



Parashat Tezaveh



English version

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## DRESS WELL

It is amazing how much our psychology is dependent on how we dress. What we wear not only tells other people who we are. It is the greatest reflection of your self-perception. So many times, I have found that by helping a person change their wardrobe, they can change their self esteem. It might be a bit expensive, but clothing can do more to your psyche than hours of therapy. Change your clothes, and you will change your life.

It is so ironic how every climactic part of the Torah's story makes mention of clothing. G-d made clothing for Adam after the Sin. After the flood, Shem and Yefet covered their father, Noah. Yaakov wears Esav's garment to take the blessings. Yosef's coat was taken from him. The Jews merited being saved from Egypt in the merit of their clothing. When Shmuel got upset at Shaul for not wiping out Amalek, he ripped his garment and said that the royalty would be passed on to someone else. It seems that there is something very deep about clothing.

One of the main reasons why we do not bring Korban Pesach on the Temple Mount today is because we do not have the materials that make the Kohen's clothing. We are not 100 percent sure what T'chelet is, and T'chelet is one of the crucial components of the Kohen's clothing. A Kohen can do the Temple Service only if he is classified a Kohen, and to be a Kohen, he needs to wear the priestly garments. This is so interesting. We know that the Beit Hamikdash, even without the Aron Hakodesh, was considered a Beit Hamikdash. In the Second Beit Hamikdash, we had no Aron, and

still, the Kohanim were able to perform the Service. It seems that the Kohen's clothing is essential to performance of the Service, even more so than the "furniture" that made up the Mishkan. Why?

If you look through the whole story of the Megillah, you'll find that the climax occurred when Esther "donned royalty". (6;1) ותלבש אסתר מלכות. That is when things started to turn around. We make mention of the fact that Mordechai, also, wore royalty. (8; 15) What is the meaning behind all of this?

There is something interesting in the Aleph Bet. After the letter Aleph, we have the letters א, ב, ג, ד. The letters that spell the word "cloth". The reason why G-d wanted the אלה בית in this order was because it serves to teach us that G-d, אלוהי של עולם, Master of the World, is always hiding behind a cloth in the world. Everything we see, everything we experience, is just G-d's garment. G-d is hiding everywhere, behind everything. Every noun, every verb that you can come up with in the Aleph Bet, every person, place or thing, every action, is just G-d hiding behind a cloth. The clothing of G-d, the world we see, is the way G-d *portrays* Himself to the World.

Now, if you take the letters א, ב, ג, ד and you do אהב"ש, which means, you take the letters of א, ב, ג, ד and you look at the corresponding letters at the other end of the Alef Bet, the letters that you get, are שקר. Falsehood. When you don't look at the world from the perspective of Alef, Alufo Shel



Olam, when you do not see the world as a בגד, as a "cloth" concealing G-d, you are living a world of שקר. When you look at Nature as an independent thing in and of itself, independent of Alef, you are seeing שקר. At every climactic point in Jewish history, G-d was projecting Himself through בגד, making sure that things happened the way they did. Nothing happened without G-d wanting it to happen.

The same is true about your clothing. You, a G-dly Image, can wear clothes that are either projecting who you are, a reflection of your innermost self, or a projecting lie, a false image, someone who you are not. When you have a hard time deciding what to wear, it is because you are having some type of identity crisis in disguise, not knowing who you really are that day, not knowing how to project a certain part of your personality and self that day. Or, you may have difficulty in deciding who or what you want to connect with, like the word קשר. But clothing can be an independent, untrue picture of self that you are portraying to the world, or to yourself, a שקר.

The Kohanim are not Kohanim, in regards to Temple Service, if they are not portraying their true identity, לכבוד ולתפארת. If they are not wearing the clothing that reminds them to focus constantly on serving G-d, they are not Kohanim. Because the Kohanim's clothes make the Kohen a Kohen, because wearing them causes them to connect emotionally, קשר, to the service that they are doing. (See Sefer Hachinuch 109) If the Kohen does not connect emotionally, if he has thoughts that are not לכבוד ולתפארת, the Service can be disqualified. If they are not wearing that uniform that puts their whole existence in line with their service, to bring G-d honor, and to show G-dliness to the world, they are not considered Kohanim. And if they are not classified as a Kohen, the sacrificial service never started.

When you change the way you dress, you change the way you feel, you change who you associate with. You change the way people perceive you, and the way you perceive yourself. The greatest

change in the Purim story happened when Esther wore Malchut, when she wore royalty, because then, she connected with the inner concept that she is a queen, and a messenger of G-d in this world. When she dressed differently, she felt different, and when she felt different, she merited Ruach Hakodesh. (Megillah 14b) Because at that moment, she realized how everything around her is just a בגד, a cloth covering G-d, which is true Malchut, because nothing can stop G-d, or you who represent G-d. Until now, she was seeing just Sheker. But after fasting, davening, doing Teshuva, she reached that level of being a queen, not only externally, but the level of being the Jewish Queen each and every one is inside. Mordechai, also, reached this level of realization that nothing exists except G-d; and therefore, he totally disregarded Haman and Amalek, that represent the Sheker that there is a power of Nature in the world independent of G-d. Mordechai reached Malchut, the identity of the Jewish King that each and every Jew has inside, that G-d is unstoppable, and if we represent G-d in this world, then we are also unstoppable. So, Mordechai, also, merited Ruach Hakodesh.

This is the month of Adar. The month of Aderet, which means that we are to don the clothing of the Midah of Malchut. That only G-d exists. This can be done specifically in the month that there was the Plague of Darkness in Egypt (Nissan was Plague of Firstborn, so Adar was the month that had the Plague of Darkness); because in the darkness, when nothing is making sense, we have an opportunity to reach that level of realization that everything around us is just G-d's בגד.

If you find a talmid chacham with a stain on his clothing, he is deserving of death. Because he makes himself despised in the eyes of the people, and that makes Torah hated. (Shabbat 114a) What you wear represents who you are. It represents who and what you stand for. It communicates to the world around you how you perceive yourself, and it portrays how you perceive others, who and what you want to associate with.

Make sure you dress well.



## YOUR TIME HAS COME

My ultimate life coach is the Ramchal. He begins Messilat Yesharim talking about goals, about habits, about awareness, about growing step by step, etc. And the way he starts the ultimate coaching of all time is with his famous words. יסוד החסידות ושורש העבודה התמימה הוא שיתברר ויתאמת אצל האדם מה חובתו בעולמו. “It is the basic obligation of every Jew to clarify and internalize the reality of his purpose in this world”. “What are you doing here?” “Why were you created?” “Who are you?” The most basic questions of life are, indeed, the most trying ones.

*For if you remain silent at this time..* (Esther 4, 14) Mordechai put pressure on Esther to beg Achashverosh, on her own behalf and on behalf of her nation. Esther was on board with Mordechai's request, but she responded that entering to speak to Achashverosh without an invitation could cost her her life. She had not been summoned for thirty days, now. The decree was not for another 11 months, for the letters that were written, signed and sent, had the doom date of the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar. It was, at that time, only the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan. But, Mordechai insisted. “Esther, NOW or never!” Why the rush, Mordechai? This is the Malbim's question.

As a matter of fact, Esther needed not one, but *three* miracles for her to approach King Achashverosh at such short notice. Three angels came to save her. One angel raised the eyes of Achashverosh, one painted grace on Esther's face, and the third angel made the King's staff stretch from 2 Amot to 60 Amot! (Megillah 15 b) The Talmud teaches us not to rely on miracles (Shabbat 32a). So, why was Mordechai so demanding?

The answer the Malbim gives is a lesson for everyone. He lays down three principles. Here is the first. When something out of the ordinary happens in life, this is an act of G-d, calling for some Divine Intervention. Esther, a righteous, modest woman, getting married to the lowly, wicked, gentile king Achashverosh, was part of G-d's plan. After Haman's decree, things started

falling into place, making sense of how and why Esther was in this position. This was a sign that she was to be the messenger of G-d to save His People. The second principle is that G-d does not need Esther, or any other person to save His People. If a person who is in the position to save does not seize the opportunity, whenever it comes, G-d chooses a different path to salvation, for He will never forsake His People. And the third principle is, when you are a means to an end, when your whole purpose is for some other goal, once the goal is accomplished, your existence has become meaningless. Esther was obviously in her position not for the sake of being queen, but for the sake of salvation for G-d's Children. If Esther would slack off, now, G-d might just find some other messenger to do the job, and that would be the end of Esther. Mordechai told Esther, your time has come. You are here for a mission, and if you wait, G-d will find someone else, and you will be lost, forever and ever.

Every man wonders what his personal mission in this world is. The way to find this out is to learn who you are. To see what you enjoy doing, what you are good at, what makes you feel alive, and what G-d wants from you, from where you are, right now, in your life. R Moshe Feinstein learns that this is what the Torah means, when it says “See: I appointed Betzalel to be the one to build the Mishkan.” What did G-d mean when He said “See”? How were the people able to *see* that Betzalel was the appointed builder of the Mishkan? The answer is because Betzalel was good at it (Shemot 35; 30. 32-34) . G-d sends you messages in life. When things are weird, when things don't make sense, that is how G-d wants things to be, for some reason, and that is where He wants You to be, for some reason.

Some of the biggest mistakes in life are the result of your not working from where you are, and from who you are. Now, today, is your opportunity for success. Ask yourself, constantly, the following questions: What can I, and only I, do, today, that if



done well, will make a real difference? What is the most valuable use of my time, right now? Success in life almost always boils down to self-discipline. Self-discipline means doing what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not. Every time you practice self-discipline, your self-esteem goes up. You like and respect yourself even more. This is the secret of serenity.

Mordechai needed to get involved in royal affairs after Haman's execution, so he could not keep up his previous high level of learning. Mordechai was thus downgraded from his being the 5<sup>th</sup> greatest rabbi of the nation, to being no. 6. The Talmud deduces from here (Megillah 16b) that Torah learning is greater than saving lives. Why did Mordechai give up a portion of his learning time, if this meant that his greatness was diminished? Because that was the position in which he found himself in life. He recognized that this was the spiritual mission that G-d had assigned to him. For only he could do it. And, it needed to be done now. Otherwise, Mordechai would not have taken out time from his learning.

One of the prayers that shake me to the core on the High Holidays is *אלוקי! עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי ועכשיו! שנוצרתי כאילו לא נוצרתי!* "My G-d! Before I was created I was unworthy, and now that I have been created, it is if I had not been created!" Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Kook explains. All of our souls were created at the very beginning of time. They were not ready to be brought to the world, until our time has come. For 6000 years, your soul waited, ever so patiently, for the moment to go on stage. Hence, "before I was created, I was unworthy". After 6000 years of patience, I am pushed into this World, and I forget my script. My mission. My purpose. "It is as if I was not created."

Be aware of your background and your position. Learn it. Make the best of it. Make the best of you. And I will leave you with a little poem, from Dr. Seuss. *You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own, and you know what you know. And you are the guy who'll decide where to go.*

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A"H



