

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



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 UL'Tifaret," "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 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." ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Rebecca Hirts & David Sudwerts
on their engagement

Tamar & Eddie Kilzi
on the birth of their baby boy

Benjamin & Sophie Wigoder
on the Brit Milah of Netanel Meir

Richard & Melanie Haranouff
on the bar mitzvah of Aaron Tzvi

THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"No matter how "busy" a person is if they really care, they will always find the time for you."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

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REVEALED



DVAR TORAH

What are you wearing today?
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

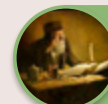
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However, in the Talmudic vernacular, to do something beautifully, is to do that action properly (See Maimonides Laws of Divorce 11:7 and Laws of Marriage 4:9, which refer to “beautifully” examining someone’s intentions. In Halacha, when one properly 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. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI DOV LEVENE - RABBI IN MENORAH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

DVAR
TORAH



WHAT LIES IN HOW WE DRESS?

Parshas Tezave talks about the components of the building of the Mishkan. Parshas Tezave moves on and discusses the special garments worn by the Kohanim, the people who served in the Mishkan. Why did they need special garments? Why not simply require them to look presentable and clean? The answer lies in how people are dressed in a palace. There are many different types of jobs in the palace by each person has a special uniform.

However, since the Mishkan is a place of spirituality, therefore the uniform here is one that stems from the spiritual realms. The idea here is not simply to look smart since such attire in front of human kings could be seen as disrespectful – e.g. going barefoot. Rather the idea is to draw down the spiritual. What does this mean?

What we see in this world is the physical. The spiritual is hidden from sight. However, we believe that the source of all physical is from the spiritual. Without the spiritual Neshama,

the physical body cannot continue existing. The spiritual can only be sensed and glimpsed through physical things. The clothes of the Kohanim were dictated by their spiritual roots. The fact that they wore four garments reflects the spiritual root of the four letters of Hashem’s Name.

This is further seen in which parts of the body these garments covered. They wore a hat on top of their head since the head represents the intellect and houses the Neshama in the brain. Next is the shirt over the top half of their body, the place of the heart and feelings. The trousers were to cover the bottom half of the body that carries out in practice the person’s thought and feelings. To know that the whole body is not the same level there is the belt that separates above and below the waist. (This idea is seen by some people who wear a gartle during davening.)

These four garments in the Kohen Godol had a special name – “Bigdei Lovon”. This literally means “white clothes”. The colour white represents purity. This is why people have the minhag to wear white on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur when we have done teshuva and want a clean slate for a new year. The place where the Kohanim served was also called “Levanon” that again has the word “Lovon” in it since the place of the Beis Hamikdash is where the Jews’ sins were constantly forgiven and left them with purity.

There are two Hebrew words for clothes – Levush and Beged. The word Levush the Gemora Shabbos 77b learns is a contraction of two words, “Lo Boish” – meaning “not to be embarrassed”. The other word, “Beged” can mean “garment” and “traitor”. This tells us that people can use what they wear to fool other people. This can be for the good. A great person can disguise himself as a pauper to remain hidden. However, it can also be used for the bad, pretending to be great while this is not so.

This applies when people decide what to wear. Different colours portray different messages. The Kohanim with their special clothes were totally removed from this. The colour was simply white and the clothes were the same for all of them, no matter their spiritual status (with the exception of the Kohen Godol). The choice was not theirs. Let us take the message of the clothes of the Kohanim and reflect outwardly who we inwardly are. Chazal call this Toichoi Kebaroi, to be one whose inside is the same as the outside. The Ben Ish Chai points out that the middle letters of the hebrew word for inside, toichoi, and the outer letters of the word for outside, kebaroi, are the letters Kaf-Vav that is the gematria of Hashem’s Name. This is reflected in the Aron whose innermost and outermost box was made out of gold. A person must take his spiritual and let it reflect outwardly by carrying out what Hashem wants. Let us all merit to achieve this high level. ■

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ALEXANDER MOSHE LAPIDOT

We may say without exaggeration that among the thousands of Bnei Torah living in the world today, there are perhaps only a few hundred who are aware of the fact that a Rav by the name of Rabbi Alexander Moshe lived in Lithuania more than a century ago – a Gaon in a generation of Gaonim and Tzaddikim. Living in the same era as Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan and Rabbi Israel of Salant, Rabbi Alexander Lapidot was considered a Torah genius and was completely refined in heart and mind. He was also a very eloquent orator and a prolific writer.

Rabbi Alexander Moshe was born to Rabbi Tzvi Lapidot on Adar 2, 5579 (1819). From his early youth he was known for his exceptional intelligence and great diligence. At a very young age he went to study Torah in Salant, where he pursued courses given by the great Gaon of his generation, Rabbi Tzvi Broida. There he encountered Rabbi Israel, the founder of the Mussar movement, and bonded with him in a friendship that would last their entire lives. He recounted that during his studies in Salant, when Rabbi Israel was the Rosh Yeshiva there; he studied tractate Nezikin with his students. When Rabbi Israel finished the tractate, Rabbi Tzvi sent his student Alexander Moshe to listen to Rabbi Israel's final course on the subject, and he then asked him to repeat everything that he had heard. A prominent individual from the city of Yanova (near Kovno) heard people speaking highly of Rabbi Alexander Moshe, and so he took as his son-in-law.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Hacohen Kook, the Rav of Jerusalem, recounts that when he met Rabbi Alexander Moshe (who was the Rav of Rassein at the time), Rav Alexander was speaking with his fiancée. He told her, "You should realize that what people say about me – that I know how to study – is an exaggeration. I know far less than what people think. And what they say about my fear of Heaven – that too is a great exaggeration. As for those who say I'm modest, they have absolutely no idea how filled I am with arrogance." She listened to these remarks and said, "But it's not possible that you have no virtues whatsoever. Tell me which." Rabbi Alexander Moshe replied, "Yes, I do have one virtue: I am a man of truth. This is why you should realize that everything I've said up to now is absolutely true."

After his marriage, Rabbi Alexander Moshe went to live with his father-in-law, who provided for his needs (which was the norm for Torah scholars at that time). There he studied Talmud and the Poskim with great diligence.

He was first appointed as the Rav and Av Beit Din of Yanova, then after a few years he went to live in a suburb on the other side of the river, in the city of Grodno. From there he went to Rassein, where he remained as Rav and Av Beit Din until his last days some 40 years later.

With Rabbi Alexander Moshe's arrival in Rassein, a new era began in his life. His fame spread to the far reaches of the land, and letters from numerous countries were addressed to him, ones that were filled with various questions and which he answered by the power of his Torah. He assisted Rabbi Israel of Salant in setting up kollels in Kovno and the surrounding areas, and he participated with him in various conferences whose goal was the establishment of kollels as well as other community activities. When Rabbi Tzvi Broida published his book Etz Pri to draw support for kollels, he included articles by Rabbi Israel and Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan, as well as an introduction and large article written by Rabbi Alexander Moshe.

In his article, Rabbi Alexander Moshe expressed the idea that one must find the happy medium, be it in the fear of Heaven or in character traits, according to what the Rambam recommends in Shemonah Perakim, and contrary to the opinion of non-Jewish thinkers. He warned against putting too much emphasis on any given point, "for just as the wicked risks by nature to infringe upon the prohibition against taking away from mitzvot, there are some people who risk transgressing the prohibition of adding to mitzvot, and to destroy the world by this exaggerated virtue." This is why, Rabbi Alexander Moshe explained, character traits are called midot (literally "measures"), for they must be measured (medudot), weighed, and calculated.

In his city of Rassein there was also a branch of kollels under his direction, and there he gave courses in Mussar according to the style of his Rav and friend, Rabbi Israel of Salant. The following account is given by Rabbi Gedalia Silverstone, the Rav of Washington, in his book Lev Avot: "I heard the Gaon Rabbi Alexander Moshe Lapidot explain the words of the Sages in tractate Berachot ('A man must always "annoy" his good inclination over his evil inclination') as follows: What does the word 'annoy' mean? If the evil inclination comes to incite you to commit a sin, do not plead with him to mercifully leave you in peace, for in that case you will certainly fall into his hands, since he knows no pity. On the contrary, you should exhibit great anger and say to him: 'Get away from me, you rasha, for you are trying to take my soul and destroy me for eternity!' This is the sense of the word 'irritate' – with anger."

Rabbi Alexander Moshe educated many great students, among them being the Gaon Rav Chanoch Henich of Vilna and the Rav of Chaslovich, the Gaon Rabbi Meir Stalivitz (who near the end of his life became the Rav of the Zichron Moshe district of Jerusalem). Rabbi Alexander Moshe was also known as a "lover of Zion," and he wrote articles in which he shared his views on settling in Eretz Israel and the goal of the "Lovers of Zion" movement. Among other things, he wrote: "All that we want is solely to create a group of farmers who will work the earth, firmly settled in Eretz Israel, to which we are connected by thousands of years of history and which was destined to us by G-d through the intermediary of the holy prophets. It is a very great mitzvah to settle there."

Rabbi Alexander Moshe helped Rabbi Nathan Tzvi Finkel (the Alter of Slabodka) establish the Knesset Israel yeshiva there, and in a certain way it was he who "discovered" the Alter of Slabodka. At the beginning of his career, Rabbi Nathan Tzvi went from time to time into the surrounding cities to speak to the public, once coming back to his hometown of Rassein and speaking there. The Rav of the city (Rabbi Alexander Moshe) came to listen to his lecture, and he found this young man filled with wisdom and knowledge. He immediately sent a letter to Rabbi Simcha Zissel, a Mussar great, to ask him to take care of the young man and steer him on the right course. Later on, this young man – the Alter of Slabodka, as he would later be known – became one of the greatest teachers of Mussar.

In 5657 (1897), Rabbi Alexander Moshe published a book on research and faith entitled Avnei Zikaron. In addition, we have many manuscripts containing his responsa on Halachah and Aggadah. Rabbi Alexander Moshe lived to the age of 87. He passed away on Adar 10, 5666 (1906). ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

OPENING NUTS & PEAPODS ON SHABBAT

In ancient times, people would eat "Melilot"-stalks of wheat-which had to be opened to expose the edible kernel inside. It is a problem to eat such things on Shabbat, since separating the chaff from the kernel constitutes the Melacha of "Mefarek" which is a Tolada of "Dash" (threshing). However, Shulhan Aruch (319:6) permits eating such stalks if the separating is done B'shinui-in an unusual manner. For example, he suggests using the tips of the fingers to break it open. Otherwise it would be a problem.

The Rema applies this prohibition to types of nuts that have a soft green shell or peas and chickpeas that grow in a pod. The Mishna Berura also applies it to sesame seeds. All of these would be forbidden to open unless done with a Shinui.

However, it seems clear that the problem is only with the green shell; there is no problem cracking open the hard shell. This is the consensus of many Poskim, including Hacham Ovadia, who permit cracking nuts on Shabbat, since that is the way it is eaten. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Russia – New York, 1895-1986) in Iggerot Moshe (OC 1:125), is also lenient, as long as the nuts are eaten right away. The Ben Ish Hai, as well, in Parashat Beshalach (Par. 8) permits peeling pistachios.

However, it should be pointed out that the Menuhat Ahaba (Rabbi Moshe Halevi, Israel, 1961-2001) was Mahmir (strict) and ruled that peeling nuts today is analogous to taking peas out of the pod. Since nowadays most nuts are sold without a shell, removing the shell is not considered an integral part of the act of eating and is a violation of Mefarek, unless done with a Shinui. This is the opinion of the Shevet Halevi, as well. Most authorities disagree with this strict approach, including the Sis Eliezer, Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata and Hacham Bension.

Thus, there is a difference between taking a pea out of a pod and cracking nuts on Shabbat. It is even permitted to use a nutcracker. When cracking a walnut containing a soft green shell, it may also be removed if done in the same action as cracking the outer shell.

SUMMARY

Removing a pea from its pod and a nut from its soft green shell may only be done with a Shinui, but it is permitted to crack the shells of nuts in a regular fashion. ■

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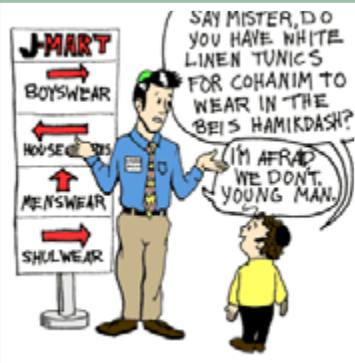
TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the menorah?
- ❷ How was Aharon commanded to kindle the menorah?
- ❸ What does tamid mean in reference to the menorah?
- ❹ What does kehuna mean?
- ❺ Name the eight garments worn by the kohen gadol.

Answer

❶ 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used. ❷ 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night. ❸ 28:3 - Service. ❹ 28:4,36,42 - Choshen, ephod, me'il, ketonet, mitznefet, avnet, tzitz, and michnasayim.

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