

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT TETZAVEH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
TAL Founder & Director

## WHAT ARE YOU WEARING TODAY?

In this week's Parasha, the Torah describes at length what the Kohen Gadol should wear when performing his service (Avodah) in the Temple (Mishkan).

The Pasuk states, "VeAsita Vigdei Kodesh LeAharon Achicha LeChavod ULTifaret," "And you shall make holy garments for Aharon, your brother, for honour and splendour" (Shemot 28:2). Two Pesukim later, Hashem enumerates the necessary garments: a Choshen, an Eifod, a Me'il, a Ketonet Tashbeitz, a Mitznefet, and an Avneit (28:4). The Torah then goes on to explain how to make each one of the garments. The obvious question that arises is why the Kohen needs to wear special clothes when he works in the Temple. Surely looks are superficial and we should make more emphasis on our inside rather than our outside?

We find ourselves in a similar situation every Shabbat. As you read this, what are you wearing today?

The Prophet Yishaya (58:13) relates; "And you shall honour it [the Shabbat]."

The sages interpret "honour" as a reference to the type of nice clothes that cause others to respect the one wearing them.

Yet again we find ourselves asking why we need special clothes for Shabbat; after all, we are the same people regardless of what we wear!

The theme of beauty seems to take great emphasis within the Torah.

The Mishkan was replete with gold and silver. Designed and built according to prophetic instructions, followed by the magnificent Bet Hamikdash in Jerusalem these structures

were known to be of the most beautiful structures in the world.

Jerusalem itself is called the epitome of beauty in the Book of Lamentations.

Furthermore, when it comes to keeping the commandments, the Torah instructs us to beautify our fulfilment of commandments with physical beauty, and have a beautiful Sukkah, Shofar, and more.

The Torah itself emphasizes how some of our holiest ancestors, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Yosef were extraordinarily beautiful people – physical beauty noticed by the most powerful monarchs of the time.

The Talmud (Berachot 12b) explains that Rabbi Yochanan was forced to sleep on his back because of his enormous mass; Rabbi Yochanan was very much overweight. Although under contemporary society's definitions of beauty, obesity is not a beautiful attribute. Furthermore, Rabbi Yochanan had huge bushy eyebrows, which had to be lifted by his assistants in order for him to see properly (Ta'anit 9a, Bava Kama 117a).

How easy it is for society to change ideals of beauty.

Nonetheless, the Talmud in multiple places describes Rabbi Yochanan as being physically attractive. Women who were trying to conceive would go gaze at Rabbi Yochanan so that when they conceive their children born would be as beautiful as Rabbi Yochanan was (Berachot 20a). Furthermore, in one incident, Rabbi Yochanan rescued a drowning bandit who he convinced to repent and become a Torah scholar. This bandit, who was later to be known as Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, was taken aback by Rabbi Yochanan's beauty and was convinced to return to Torah after Rabbi Yochanan promised him his equally beautiful sister (Bava Metzia 84a). From these Talmudic descriptions, it is clear that Rabbi

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Quiz

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Yochanan was "beautiful" but lacked certain physical elements, which are now used to define beauty.

The famous novelist Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910, author of War and Peace) once remarked, "It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness." However, in the Talmudic vernacular, to do something beautifully, is to do that action properly (See Maimonides Laws of Divorce 11:7 and Laws of Marriage 4:9, which refer to "beautifully" examining someone's intentions. In Halacha, when one properly salts meat, he is called "beautifully" salting the meat) and correctly. The Torah idea of real beauty is goodness!

Classical beauty stems from harmony. Without harmony, we tend to find visual stimuli either boring and bland or chaotic and overly busy. One example of harmony is found in symmetry; an image which is perfectly balanced is appealing.

The ultimate harmony is the union of the spiritual and physical worlds. It creates a beauty like no other, an effect so powerful that any attempt to imitate it is an insult to the notion of beauty. Jerusalem is the essence of beauty in

Judaism; it is the point where heaven and earth kiss, a bridge between two realms. According to Jewish tradition, the physical energy that sustains every part of the world flows from Jerusalem. King Solomon understood how Jerusalem connects every corner of the earth to its spiritual source, and was even able to plant in Jerusalem things indigenous to other parts of the world because he understood where each channel of energy stemmed from Jerusalem and extended across the globe. Jerusalem below is the physical counterpart of the spiritual energy that flows to the world, creating the perfect harmony between physical and spiritual.

The beautiful people in the Torah were living reflections of harmony between the physical world and the spiritual. Joseph, for example, was so handsome that the local women would climb the walls just to get a glimpse of him. Instead of letting physical pleasure dominate him, Joseph stood up to the test when tempted by Potiphar's wife, and did not let his physical beauty sever him from the real harmony of living a spiritual life. Our ancestors described as beautiful were individuals whose physical attractiveness lived in perfect harmony with their

spiritual essence.

The Torah commands the Kohanim to wear special garments during their service in the temple to portray the harmony within. Clothing is the interface between a person and their environment; it transmits its own energy both inwardly and outwardly. His inner beauty shone through and had an impact on both the Kohen and those who saw him.

Shabbat is the one day in the week that we can concentrate on our spirituality, yet at the same time partake in delicious food and company. It is the bridge between the spirituality and the physicality. We honour Shabbat, wearing the best of clothes to bring out our inner essence and shine through.

That harmony represents real beauty! Sometimes we need a bit of help from our outer garments, feeling weak; we need a boost from the outside to the inside to convince ourselves of our potential and real beauty.

But the real focus in Judaism, attained by so many of our great leaders has always from the inside out.

It's Shabbat! Wear those clothes with pride and honour to the Almighty, relax, and let your inner soul shine through.



## RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

### AND YOU SHALL ACCOMPANY...

The Parsha opens with the words "Ve'ata Tetzaveh", usually translated as "You shall command" the Bnei Yisrael. But the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh reveals a deeper meaning. Ve'ata Tetzaveh can also mean "You shall accompany." Hashem is telling Moshe Rabbeinu: "You will accompany the Jewish people."

This is not just a message for Moshe's lifetime. It is a statement for all generations. Every Jew carries within himself a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu, a piece of the Neshama of the greatest leader Klal Yisrael ever had. Even when a person feels discouraged, unproductive, or spiritually distant, he is never

alone. Moshe Rabbeinu accompanies him, from within.

The Sfat Emet explains how this came to be. How did Moshe's Neshama become connected to every Jew? Because Moshe Rabbeinu lived a life of Moser Nefesh for Klal Yisrael. He gave himself over completely for the people. He did not live for his own greatness, but for their survival and spiritual elevation.

We see a powerful expression of this in this week's Parsha, where Moshe's name does not appear at all. This omission traces back to his plea after the sin of the Egel HaZahav, when he said to Hashem: "If You do not forgive them, erase me from Your Sefer." Moshe Rabbeinu was willing to be erased from the Torah itself for the sake of the Jewish people. That is the essence of Moser Nefesh, giving over a piece of one's soul.

Because Moshe gave of his Neshama

to Klal Yisrael, every Jew carries a piece of him within. And this teaches us something profound about how souls become connected. When we perform acts of Chesed, helping someone, offering encouragement, giving tzedakah, reaching out when it's inconvenient, we are giving a piece of ourselves. We are creating real, spiritual connection.

Parashat Zachor prepares us for Purim, where the mitzvot themselves emphasize connection: Matanot La'evyonim and Mishloach Manot Ish L're'ehu. The Yeshuah of Purim came through unity, through Jews caring for one another in a tangible way.

When we live with Moser Nefesh for others, we awaken the spark of Moshe Rabbeinu within us. And through those acts of Chesed and connection, we help bring the Yeshuah that Klal Yisrael and the world so deeply needs today.



## RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

*Tehillim for Our Times; Chapter 18:*

למנצח לעבד ד' לודד אשר דיבר לד' את דברי השירה הזאת ביום הציל ד' אותו מכף כל אויביו ומיד שאול

### WHEN THE GOING GETS GOOD (PART 2)

*Hashem, You are my Rock and Fortress and Saviour. My G-d, My Rock - I will take shelter in You; my Shield, Horn of my redemption, my Shelter (Tehillim 18;3)*

In the above – quoted verse King David refers to Hashem as his saviour - not in times of pain, but when things are going well. King David sets out two distinct scenarios in which he is confident that he will experience success and security.

*i. "Hashem, You are my Rock and Fortress and Saviour";*

#### Hashem will

- shelter him so that danger does not even approach him. Hashem will "save" him from oncoming danger.
- He will be protected from that danger within a "fortress".
- That fortress will be placed on a "rock", far from any threat.

King David is pointing out that Hashem

fulfills all three of these functions at once in order to keep him away from harm.

*ii. "My G-d, My Rock - I will take shelter in You; my Shield, Horn of my redemption, my Shelter"*

The other scenario referred to here is a time of danger from which we are extracted with relative ease. Here Hashem is referred to as "My G-d (אלי), My rock" which indicates a greater degree of divine supervision of the individual as well as an increased closeness to him - as might be required when he is actually facing danger. King David speaks of Hashem as the "shield" he would carry with him in to battle. Hashem is also his greatest weapon – the "horn" with which he could attack his enemies as well as the "Stronghold" who gives him the strength he needs to pull through the fight.

#### How to Respond When Things are Going Well

How does one respond during those times in life in which he is enjoying relative success and tranquillity? Logic dictates that one should certainly not cool off his relationship with Hashem. Many of the challenges we experience are only given to us to encourage us to pray and connect

with Hashem. If we suddenly stop communicating with Hashem during the good times then - heaven forbid - obstacles may be placed in our way to bring us back. In practical terms however it is extremely difficult to pray with the same fervour as one might do when he is suffering and therefore King David shows us that at these times we should embrace a new tactic. Alongside his routine prayers King David will

*"call out Hashem's name with praise" (ibid;4).*

When things are going well he will make sure to keep thanking and praising Hashem and in that way he will keep his connection. You do not need to wait until you win the lottery in order to thank Hashem. If you called someone you needed to speak to and they picked up the phone then that is also something to be grateful for. Following this method King David is confident that

*"I will be saved from my enemies" (ibid) -*

that he will be continue to be successful and will not need to resort to desperate prayer.



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

If the Tenth Man Needs to Leave During the Hazara

Generally speaking, one should not leave the synagogue until the end of the Tefila. There is a tradition that if a person routinely leaves in the middle of the service, then in the future, after Mashiah comes, he will be told to leave the Bet Ha'mikdash before the end of the prayers.

It is especially grievous for a person to leave if he is the tenth man. As we've seen in previous installments, a person who exits during a part of the service that requires a Minyan, leaving behind less than ten men, is subject to the harsh warning of the prophet Yeshayahu, "Ve'ozebeh Hashem Yichlu" – "Those who abandon G-d shall be

annihilated" (Yeshayahu 1:28).

Sometimes, however, a person has a pressing need to leave. It goes without saying that in the case of a dire emergency, a person may leave the synagogue during any part of the service even if this results in breaking the Minyan. Thus, for example, it is obvious that if a Hatzalah member gets a call during the Hazara (repetition of the Amida), he should immediately leave and tend to the emergency.

However, there are even matters of lesser urgency that allow leaving during the Hazara (or other parts of the service that require a Minyan) even if one is the tenth man. If a person needs to use the restroom, for example, and he cannot

restrain himself, then it is permissible for him to leave, even though fewer than ten men will be remaining in the synagogue. If a significant financial loss is at stake – such as if a person must leave early for a vitally important business meeting, or might otherwise lose his job – then according to Rav Shmuel Vosner (1913-1915), one may be lenient and leave to avoid the financial loss. Others disagree. In practice, Rav Yisrael Bitan writes that one may rely on the lenient position if he wishes, but he should preferably remain in the synagogue and trust that "Kol Ha'shome'a Li Eno Mafsid" – one ultimately gains, and does not lose, by obeying Hashem and doing the right thing, and any money

lost as a result of remaining in the synagogue will be repaid.

There is some discussion among the Poskim regarding a Kohen's hand-washing in preparation for Birkat Kohanim in a situation where only ten men are present in the synagogue. In most synagogues, the Kohanim must exit the sanctuary to access the sink. Should the Kohen do so if only ten men are present, and he would thus leave behind fewer than ten men for a few moments during the Hazara? Some suggested that in such a

situation, it is preferable for the Kohen to wash his hands before the Amida in order to avoid the problem. Others, however, disapprove of this solution, as a Kohen ought to wash his hands as close to Birkat Kohanim as possible. Rav Haim Palachi (Turkey, 1788-1868) writes that in such a case, the Hazzan should pause for those few moments when the Kohen is outside the synagogue and only nine men remain.

As for the final Halacha, Rav Yisrael Bitan ruled that preferably, water should be brought to the Kohen inside

the sanctuary in this situation so he does not need to leave. If this is not feasible, then the Kohen should leave to wash his hands, and the Hazzan should pause, in accordance with Rav Haim Palachi's ruling. If the sink is visible from inside the sanctuary, then the Kohen may leave to wash his hands and rely on the opinion that he counts toward the Minyan since he can still be seen.

Whenever one exits the synagogue, it is proper to do slowly, as leaving hurriedly gives the impression that he is eager to finish the prayers and leave.



## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Tetzaveh

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.

**Rabbi Sinclair,**  
Seasonsofthemoon.com

### Q

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.

### A

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.

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