

# OHRNET

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE RABBI'S CLOAK

“...for glory and splendor” (28:2)

Anyone who has appeared in a play will be familiar with “props.” A “prop” could be as small as a pen or as large as a coffin. Any object with which an actor has to interact is a “prop.” In days of yore, “theatre properties” was a term used to distinguish the company’s property from what belonged to the actor.

The word “prop”, however, has another connotation.

Sir Lawrence Olivier, the doyen of Shakespearean actors, once said that he could never bring a character to life until he wore the character’s clothes; the costume and “props” propped up his creation of the character.

“Props” may be fine for the stage, but in life they can be dangerous things.

It would not surprise me to meet someone who had penned a masterpiece on the back of a deli menu. Someone, however, who had managed to do the same while using a *Cartier* fountain pen on an antique writing table in a Soho loft would *seriously* surprise me.

Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address on a piece of borrowed stationary; a famous Irish novelist used a pencil and a notebook to write his odysseys; and Van Gogh rarely used more than six colors.

The less we understand what we are trying to achieve with our lives, the more we need the trappings, the props; which is why there are so many sec-

ond-rate art directors with state-of-the-art Macintosh computers and second-rate photographers with this week’s cutting-edge digital camera.

In life, being dressed for the part is not enough. You just have to *be* the part.

Our soul is pure, a part of G-d from above. Nothing we can do can ever pollute the soul itself. However, we can make it pretty grubby. When we leave this world we cannot enter the palace of the King wearing soiled garments, and thus we have to go to the ‘spiritual dry cleaners’ also known as Gehinom. By all accounts this is not an enjoyable experience to say the least. When a person masquerades away his life, the props stick to him. He becomes welded into an iron mask of illusion. Removing him from that mask, as must be done, is an unpleasant business.

Before donning the *tallit* in the morning, there is a short prayer in which we ask G-d that the mitzvah of *tzitzit* should create for us a *chaluka d’Rabbanan*, “the Rabbi’s cloak.”

When we live our life devoid of the costumes and props of this world, our good deeds and *mitzvot* bedeck us in the world to come with “the Rabbi’s cloak”, a beautiful garment of “glory and splendor.”

• Sources: Based on an idea by Hugh MacLeod

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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

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

## ISRAEL Forever

### CLOTHES MAKE THE PRINCESS

“Clothes make the man.” This slogan of the garment industry will certainly come to mind this Shabbat as we hear in the Torah reading the stress that was placed on the details of the sacred garments worn by the *kohanim*. Those garments not only identified the wearers as do uniforms in secular life but also exerted a mystical influence on those chosen to perform the Sanctuary service for the nation.

If clothes of dignity are important for men, this is even more important in regard to women. One of the disap-

pointing features of secular society in Israel and elsewhere is the lack of appreciation by Jewish women of the need to dress in modest fashion. The Torah teaches us that the Divine Presence that protects us from our enemies departs from us when immodesty prevails.

It is to be hoped that the message of this week's Torah portion that clothes make the man will inspire women to appreciate that clothes not only make the woman but transform her into a princess whose royal modesty will help protect Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

### HAR HAZEITIM – TOMB OF PROPHET ZECHARIAH

At the bottom of the Jewish cemetery in the Kidron Valley on the slopes of Har Hazeitim is the tomb of the last of the prophets.

Zechariah lived during the return to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonian exile and was a member of the august *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah* (Members of the Great Assembly) who played such a major role in rab-



binical legislation and leadership.

All who visit his tomb pray for the fulfillment of his prophetic vision of “Elderly men and women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem... and the streets of the city will be filled with little boys and girls playing.” (*Zechariah* 8:4-5)

## PARSHA Q&A ?

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

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

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

לע"נ

ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון ע"ה  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

- When forbidden matter loses its status by being in a mixture with a greater amount of permitted matter
- How this applies to crops in the *shemita* year
- The importance of seeking nullification of vows
- Vows tied to time periods
- How the Yovel year interacts with the *shemita* cycle
- Vows tied to agricultural seasons
- When fruits from others' fields may be eaten
- Rabbi Tarfon's narrow escape
- Proper motivation for learning Torah
- When a Torah scholar may identify himself as such and what benefits he may enjoy from this status
- Vows tied to rainy season
- The leap-year factor in vows tied to a year
- How long vows re wine, meat or garlic are in effect
- Declining gifts to nullify vows
- Limitations on openings for vow nullification

## DECLINING THE FAVOR

A Jew makes a vow that he will not take any benefit from another unless he accepts for his son a generous gift of grain and wine. The majority view of the Sages in the *mishna* is that the intended recipient can free the donor of this vow without the need for rabbinical nullification by simply stating: "Since you only made this vow in order to show that you honor me, it is a greater honor for me to decline the gift."

The logic behind this is thus explained elsewhere (*Mesechta Gittin* 74b). The intention of the one making the vow is only to economically assist the other fellow, and if he has no need for such help then the vow is automatically nullified.

Since this is the case, such a declining of the gift by the father is meaningful only if his son is being supported by him. Should the son be independent it is he and not the father

who was the intended beneficiary and only he can nullify the vow by declining the gift.

An interesting question arises in regard to a hypothetical case of the vow being made that a ban on benefit will take place if the other party goes to a certain place. Can the vow maker nullify the vow by declaring that he considers the other fellow as *not* having gone?

One opinion mentioned in the commentary of Rabbeinu Nissim (RaN) is that while we can consider declining a gift as fulfillment of a condition because the recipient has the prerogative of accepting the gift and returning it, this is not applicable to our case in which not going is to be considered as fulfilling the condition of the vow maker.

He does, however, cite another opinion that the cases are similar. In both of them we focus on the intention of the vow maker, which is to have his will done. If he is content to see his will done by not having the other party go, then his condition is considered fulfilled and the vow is nullified.

• *Nedarim* 63b

## What the SAGES Say

"One should not say 'I shall learn Torah in order to be called a scholar, a rabbi or an elder of the yeshiva', but should learn Torah out of love for G-d, and honor will eventually come to him."

• *Beraita - Nedarim* 62a

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## EUTHANASIA

**From: Ira in Miami**

*Dear Rabbi,  
Here in Florida the husband of a woman in a persistent vegetative state won the right to 'pull the plug' and allow her to die. Her parents opposed this request. What is your position on the right to die and living wills in which a person leaves instructions for one's family to end life if one has no quality of life and/or is comatose and unable to make one's own decisions? Thank you.*

Dear Ira,

Jewish law forbids euthanasia in all forms, which is considered an act of homicide. The life of a person is not "his". Rather, it belongs to G-d, the One who granted that life. Therefore it may be reclaimed only by the true Owner of that life, at the time and under the circumstances that He wills. Despite one's noble intentions, mercy-killing is a flagrant intervention into a domain that transcends this world.

One source for this prohibition is in the verse: "But your blood of your lives will I require; ...from the hand of man, from the hand of a person's brother, will I require the life of man" (Gen. 9:5). After having stated "from the hand of man", the phrase "a person's brother" is redundant. This seeming redundancy refers to the prohibition against euthanasia. Although murder is the

opposite of brotherly love, one might think that euthanasia is in fact a permitted expression of brotherly love. The verse thus implores that this particular form of "brotherly love" is nothing more than murder.

Nevertheless, one must not be lax about relieving the person's pain. Elimination of suffering is a commendable goal. In fact, this may permit even "aggressive" treatment of pain to a degree that is not standard medical practice. For example, heroin may be used to treat pain according to Jewish law, even though it may be prohibited by civil law. But by the same token, Jewish law certainly forbids euthanasia, even if it were to be permitted by civil law.

There are other considerations that are beyond the scope of this column, such as active vs. passive intervention, praying for a suffering person's death, and the definition and treatment of a moribund patient. These and other related topics may be further studied in the accompanying list of sources.

Sources:

- "Judaism and Healing", J. David Bleich.
- *HaKtav v'haKaballah*, *ibid*.
- "The Jewish Attitude Towards Euthanasia", by Fred Posner; *Jewish Bio-Ethics*, by Fred Posner & J. David Bleich, Sanhedrin Press.
- *Practical Medical Halacha - Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists*, Feldheim Publishing.
- *Medical Halacha for Everyone*, Abraham S. Abraham, Feldheim Publishing.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### PRAYING FOR THE ILL

**Question:** I recently received the sad news of a friend's serious illness along with a request to pray for his recovery. I was wondering whether I was obligated to do so and how to go about it. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** As regards obligation, you should bear in mind what our Talmudic Sages say (*Mesechta Berachot* 12b): "Anyone who is capable of praying for the good health of another and fails to do so is considered a sinner."

How does one pray?

One can pray immediately upon hearing the sad news or

any other time by simply requesting in any language that "G-d should send a complete healing to the party (Hebrew name), the son of (mother's Hebrew name) along with all the ill of the Jewish people."

Including this prayer in the silent *Shmoneh Esrei* service in the blessing relating to health (which is to be found in virtually every siddur) is an even more effective way of praying. But perhaps the best way to pray for the sick person is while visiting him and his condition inspires you to greater sincerity. At the bedside there is no need to mention the patient's name because the Divine Presence is there.

## NO EXTRA CHILD

“Efrat” is an Israeli organization dedicated to helping expectant mothers avoid the temptation of abortion and providing them with moral and financial assistance in giving birth and caring for the infant.

The organization’s founder and director, Dr. Elie Shusheim, tells the story of a mother of 13 children who entered the hospital to give birth to yet another child. The attending doctor, who recognized her from previous births, cynically remarked to her, “Oh, it’s you again!”

After recovering from the rudeness of the doctor, she phoned her husband and asked him to come to her hos-

pital room the next morning, during the doctors’ rounds, with all 13 children — ranging from teens to tots — dressed in their finest holiday clothes. When the doctors entered her room and angrily ordered everyone out, the mother turned to the doctor who had expressed disappointment over her bringing another child into the world. Pointing to her handsomely dressed, beautiful children she challenged him: “Which of these would you have wanted me not to have?”

The stammered apology of the offending doctor made its impression on all of his colleagues.

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