do Be Childlike!

**A**s a child I adored Purim. I waited for it all year. Dressing up in a wacky costume and the never-ending nosh was the most amazing combination. Watching the adults behave in a way that they never, ever did during the rest of the year was pretty exciting too. Unfortunately, as I got older I seemed to lose some of that sense of childlike wonder and enthusiasm. It is not that I am not excited about things, but the excitement seems to be more restrained than it used to be when I was younger.

One of the most exciting parts of Purim is the reading of the Megillah. The Megillah tells the narrative of what happened before, during and just after the story of Purim — how we, the Jewish People, found ourselves in such critical danger, and how G-d protected us throughout. In fact, the Megillah is such a roller-coaster of a story that it is hard to keep track of all the details, of all the twists and turns, until the final outcome. Towards the end of the Megillah there is a delightful verse that describes how the Jewish People felt when they finally realized that they were no longer in danger of annihilation and did not have to live in terror of their lives: “*LaYehudim haytah orah v’simcha v’sasson viy’kar* — the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.” (8:16) This seems to be a simple and poignant portrayal of their feelings at that moment, and yet our Sages teach (Tractate Megillah 16b) that each one of those four expressions of emotion is actually alluding to one of four different commandments

that we are obligated in. *Orah* — light — alludes to the learning of Torah, *Simcha* — gladness — alludes to keeping the Festivals, *Sasson* — joy — alludes to the obligation to perform Brit Mila, and *Yekar* — honor — alludes to wearing Tefillin.

One of the great Chassidic Rabbis, the Sefat Emet, questions why the Megillah is being so ambiguous. If the verse is referring to these commandments, why doesn't it simply state that the Jewish nation had Torah, the Festivals, Brit Milah and Tefillin? Why does the verse use expressions of emotion to describe the commandments? The Sefat Emet provides a most insightful explanation. It wasn't the commandments that were being restored. Rather, it was the *emotion and feeling* towards those commandments that was reignited within each individual. The Sefat Emet teaches that throughout the story of Purim the Jewish People never stopped learning Torah, but the light of Torah was missing from their lives. They also never stopped celebrating the Festivals, but, understandably, gladness was absent from their celebrations. So, too, there was never a moment when they stopped performing Brit Milah on their newborn babies, but how could they do so with joy under such a threat? And they always continued to put on Tefillin, but the incredible sense of honor that wearing Tefillin carries with it was missing when they did so.

However, once the enormous peril was removed from them, once they understood as clearly as can be

*Continued on page seventeen*

Tetzave

## Silent Broadcast

“Upon it (the Inner Altar) Aharon will bring the spice incense...” (30:7)

Advertising is the touchstone of contemporary society. The art of advertising is not to sell a product. It is to sell to people a perception of themselves that will result in their buying the product. Maybe the little blue stripes will keep your teeth looking brighter. Maybe they won't. What sells the product, however, is not the promise of brighter teeth. It is the lifestyle of people who have brighter teeth. As anyone who sees these ads should know, people with brighter teeth are never unhappy. They never feel tired. They flit effortlessly from one party to another. They jet-set across the world without a bank manager or mortgage in sight. And all for the price of a tube of toothpaste. Now that's what I call getting value for your money!

In an age where illusion has become reality, where people send wreaths to TV stations when soap-operas stars "die" and are written out of the script, selling the Brooklyn Bridge has never been easier. All you need is a lot of money. And airtime.

The truth, however, sells itself. It doesn't need to be

trumpeted to the skies. Nothing is more infectious than the truth.

There is a Jew who sits in a most frugal apartment in Yerushalayim. He has never made any television appearances. He has never been interviewed on any talk show. No one has ever advertised him. And yet the Jewish world beats a path to his door when it needs a halachic decision. His status and fame come entirely from his piety, plus the fact that in virtually every area of Judaism he knows the law better than anyone else. And everyone else knows it.

In the Beit Hamikdash, the *ketoret* — the service of burning the incense — was performed away from the public eye, in private. Yet its scent could be detected as far as Jericho, more than twenty miles away.

When a person puts all his effort into living correctly, in accordance with the truth of the Torah, then, even though he may not broadcast his virtues, the nation will seek him out. His life may be a quiet understatement, but all his actions will radiate inner purity and holiness like a beacon.

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Ki Tisa

## Headraiser

“When you raise the head of the Jewish nation” (30:12)

Why does the Torah choose the expression “raise the head” to mean that Moshe should take a census of the Jewish People?

G-d explained to Moshe that the Jewish People had placed their lives in jeopardy by worshipping the golden calf. The process of counting them by the coins they were to donate would “raise their heads,” elevate them spiritually from the depths to which they sunk, and earn them atonement for their sin.

Moshe supposed that such atonement would require a coin of a very large denomination indeed.

Perhaps it would be a *kikar* of silver, the equivalent of three thousand silver coins. If not three thousand silver coins, it might be that G-d would demand a coin worth a hundred silver pieces for each. This would be based on the penalty of one hundred silver pieces as the penalty the Torah prescribes for a man who wrongly defames his wife's virtue. Since the Jewish People defamed G-d's name when they mistakenly proclaimed “*These are your gods, Yisrael,*” this might be the level of the atonement required.

Alternatively, if not a coin worth a hundred silver

*Continued on page four*

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## Parsha Insight...continued from page three

coins, Moshe surmised that the coin G-d would stipulate might be the equivalent of fifty silver pieces. For that is the penalty that a seducer must pay, and the Jewish People had made idols in defiance of the commandment “*You shall have no other gods!*”

At the very least, Moshe conjectured, G-d would demand a coin equivalent to the value of thirty *Shekalim*. The owner of a goring ox must pay thirty *Shekelim*. By worshipping a calf, the Jewish People had traded G-d’s glory for the image of a calf.

Moshe’s fears were unfounded. G-d said to him “You need not pay Me coins worth a hundred, or fifty, or even thirty silver pieces. All I ask is that you donate one small coin the value of a half-Shekel.”

G-d then took a half-Shekel coin from under His Throne of Glory, showing to Moshe its size and shape.

“This is the type of coin they shall give,” said G-d.

Those half-Shekel coins from the census were melted down and used for the silver sockets, the “*adonim*”, that were the foundation of the walls of the Mishkan. In other words, the Mishkan literally stood on the half-*Shekalim* that the Jewish People donated. They were the new basis of G-d’s residing amongst them.

Maybe this is one of the reasons that they were called “*adonim*.” *Adon* means “lord.” It is the root of the word that we say to indicate the ineffable four letter name of G-d. In effect the Jewish People, by contributing those half-Shekels, were humbling themselves under the supreme Lordship of G-d, which was the new basis of their closeness with Him.

It doesn’t take a million dollars to make G-d our “*Adon*.” Just a heart that is as broken and humble as a half-Shekel.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### TETZAVE

**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.

### KI TISA

**M**oshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-Shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his

sons. G-d selects Betzalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe’s descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d’s cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

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BY RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN

**Avodah Zara 30 - 43**

**The Metaphor of Fragrant Oil**

*Rav Nachman the son of Rav Chisda taught: Why is a Torah scholar compared to a flask of fragrant oil? To teach that when he is open his good fragrance is sensed, but when he is closed his good fragrance is not sensed.*

This idea is learned from a verse in Song of Songs (1:3, see there), in addition to a number of other inspirational messages. Rashi on our *daf* explains this statement to mean that only when a Torah scholar actually teaches what he has learned to others does he acquire a special name. Just as the oil's good fragrance is amplified when it is poured from its flask into another vessel, so too does the greatness of the Torah scholar increase when he teaches Torah to students.

Another teaching made by this Sage from this verse: "Things that are hidden from him become revealed." Rashi states that this means that when he teaches others he has special help from Heaven to understand things that he did not understand before, without effort. The Maharsha explains this teaching somewhat differently, that he will increase his own Torah wisdom when he interacts with his students. As Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Chanina said (Maccot 10a), "Much have I learned from my rabbis, even more have I learned from my colleagues, but from my *students* I have learned more than from anyone else." When teaching Torah, the teacher achieves his maximum understanding, due to the process of intense questioning and reasoning with the various logical viewpoints of his students.

Tosefot explains that the idea of "hidden things will be revealed to him" does not refer to increased Torah knowledge as Rashi and the Maharsha claim. Tosefot interprets this statement to mean that "people will tell him their secrets." People do so because they feel he will correctly advise them how to succeed, due to his great wisdom gained via Torah study. This attribute of becoming "master of advice" is found in Pirkei Avot (6:1): From him (one who studies Torah without ulterior motive) people enjoy counsel and wisdom, understanding and power.

• *Avoda Zara 35b*

**A Blessing for the Guardians**

*Rebbi said, "Blessed is G-d, Who entrusted His world into the hands of guardians."*

Rebbi (Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi) was ailing with intestinal pain and knew that apple wine could be helpful. He asked other rabbis if they knew whether apple wine of non-Jews is permitted to drink or not, unlike their grape wine which is clearly banned. Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yossi told him: "One time my father had an intestinal pain and he was offered 70-year-old apple wine of non-Jews. He drank it and was healed." Subsequently, they checked and found a non-Jew who had a large quantity of 70-year-old apple wine, which Rebbi drank and was restored to health. He then recited a unique blessing to G-d: "Blessed is G-d, Who entrusted His world into the hands of guardians."

The Maharsha explains the meaning of this blessing in two ways. The "simpler" meaning is that Rebbi praised the Almighty for creating guardians for all contents of His world, even for this type of "esoteric" and unusual wine, which is needed only for medicinal reasons.

A deeper meaning offered by the Maharsha is based on the fact that Adam's role in Gan Eden was to be a "guardian." The verse states (Ber. 2:15): "And He (G-d) placed him (Adam) in the Garden of Eden to work it and to guard it." Adam was a caretaker in Gan Eden, but not permitted to freely eat from the fruit of the trees there. After the exile from Gan Eden, however, Mankind was given dominion over the *entire* outside world. Based on this concept, Rebbi's *beracha* was one of praise to G-d for making the one-time "*guardian*" of Gan Eden now the *recipient* of all benefits of the entire world, with permission to use the bounty of Creation for all his needs. (Commentaries explain that although Adam was indeed allowed to eat in Gan Eden, except for the Tree of Knowledge, he was permitted to do so only while tending to the trees there. This is in accordance with the halacha that permits a worker to eat from the fruit of trees he is picking for the owner. At all other times, however, he was not allowed to eat from those trees — and certainly not to ferment them for wine — and was therefore considered a "guardian" of the trees and their fruits while in Gan Eden.)

• *Avoda Zara 40b*

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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### TETZAVE

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?

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## PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tetzave'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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## PARSHA Q&A?

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### KI TISA

1. How many “*geira*” are in a shekel?
  2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
  3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
  4. The Jews were counted after Yom Kippur and again after Pesach. Both times they numbered the same amount. How can this be? Didn't some 19-year olds turn 20 during that six month period?
  5. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
  6. According to Rashi, why are sailors called “*malachim*?”
  7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'at* (knowledge)?
  8. Shabbat is a “sign.” What does it signify?
  9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
  10. How many books are there in Tanach?
  11. From where did the men take the earrings that they donated to make the calf?
  12. Why did Aharon build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
  13. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
  14. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
  15. Why did Moshe ask that his name be erased from the Torah?
  16. How has the sin of the golden calf affected the Jewish People throughout history?
  17. In verse 33:2, G-d says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
  18. How did G-d show that He forgave the Jewish People?
  19. How did Moshe become wealthy?
  20. How do the light rays shining from Moshe's face show us the powerful effect of sin?
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## PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Ki Tisa's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

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1. 30:13 - Twenty.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the *adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the *Mishkan*.
4. 30:16 - Their ages were calculated based on Rosh Hashana, not based on their individual birthdays.
5. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
6. 30:35 - Because they stir (*malach*) the water with their oars.
7. 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'at* is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between G-d and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:18 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 31:18 - 24.
11. 32:2,3 - From their ears.
12. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
13. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah forbids those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation which has estranged itself from G-d!
14. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
15. 32:32 - So people shouldn't say “Moshe was unworthy to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people.”
16. 32:34 - Whenever G-d punishes the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
17. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
19. 34:1 - Moshe carved the Tablets out of precious stone. G-d commanded Moshe to keep the leftover fragments.
20. 34:35 - Before the sin of the golden calf, the people would not have been afraid to look at the light rays, but after the sin they were afraid.

**HAPPY PURIM!**

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

## Purim, Defeating Amalek

One major theme in the story of Purim is the victory over Haman, who was from the seed of Amalek. In fact, this is the reason why we read *parshat Zachor* on the Shabbat before Purim, which describes Amalek's defeat. Therefore, to understand the significance and depth behind Purim we must study the essence of Amalek.

*Chazal* tell us that everything that happens in this world has a spiritual cause. This is why the Jewish approach is always to attribute spiritual reasons to physical struggles with our enemies. This approach defines enemies as only an outer manifestation of an inner deficiency in the Jewish People. Therefore, since G-d communicates with the world through dealing with it measure-for-measure, by studying an enemy's essence we can gain an insight into the deficiency within that caused our assault (*Michtav M'Eliyahu II* p. 51; see Ramban on Ber. 15:14 for why the nations will be punished for their attacks even though they were Divine decrees). Let's analyze the spiritual cause of Amalek's attack on the Jewish nation.

The very first time Amalek is mentioned in the Torah is after the Jewish People crossed the Yam Suf, which was directly after the many miracles G-d had performed for them. From each of the ten plagues to the sea splitting, G-d revealed Himself to the world in nearly every way possible. However, Amalek refused to acknowledge G-d because they attributed even open miracles to mere chance and coincidence. So, despite these unbelievable events, Amalek attacked the Jewish People.

What was the spiritual measure-for-measure cause of Amalek's attack? The Torah records Amalek's attack immediately following the Jewish People's complaint to Moshe for water. They asked, "Is G-d in our midst or not?" which demonstrated doubt in G-d. G-d thus allowed Amalek, the nation of *doubt*, to attack them (see Rashi on Shemot 17:8).

A similar chain of events took place in the Purim story. The commentaries tell us that Haman, from the seed of Amalek, personified their trademark and completely ignored all the obvious signs of G-d's worldly involvement. The Megillah tells us that, through a series of very unlikely events, the very night that

Haman decided to finalize Mordechai's death became the very night that Haman himself advised Achashverosh to magnificently honor him. How was this so? The Megillah records that on the night Achashverosh could not fall asleep, he called in his scribes to read from his *Sefer HaZichronot*. The book opened to Mordechai's unrewarded good deed, which prompted Achashverosh to ask if there was anyone in the courtyard he could speak to about rewarding Mordechai. His courtier happened to spot Haman, who was ironically walking toward Achashverosh to discuss his plan to hang Mordechai. Achashverosh asked Haman for advice on rewarding someone whom the king wants to honor, and Haman, who was certain that Achashverosh was thinking about him, advised to have the man ride around as the king throughout the town. The Vilna Gaon explains that after all these strange events the Megillah says that Haman reported to his wife, Zeresh, and his loved ones, everything that *chanced* upon him. Haman still saw everything as mere chance (*Gra* on Esther 7:13).

What was the spiritual measure-for-measure cause of Haman's death decree in the Purim story? The Gemara says that one reason why G-d decreed the Jewish People's destruction was because they took pleasure in Achashverosh's feast (*Megillah* 12a). Even though Mordechai, the Torah leader of the time, forbade them from attending, they felt that it was politically important. In other words, they removed G-d from the picture and based their decision on political considerations. This is why G-d orchestrated for Haman, the heir of Amalek, to gain power and decree against them. The moment the Jewish People stopped recognizing G-d's control, Haman, the epitome of disbelief in G-d, was able to seize control.

### Defeating Amalek

The *pasuk* describing the war with Amalek says:

*And it was that when Moshe would raise his hand that Israel was stronger, and when he would put his hand down that Amalek was stronger.* (Shemot 17:11)

The Mishnah says: *Was it Moshe's hands that won or lost the war? Rather, the verse is coming to teach you that when the Jewish People looked up to Heaven and*

*Continued on page eighteen*

## LOVE of the LAND

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

### Purim — A Miracle Without Hallel

As Jews throughout the world celebrate the miracle of Purim the question arises as to why Hallel is not said on this happy day. One of the answers given to this question in the Talmud (Megillah 14a) is that Hallel is not said for a miracle that took place outside of Eretz Yisrael.



Even though we do say Hallel in regard to the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt, that event took place before Jews entered their Promised Land. Once they came to Eretz Yisrael no place outside of it was worthy of having Hallel said for a miracle that took place there.

### The Walled Cities of Eretz Yisrael

The Megillah is read on the 14th of Adar in cities which were *not* walled at the time when Joshua led the Jewish nation in conquest of Eretz Yisrael. In cities which *were* surrounded by walls at that time, the Megillah is read a day later, on the 15th of Adar.

In a city about which there is uncertainty as to whether it was walled at that time or not, its inhabitants must read the Megillah on both the 14th and 15th. This includes the ancient cities of Jaffa, Lod, Acco, Tsefat, Haifa, Beersheva, Hebron, Shechem and Gaza, according to the “*Luach Eretz Yisrael*” of Rabbi M. Tuchichinski. Feasting and gift giving are also done on both days. The blessing on the Megillah reading is said only on the 14th when most of the world reads the Megillah.

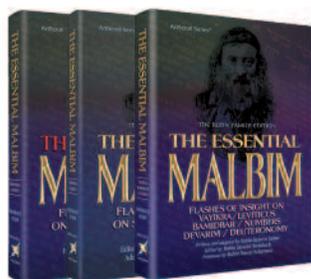
In Tiberias, too, the Megillah must be read on both days. But this is not because there is any doubt that the

city had walls in the time of Joshua. A passage in Joshua 19 describes Rekes as a walled city, and we know that Rekes is another name for Tiberias. What then is the question that arises in regard to Tiberias?



Tiberias is located on the Sea of Galilee, also called the Kinneret. Thus, it was protected from invaders by a combination of walls and the sea. If we define a “walled city” literally, as one completely surrounded by walls, then Tiberias does not qualify. But if we view “walled city” as one protected from invasion, then Tiberias’ combination of walls and sea qualifies it as such.

This is why the Sage Chizkiyahu instituted in Tiberias the Megillah reading on both days, a ruling cited in the Shulchan Aruch as a precedent for all cities whose status is uncertain. (*Orach Chaim 68 8:4, Mishneh Berurah 9*)



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FLASHES OF INSIGHT  
ON CHUMASH

EDITED BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH  
ADAPTED BY RABBI REUVEN SUBAR

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

## Feminist Purim

### From: Rivi

*Dear Rabbi,  
Am I correct in noticing that Purim features the role of a woman, Esther, as heroine, more so than other Jewish holidays? If so, why might this be and what is the message?*

Dear Rivi,

Purim is not the only holiday which features a female protagonist. The holiday of Pesach which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt also includes women in the theme of Redemption: The Jewish women in general, and the midwives in particular, who denied Pharaoh's decree, are considered an instrumental part of the salvation. Similarly, Chanuka extols the role of Yehudit, alongside her father and brothers, the Maccabees, in overcoming the oppressive Greek enemy. And many other holidays and important events also feature women in prominent roles.

Nevertheless, it seems you are correct in observing that the Purim story features a woman, Esther, as the prime role and the major character through which salvation was achieved for the Jewish People. Thus it is worth exploring why that might be, and what the message is.

The Talmud (Megilla 11a) states, "Reish Lakish would introduce his discourses on the Book of Esther with the following verse: Like a roaring lion and a ravenous bear, so is the wicked ruler over a destitute people (Prov. 28:15). When the verse says, 'a roaring lion' it refers to Nevuchadnezzar; 'a ravenous bear' refers to Achashverosh; the 'wicker ruler' is Haman; and 'a destitute people' is the Jewish People, who were destitute of *mitzvot*."

Nevuchadnezzar's ferocious roar is described in the verse, "Whoever does not bow down and serve the idol will be cast into a *raging*, fiery furnace" (Dan. 3:6). It was out of fear of this that Israel bowed down to the idol of Nevuchadnezzar during the earlier Babylonian period.

Achashverosh is referred to as a ravenous bear since he presided over the voracious consumption at the feasts of which he commanded that "all the people in Shushan (that is the Jewish People) the capital, be gathered for the feast" (Esther 1:5). He thus ensnared them into transgressing in this gluttony.

These two sins — bowing out of fear to the statue of Nevuchadnezzar and partaking of the hedonistic feasts in deference to Achashverosh — made the Jews destitute of *mitzvot*, thus enabling Haman to rule over them, because of their guilt in these two sins.

Rabbi Moshe Alshich, in his commentary on the Megilla, notes that since the Jews were liable for these two separate sins, G-d sent two separate redeemers, Mordecai and Esther. Israel was protected from each of these sins through the merit of a redeemer. And through the combined efforts and merits of Mordechai and Esther, the complete redemption was achieved.

The Alshich further elaborates that since Mordechai was the one who cried out in the streets, exhorting the Jews to keep away from the banquet, it was he who protected against the sin of the feast. And thus it was Esther's merit which protected against the sin of the idol.

But of the two redeemers, Mordechai and Esther, why was it specifically Esther, a woman, who shielded the Jewish People from the very severe transgression of idolatry?

This is because, unlike the Jewish men, Jewish women always repudiated idol worship. As such, they did not participate in the sin of the golden calf. And for this reason the miraculous salvation of the Jewish People in the Purim story was wrought specifically through Esther's replacing the idolatrous Queen Vashti, granddaughter of Nevuchadnezzar, thereby uprooting idolatrous influence over Israel, as befitting a righteous Jewish woman!

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## WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

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BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

### For Crying Out Loud

When Esav found out that the blessing from his father Yitzchak had been given to Yaakov, Esav “cried out a great and bitter cry” (Genesis 27:34). The Midrash says that because Yaakov caused Esav to “cry out”, Yaakov’s descendants were later punished with the threat of annihilation (via Haman, a descendant of Esav), and Mordechai ended up having to “cry out” to G-d (Esther 4:1). In this way the Midrash links the fate of the Jewish People in the story of Purim to the story of Yaakov and Esav. However, this Midrash is somewhat problematic, because when looking at the Hebrew words used to convey Esav’s crying and Mordechai’s crying, one will notice that they are not the same. Esav’s crying is described as a *tzaakah*, while Mordechai’s, a *zaakah*.

What’s the difference between *tzaakah* and *zaakah*? (And don’t tell me the letter *t*!)

Rashi (to Iyov 6:17 and Sotah 36b), Nachmanides (to Iyov 40:17), the Zohar (Shemot 20a), and others, all explain that *tzaakah* and *zaakah* are wholly synonymous, and both words can be used interchangeably. They explain that both the letter ZAYIN in the beginning of the word *zaakah*, and the TZADIK in the beginning of the word *tzaakah*, yield similar phonemes, both articulated by the teeth. Therefore, these two letters can be used substituted for one another. Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) likewise writes that there is no difference between the words *tzaakah* and *zaakah*. Although he notes that the word *tzaakah* is related to the word *tzaar* (“pain”), he concludes that both words denote an outward expression of one’s pain and suffering (similar to crying).

According to this approach the Midrash is entirely justified in connecting Esav’s cries to Mordechai’s, because the Bible practically uses the same word for both.

However, the late 12th century Asheknazic scholar Rabbi Elazar Rokeach of Worms writes that the words *tzaakah* and *zaakah* are not synonyms. He explains that the word *zaakah* implies crying out in the context of registering a complaint, while *tzaakah* does not. He further notes that *zaakah* implies multiple people crying, while *tzaakah* does not. In light of this understanding it is somewhat difficult to justify linking Esav’s crying out to Mordechai’s crying if the Bible uses two different words to express those two different occurrences.

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Shapira-Frankfurter (1743-1826),

who was Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch’s great-uncle, writes that while the terms *zaakah* and *tzaakah* can be used to express somebody pleading with another human, the word *shaavah* applies only to one who pleads with G-d. Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the word *shaavah* is related to the word *yeshuah* (both have the root SHIN-VAV-AYIN), and connotes one who calls out with the expectation that it bring his salvation.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) writes that all three words denote somebody who calls out with the expectation of bringing about his deliverance, but differ in one small detail. Those who engage in *zaakah* and *tzaakah* simply verbalize their suffering, but do not explicitly ask for help (like a poor man who cries, “I have not eaten in a long time”). By contrast, one who engages in *shaavah* makes his desire for help unmistakably clear (like a poor man who cries, “Please give me something to eat”). The Zohar also contends that *tzaakah/zaakah* is less explicit than *shaavah*, but explains that the former is the silent cry of pain, while the latter is an expression of prayer. According to one opinion in the Zohar, *tzaakah/zaakah* is a greater form of supplication because it denotes the crying out of the heart.

Psalms 107 tells of four people who ended up in dire circumstances, and they called out to G-d and were saved: the wayfarer lost in the desert, the incarcerated, the deathly ill and the sailor aboard a ship in the storm. In the first and last of these cases the word *tzaakah* denotes the sufferer’s crying out, while in the middle two cases the word *zaakah* appears.

Rabbi Emmanuel Chai Ricci (1688-1743) explains that the difference between *tzaakah* and *zaakah* is that the *tz*-consonant in the former is a longer sound than the *z*-consonant in the latter. Accordingly, since the incarcerated and the deathly ill are confined to their respective places (the incarcerated to his jail cell and the ill to his deathbed), they use a shorter word than the other two, who have more options to escape their predicament.

The Midrash understands that these four fellows correspond to the four kingdoms which are to subjugate the Jewish People: Babylon, Persia/Media, Greece, and Rome. To explain this, the Midrash asserts that the first and last of the above kingdoms (Babylon and Rome) were more detrimental to the Jewish People than the middle two (probably because they both destroyed the Holy

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# The Anatomy of a MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

## The Seven Rabbinic Mitzvahs

*“According to the teachings that they will teach you, and according to the judgment that they will say to you, shall you do. You shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left.” (Devarim 17:11)*

The Torah empowers and charges the Rabbis with the responsibility to create “fences” to protect the Torah, and we are likewise charged with the obligation to follow their instructions. Accordingly, we find countless examples of Rabbinic decrees mentioned in the Talmud. Based on the above verse the Rabbis were given license to create Rabbinic *mitzvot* as well. These mitzvot are: Hallel, Purim, Chanuka, washing the hands (before eating bread), lighting Shabbat candles, and saying blessings (such as when eating food, and more) — seven in total.

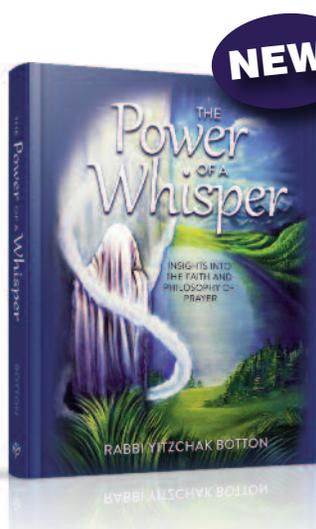
Adding these seven Rabbinic commandments to the six-hundred and thirteen Biblical commandments brings us to a total number of six-hundred and twenty, the numerical value of the Hebrew word “*keter*,” which means “crown”. This teaches us that through fulfilling the *mitzvot*, both on a Biblical and Rabbinical level, the crown of Torah is placed on one’s head (see Baal HaTurim, Yitro 20:14).

We find in Midrash Rabbah (Bamidbar 13:16) that there are 613 letters corresponding to the 613 *mitzvot*

in the “*Aseret HaDibrot* — the “Ten Commandments,” from the opening phrase “I am the L-rd... (*Anochi*), up until the phrase “That is to your friend (*asher le’rei’echa*) — and with the additional seven Hebrew letters of *asher le’rei’echa* the total number is 620. The Midrash connects the seven extra letters to the seven days of Creation, which teaches us that the world was created in the merit of the Torah.

Rabbi Yehoshua Horowitz writes in *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* in the name of the *Kadmonim* (early Rabbis), that the 620 letters of the Ten Commandments (613 plus 7) represent the 613 Biblical commands together with the 7 Rabbinical ones. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, author of *Tanya*, explains that the 620 Biblical and Rabbinical commands that equal the numerical value of *keter*, crown, correspond to 620 pillars of light above, revealed through the Torah and the *mitzvot*.

Purim, one of the seven Rabbinic commandments, was instituted to commemorate the miraculous salvation of the Jewish People from total annihilation. This holiday includes four *mitzvot*: the reading of the Scroll of Esther, a festive meal in which many partake of wine or other alcoholic beverages, giving two gifts of food to another Jew and giving charity to at least two poor people.



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BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

**Tetzave****Cut from the Cloth of Character**

**C**lothes don't make the man. Or do they? The Kohen's garments were more than a uniform. The entire character of the priesthood and the validity of the offering procedures depended on these priestly garments, and on every detail prescribed for them in this week's Torah portion. Without these garments the Kohen is not fit to perform Temple service; the service is invalid. Without them the Kohen exposes his own persona, with all its faults and weaknesses, and is thus unfit to serve. But when he is clothed in the priestly garments, the Kohen assumes a new identity. He does not appear as he actually is, but as he ought to be, and can then meet the standards of sanctity required for the service.

Our Scripture is full of references to clothing, expressing, and even imbuing, character. Consider the first appearance of clothing in the Torah. After Adam and Eve sin, and they are banished from Gan Eden, G-d *clothes them*. Now that they are in danger of straying to the level of beast, they are given clothing to remind them of their higher moral calling.

The Hebrew words for clothe, cover and clothing are often used to describe the integration of character traits. G-d is said to be clothed in majesty, in righteousness, and in zeal, among other attributes. Our prophets describe man as clothed in salvation, righteousness, strength, dignity and faithfulness, and there are several instances where the *kohanim* are singled out as being clothed in righteousness and salvation. (*Tehillim* 132:9, 16) The garments of the Kohen must express the character he is to achieve, and set the standard for the nation as a whole. The Kohen must not wear anything else on his body that would interfere with these garments — he is to be one with the traits they symbolize.

Rav Hirsch's commentary leaves nary a detail of these garments unexplored. Here, we share only two examples. The linen pants of the Kohen are called *michnesei bad*, and the Torah instructs that they *cover his nakedness, from his waist until his thighs*. Thus, they cover the parts of the body involved in nourishment and reproduction; they cover them with the qual-

ity of purity, symbolized by the white linen. Purity is especially relevant to these two realms of human activity. The name for linen, "*bad*" derives from the special way in which the plant grows as it rises from the ground: it rises in straight, separate, unbranched stems. This represents the straight, predetermined and undeviating path that purity demands.

The tunic, extending from shoulder to heel, also represents purity. The tunic thus covers the entire body, except the head; it clothes the *animal* nature of man with purity. It is woven into a small pattern of hollows, like hollows into which stones are set. This represents two fundamental steps required in the quest for purity: first, one must remove anything impure, creating a hollow space for the good to be set. As King David writes, *shun evil and do good*. (Psalms 34:15)

All of the Kohanic garments must be supplied and owned by the nation. The people, too, are to reflect on the attributes befitting a servant of G-d, even outside the Temple, and 'clothe' themselves accordingly.

Source: *Commentary, Shemot* 28:43

**Ki Tisa****A Complete Half Shekel**

**O**ne half, one, one and a half, two, two and a half, three.... Take the final count and multiply by two, and you have the total population. Would it not have been simpler to count by ones?

The counting of Israel is in halves — each Jew was commanded to donate one half-Shekel to the construction of the Mishkan, and through this donation the people were counted. In later years this half-Shekel would be collected annually for the communal sacrificial offerings.

It is significant that the count is accomplished by way of donation. In order to be counted among the people of Israel, an individual must *contribute*. One who merely exists, living for himself, does not become an integral part of the nation. Rather, he who gives and contributes earns his place in the community. He may then become "one of the counted." (Shemot 30:13). Only one who asks not what the community can do for him, but resolves to do for the community

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BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

## Nothing but the Truth

*Q: My little daughter loves to kiss the mezuzah before going to sleep. She keeps on asking me to move the mezuzah lower down on the post so she can reach it. I always tell her that it must stay where it is. But when she asks me: "Why?" I don't know what to tell her, except "That's where it is supposed to be!" To be honest, I would also love to know why!*

*A: The Talmud equates the mitzvah of tefillin to mezuzah, which follows it in the first paragraph of the Shema. Just as tefillin are placed on the upper part of the body and the head, so too, the mezuzah should be affixed within the top third of the doorway.*

Also, the mezuzah must be visually noticeable to the adults who pass by it, as a reminder to observe the mitzvot incumbent upon them.

The custom of kissing a mezuzah, precious as it may be, cannot push aside these halachic principles. R' Yonason Rosenblum, in his classic biography of Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky, records:

Reb Yaakov was particularly attuned to the dangers of exposing children to any kind of falsehood. He once visited the kindergarten of his son Binyamin's yeshiva and noticed that the mezuzah had been placed lower on the doorpost than halachically prescribed, so the children could reach it upon entering the classroom.

The idea of getting children used to touching the mezuzah when they come into a room was a good one, said Reb Yaakov, but the means were wholly inappropriate. "Put the mezuzah on the upper third of the doorpost where it belongs," he said, "and let them use a stool to reach it. Otherwise they will grow up thinking a mezuzah can be put anywhere you wish. One does not raise children with falsehood."

Perhaps there is another lesson here as well: It's important to convey to our children — and to ourselves — that our job is to lift *ourselves* up to meet our spiritual challenges, even when it's "oh-so-tempting" to look for ways to simply lower the bar.

• Sources: *Agur B'ohalecha* 12:9:26, citing *Minchas Pitim*; *Yitzchak Yikarei* 6:9:24, citing *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*; R' Y. Rosenblum and R' N. Kamenetsky in *Reb Yaakov, Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 2004, pp. 326-7*

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### Letter & Spirit...continued from page thirteen

joins the ennobled circle of those counted before G-d.

He does not give a full Shekel, but one half-Shekel. Even the fullest, whole-hearted contribution to community can only be a "half." One member can never accomplish all of the work; his accomplishments must always be met by the contribution of his brother. The half-Shekel reminds each member, *the task is not for you to complete.* (Avot 2:16)

One Shekel was equivalent to twenty *geirah* (approximately 20 grams), and thus the half-Shekel was ten *geirah*. Although he gives one half-Shekel, the measurement is a unit of ten, a number which represents a complete unit, a full set. Subjectively, he is to give a complete measure of himself, of his talents, of his

efforts. He is not to view his effort as half-hearted, waiting for someone else to pitch in. Rather, he gives his full ten *geirah*, understanding that while *the task is not his to complete*, he is *not free to excuse himself from his part.* (Avot 2:16)

We all become co-builders of the Mishkan, of the community, when we make our individual donations. The rich give no more than the poor — everyone gives his "half." When each gives his *whole* half, his full contribution, the total strength of the community is realized, and we may be counted among those who G-d numbers as His own.

• Sources: *Commentary, Shemot* 30:12-13; *Collected Writings, Vol. II, Adar II, p. 380*

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

## Jonah Feldman

Age 28 - Arlington, Virginia  
Brandeis University, BA Anthropology/Economics

The first rule for an anthropologist doing field work is: “Don’t affect the society you’re studying.” You are an observer — a very curious, analytical, and close observer of the language, customs, family relationships, structure, religion and politics of the society, but never a participant to the extent that you lose your objectiveness and distance, thereby influencing the behavior of the people in the society. Of course, people being who they are, it’s quite impossible not to be influenced by the society one lives in and likewise regarding influencing it.

Jonah majored in Anthropology at Brandeis University and might have gone on to graduate school in that subject, but he had an itch to travel and observe humanity in its various societies firsthand. And he did a very good job of it. He travelled the world: to South East Asia, India, South America, the Middle East and Europe. But the first place he decided to do his field work was in Monroe, NY, among the Satmar Chassidim, who in many ways are as insular a society as any in the jungles of the Amazon.

Jonah grew up in a highly educated family. His father is a physicist and his mother a psychotherapist. He has an older brother who is an immigration rights activist in Houston, Texas, where he represents undocumented immigrants in the Immigration Courts. The family was secular, but very proud of its ethnic Jewish heritage. For a senior project in high school Jonah went with his family to Israel for ten days and reported on it. In Jerusalem, where they stayed, he saw a different slice of the Jewish world than he had ever seen in Arlington — people who actually practiced the laws that were written in the Bible and who

dressed very differently from the Jews he knew back at home. His curiosity about his co-religionists was piqued, and when he started college in Boston he sought out the Bostoner Chassidim.

For the summer after his freshman year Jonah decided to delve a bit deeper into his heritage. The Bostoner community set him up with Fischel and his Satmar family in Monroe, NY for the summer. Yonah stayed with them. He soaked up the Yiddish language and the *shiurim* and the warmth of the place. He was very impressed with the strong sense of community and belonging they felt, although he did not become a Chassid himself.

As the *Sefer HaChinuch* says, if you force a *rasha* to do one mitzvah on a daily basis, he’ll eventually become a *tzaddik*. The force of habit made a non-practicing Jew into one who kept Shabbat, *kashrut* and *tefillin*. After returning to Boston, however, his practice

wavered and Jonah’s religious observance drifted away.

After graduating from Brandeis he came back to Israel on a four-week government sponsored program called Amiram. When that program ended, after a brief sojourn back at home in Virginia he set off on a four-year tour of the world. While visiting Portugal in 2016 he had an epiphany, and made a decision to come to Israel, his ancestral home. He hung out in Tel Aviv for the first six months, and then got serious, hopped on a bus and walked into Ohr Somayach’s Mechina Program. He’s now in Rabbi Wiener’s Gemara *shiur* and is seeing increasing progress in his learning. His goal is to learn and get married, have children and establish a “*Bayit ne’eman b’Yisrael*” — no longer as an observer, but as a participant.



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Temple and exiled the Jews from Jerusalem).

Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) deduces from this that the word *tzaakah* denotes a more intense form of crying out than *zaakah* does, as it indicates a more serious state of distress. Indeed, Malbim (to Psalms 107:6) writes that the Bible uses *tzaakah* (as opposed to *zaakah*) in the cases of the lost wayfarer and the sailor because they are in greater danger than are the jailed person and the sick person (unlike Tosefot to Berachot 54b who write that the four people are listed in order of their danger).

### My Clothes and Me

The Malbim and others explain how a bevy of apparent synonyms for “clothing” actually differ from one another. As many commentators note, the Hebrew words *levush* and *malbush* do not inherently refer to clothing. Rather, they are conjugations of the Hebrew verb *lovesh* (“he dresses”), and refer to that with which one dresses. Malbim further explains that the word *beged* is a general term that includes all sorts of clothing, while other words, in various ways, refer to specific types of clothing.

Returning to the word *levush*, the commentators explain that it denotes a type of garment which is worn in the normal way of dressing, but is nevertheless special because most people do not wear this type of garment. A *levush* is a distinct type of clothing reserved for certain individuals. To this effect, the word *levush* is applied in the construct to form phrases like *levush malchut* (“royal clothes”), *levush sak* (“sackcloth”) and more.

The word *kesut* (which literally means “cover”) refers specifically to clothing which is worn by simply covering oneself with it (like a poncho or a shawl). It is not worn in the normal fashion of donning clothes. Sometimes, the first letter of the word *kesut* is dropped and the word appears as *sut* (e.g., Genesis 41:11). A type of *kesut* that is worn at night is known as a *salmah* or *simlah* (with the metathesis of language allowing for the placement of the L and M consonants to be interchanged). The Malbim explains that another difference between *kesut* and *salmah/simlah* is that the former is only used to cover oneself, while the latter also gives honor to its wearer. Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim argues that the word *kesut* focuses on clothes’ ability to protect its wearer (whether from the heat, the cold, or something else).

Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer points out that the above stands in contrast with the explanation proffered by Rabbi Yosef Kolon (1420-1480), also known as the Maharik. He wrote that *beged* denotes a simple piece of cloth like a *tallit* that is not fitted to the one wearing it, while *kesut* implies a specially sewn garment that fits to one’s shapes and dimensions. Rabbi Wertheimer further writes that a *salmah/simlah* is a linen cloth that can be folded and used to cover one’s head, neck, and upper

torso (similar to a hijab or kefiyah), and also doubles as a bed sheet when unfolded to its full size. Rabbi Wertheimer agrees that when worn, a *salmah/simlah* generally serves as a badge or symbol of honor.

Although he goes against the consensus, Ibn Ezra (to Exodus 22:25) actually writes that *salmah* and *simlah* are not synonymous. Rather, he explains, *simlah* is a general term which includes multiple items, and that *salmah* is one of those items that falls into the category of *simlah*.

The word *mad* (rhymes with *tod*) refers specifically to a garment which is custom-fitted to the person intended to wear that article. It is related to the Hebrew word *moded* (“measure”). In Modern Hebrew *madim* refers to a uniform, most commonly the fatigues worn by soldiers. The word *maateh* refers to “wrapping” or “enveloping” and need not necessarily refer to clothing, but to anything which is wrapped around something else or otherwise envelops it.

Malbim explains that the word *me’il* refers to the outermost layer of clothing which one might wear, and is related to the Hebrew word *mei’al* (“on top”). Rabbi Wertheimer writes that *me’il* denotes a thin, delicate article of clothing.

Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (1935-2017) notes that the words *beged* and *me’il* are both related to the idea of perfidy. The word *beged* is related to the noun *begidah* (treachery) and the word *me’il* is related to the word *me’ilah* (betrayal). Rabbi Shapiro explains that when a man dons a *beged* he uses that implement to conceal his true, inner-self and reveal to the outside a façade. This duplicity is conceptually related to the idea of treachery and betrayal, whereby one feigns loyalty on the outside but has nefarious intentions on the inside.

The word *levush*, on the other hand, denotes a pragmatic, utilitarian use of clothing. The Talmud (*Shabbat* 77b) explains that the word *levush* is a contraction of the words *lo bushah* (“no embarrassment”), because the purpose of wearing a *levush* is simply to cover oneself in a respectable way — there are no dastardly motives. Rabbi Yochanan called his clothes “the honors” (*Bava Kama* 91b) because he viewed his clothes as simply a mechanism by which he may respectably present himself in public, as opposed to a mask behind which to hide.

Following this sort of model, Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin (1738-1792) explains that every action a person does creates a layer of dressing for his soul, but that there are two types of dressings. If he does a good deed he creates a *levush* for his soul, and if he does a bad deed he creates a *beged* over his soul. What you wear depends on what you do. Although the famous cliché suggests that “the clothes make the man,” we see that actually the opposite is true: “The man makes the clothes.”

*Eiluy Nishmat* my mother Bracha bat R’ Dovid  
and my grandmother Shprintza bat R’ Meir

that G-d had wrought for them the most astonishing miracle, they were able once more to serve G-d with true, unbridled emotion.

One of the most brilliant scholars in America before the Second World War was Rabbi Shlomo Heiman. He was one of the greatest authorities in Jewish Law in his generation and he was also the head of one of the flagship Torah academies in New York. Rabbi Heiman would give an in-depth Talmud lecture almost every day to his students, and, despite ill-health his enthusiasm and passion for Torah were legendary. One day there was a very heavy snowstorm and the city ground to a halt. Traffic was blocked and people stayed home to wait out the storm in comfort. On that day only three people arrived for the lecture even though they were virtually certain it would be cancelled. Yet, to their enormous surprise, Rabbi Heiman arrived to deliver the lecture as usual. In his characteristic way he began teaching them with fiery enthusiasm, just as if he was teaching hundreds of people in that room and not just three. Those three students saw that he was physically pushing himself to his limits, and, knowing that he was not in the best of health, they beseeched him, "Rabbi, there are only three of us here. Please don't exert yourself so much!"

"It's not true that you are only three," he replied. "Yes, of course I am speaking to the three of you, and trying my best to show you the beauty and wisdom of the Torah. But I am also hoping to influence not just you, but also your families, your children and grandchildren, your future students, and your students' students. I see them all before me!"

Not one of those three students would ever forget their Rebbe, his passion and his innocent enthusiasm. And neither would their families and students forget all

this either.

Regarding the Ten Plagues that preceded the Exodus from Egypt, our Sages teach that each plague actually took a month from beginning to end. There were three weeks of warnings before the plague began, and then one week of the actual plague. The last plague was on Seder Night, the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Nissan. One of the great Chassidic leaders points out that this means that the Plague of Darkness, which was the ninth plague, started on the fifteenth of the previous month of Adar —the exact same date on which the events of Purim would take place almost one thousand years later! On exactly the same date when we are celebrating Purim and the return of the true light of Torah, and joy to the world, the Egyptians were plunged into complete and absolute darkness.

This time of the year is truly a time of light, gladness, joy and honor for the Jewish nation.

There is an old adage that resonates within me: "We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public." I think that there is a lot of truth to that. And I also think that perhaps Purim is the perfect time to really learn how to act in public. It is the time to learn how to let everyone see how excited we are about keeping the commandments. It is the time to show the world how passionate we are about *being able* to keep the commandments. It is the time to approach our relationship with G-d with childlike enthusiasm and innocence, so powerful that it does not wane throughout the rest of the year.

And if we do so, we will truly merit *living and feeling* exactly what the Megillah describes: "*LaYehudim hay-tah orah v'simcha v'sasson viy'kar*" — that we will also be blessed with lives that are full-to-bursting with light, gladness, joy and honor!

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Seasons Then and Now...continued from page eight

*subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they would win, and when not, they would fall.* (Rosh Hashana 29a)

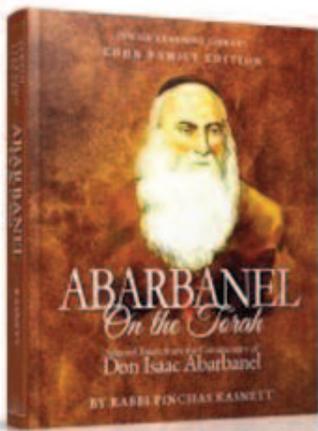
Amalek was able to attack the Jewish People after they demonstrated disbelief. Similarly, after putting all their *emunah* in G-d, the Jewish People were able to rectify their mistake, and defeat Amalek. This is precisely how the Jewish People merited overcoming Amalek in the Purim story. Esther understood that the only way to save the Jewish People would be through undoing their offense of removing G-d from the picture when they attended Achashverosh's feast. Therefore, the Gemara says that Esther purposely invited Haman to her feast, giving the impression that she was on Haman's side. One of her intentions, says the Gemara, was to cause the Jewish nation to lose hope in their "political contact" in the palace, and turn directly to G-d to save them (Megillah 15b). The Jewish People responded correctly, and instead of focusing on political tactics they turned to G-d and did *teshuva*. Through undoing the mistake of trusting in politics instead of G-d, the

Jewish People merited salvation from Haman's decree.

Even though Amalek as a nation is no longer around, and individuals who are from the seed of Amalek are unrecognizable (see Yoma 54a), nevertheless their ideology of denying G-d's providence still plagues us. The commandment to erase the memory of Amalek requires of us to *remove doubt*, Amalek's essence, by revealing G-d's name and providence behind everything. For us to defeat this Amalek we must represent the opposing force. Just as Amalek dares to attribute even the clearest signs of G-d's providence to coincidence, the Jewish People must go to the other extreme, and show that G-d is also behind the seemingly natural occurrences. This is the big lesson behind Purim, the holiday in which the miracles were masked by nature. Through reading the Megillah, which doesn't mention G-d's name openly, we are meant to put the unlikely coincidences together and reveal G-d's name — even in seemingly natural events. This is the way to eradicate the memory of Amalek today. (Haamek Davar on Shemot 17:14; Michtav M'Eliyahu IV p. 288)

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