

THE BOOK OF *Koheles*  
SUNDAYS 11:15 AM EST: WWW.MESORA.ORG/TALKLIVE

5757  
5771  
14  
YEARS

Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification  
of Authentic Jewish Beliefs and Practices

# JewishTimes

Volume X, No. 15...Feb. 11, 2011

WWW.MESORA.ORG/JEWISHTIMES

Download and Print Free

## IN THIS ISSUE

TITZAVEH	1-3
TIME TO DRESS UP	1,4
RESPONDING TO HERETICS	1,5
LADEN WITH TREASURE	6,7
CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN?	8

## JewishTimes

1,300,000 Copies in Circulation.  
Support Jewish Education and  
Activism for World Jewry.  
[www.Mesora.org/Donate](http://www.Mesora.org/Donate)



## CANDLE LIGHTING 2/11

Boston	4:52	Moscow	5:05
Chicago	4:59	New York	5:06
Cleveland	5:36	Paris	5:44
Detroit	5:40	Philadelphia	5:12
Houston	5:48	Phoenix	5:50
Jerusalem	5:03	Pittsburgh	5:31
Johannesburg	6:36	Seattle	5:07
Los Angeles	5:14	Sydney	7:34
London	4:48	Tokyo	5:00
Miami	5:53	Toronto	5:24
Montreal	4:56	Washington DC	5:22

## Weekly Parsha

# Titzaveh

RABBI BERNIE FOX

### The Function of Prophecy in the Resolution of Issues in Halachah

And you should make a Breast-plate of Judgment of a woven design. Like the design of the Ephod, you shall make it. You

(continued on next page)

## Weekly Parsha

# TIME to Get Dressed

RABBI DR. DARRELL GINSBERG

The parshiyos dealing with the commands for and fabrication of the Mishkan and priestly garments (bigdei kehuna) are not ones that are known for their high drama and spectacular events. In fact, verse after verse resembles an instruction manual describing, in explicit detail, the exact dimensions of every item that was required for these institutions. The Torah SheBeal Peh, as expected, takes this to the next level, parsing the minutiae for even more meticulous information. Though the content of these parshiyos may appear extraneous, particularly in its exhaustive detail, the premise when studying the Torah is that every part of it, due to its source as from God, contains within it deep and important ideas. A methodology must be employed to help bridge the gap between what seems to be

(continued on page 4)

## Fundamentals

# RESPONDING to Heretics

"Know what to answer a heretic" (Ethics 2:14)

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Rabbeinu Yonah explains Rebbe Eliezer's quote above as follows: "Know how to respond to heretics, so others will not see you fail, and think the heretic is correct...ultimately profaning God's name." Maimonides quotes the Talmud that teaches an additional lesson: debate idolatrous heretics but not Jewish heretics. For debating the Jewish heretic strengthens them [probably as they are more adept at perverting quoted texts]. Maimonides quotes King Solomon who says that heretics are irreparable. (Proverbs 2:19) It does appear this is so, as the heretic has habituated his thoughts towards twisting Torah sources. Thus, any further attempt to correct him through discourse will also be twisted. He will face the worst fate the Talmud warns of, "Those who reject the Torah as God-given have no afterlife". (Sanhedrin 90a)

(continued on page 5)



(Titzaveh cont. from pg. 1)

## Weekly Parsha

# JewishTimes

Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought



The JewishTimes is published every Friday and delivered by email. **Subscriptions are FREE.** To subscribe, send any email message to: [subscribe@mesora.org](mailto:subscribe@mesora.org)

Subscribers will also receive our advertisers' emails and our regular email announcements.

**Contacts:**

We invite feedback or any questions at this address: [office@mesora.org](mailto:office@mesora.org)  
Ph(516)569-8888 Fx(516)569-0404

**Advertising:**

<https://www.Mesora.org/Advertising>

**Donations:**

<https://www.Mesora.org/Donate>

**Content at Mesora.org:****JewishTimes Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/JewishTimes>

**Philosophy Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Philosophy>

**Weekly Parsha Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/WeeklyParsha>

**Audio Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Audio>

**Interactive, Live, Audible Sessions:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/TalkLive>

**Database Search:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Search>

Articles may be reprinted without consent of the JewishTimes or the authors, provided the content is not altered, and credits are given.

shall make it of gold, blue, purple, scarlet wool, and twisted linen. (Shemot 28:15)

The Kohen Gadol wore eight garments. These consisted of the four garments worn by every kohen and an additional four special vestments. One of the special vestments was the Choshen Mishpat – the Breast-plate of Judgment. The Choshen hung from the shoulders of the Kohen Gadol. The vestment was made of woven cloth. Embedded into the Choshen were precious stones representing the Shevatim – the Tribes of Israel. The Choshen had a unique function. Questions could be posed to the Kohen Gadol. He would respond by consulting the Choshen. Maimonides describes this process based upon the comments of Talmud. The proposed question would be brought to the Kohen Gadol. He would immediately be overcome with the spirit of prophecy. The Kohen Gadol would look at the Choshen. The response would be transmitted to him in a prophetic vision. The answer was expressed through the illumination of the letters engraved upon the stones of the Breast-plate.[1]

What type of questions could be addressed to the Choshen? In the Prophets we find that the Choshen was consulted on national issues. A king might refer to the Choshen for guidance regarding a military campaign. However, Rashi comments in Tractate Eruvin that questions of halachah were not addressed in this manner. This limitation upon the use of the Choshen reflects an important principle of the Torah. Prophecy cannot be used to resolve issues of halachah. Such questions are the responsibility of the Sages and the courts. They must address these issues using the standards of halachah and their own intellects.

Rabbaynu Yonatan ben Uziel makes an amazing comment that seems to contradict this principle. In our pasuk, The Choshen is referred to as the Breast-plate of Judgment. What is the relationship between the Choshen and judgment? Rabbaynu Yonatan ben Uziel explains that the Choshen could be consulted over legal issues! This seems to contradict the principle that issues of halachah cannot be resolved through prophecy.

A similar contradiction is suggested by the last

mishna in Tractate Edyot. Our Sages teach us that the Messianic era will be preceded by the reappearance of, Eliyahu, the prophet. The mishna explains that Eliyahu will help prepare the path for the Moshiach. Raban Yochanan ben Zakai posits that one of Eliyahu's functions will be to clarify issues of lineage. Maimonides explains the meaning of this statement. Through prophecy, Eliyahu will identify those individuals who have become completely alienated from their Jewish roots. They will be welcomed back into Bnai Yisrael. In addition, impostors whose lineage is imperfect will be identified and excluded from the Jewish people. This would seem to be another example of prophecy used as a means to resolve an issue of halachah.

Rav Tzvi Hirsch Chayutz Zt"l, based upon a careful analysis of Maimonides' comments, offers a brilliant response. He explains that the limitation of prophecy as a means of resolving



questions of halachah needs to be more fully understood. This limitation excludes prophecy from being used to determine the proper formulation of the law. For example, in order for a person to be punished by the courts for eating a prohibited substance, a minimum quantity must be ingested. Assume a person consumes less than this amount. Certainly, the person cannot be punished by

the courts. But is this activity included in the Torah prohibition or is the consumption prohibited by only an injunction of the Sages? This issue is disputed by Rebbe Yochanan and Rebbe Shimon ben Lakish. The dispute revolves around the formulation of the Torah prohibition. Such an issue cannot be resolved through prophecy.

Sometimes a question of halachah develops in a case in which the formulation of the law is clear but the facts of the case are unknown. The questions of lineage to be resolved by Eliyahu are an example of this type of case. The laws governing lineage are not in question. Their formulation is known. However, the application of these laws is hindered by our ignorance of the actual lineage of the individual.

Rav Chayutz suggests that prophecy is not excluded as a means for resolving these factual questions. This explains the mishna in Tractate Edyot. Eliyahu, the prophet, will not resolve

(continued on next page)

issues of lineage through altering the formulation of the law. This would indeed constitute a violation of the principle excluding prophecy from matters of halachah. Eliyahu will deal with factual issues. He will divine the true family history of the individual and determine the true facts in the case. This approach can also explain the comments of Rabbaynu Yonatan ben Uziel. There is a place in halachah for prophecy and the Choshen. This is the area identified by Rav Chayutz. Questions which are factual and not related to the formulation of the halachah could be referred to the Choshen.

### The Function of the Bells that Adorned the Jacket of the Kohen Gadol

*And it shall be upon Aharon when he serves. And its sound will be heard when he comes to the sanctuary before Hashem, and when he goes out, he shall not die. (Shemot 28:35)*

Our pasuk discusses the jacket worn by the Kohen Gadol. This jacket is of unusual design. A series of gold bells hang from the jacket. What was the purpose of these bells? Most of the commentaries agree that our pasuk is addressing this question. However, they differ on the answer the passage is providing.

Nachmanides comments that the bells announce the Kohen Gadol's entry and exit from the sanctuary. Why is this notice required? Nachmanides explains that it is inappropriate to enter the presence of the King without announcing oneself. It is also disrespectful to leave the King's presence without first providing notice. The sanctuary must be treated with the same respect that is accorded a human king. Therefore, his entry and egress from the sanctuary must be announced by the sounding of the bells affixed to the Kohen Gadol's jacket.[2]

Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra takes a very different approach to explaining our pasuk. He suggests that the proper translation of the pasuk is that "his – the Kohen Gadol's – voice will be heard when he comes to the sanctuary before Hashem." In other words his prayer and petitions will be heard by Hashem. According to Ibn Ezra, the bells, as well as the other garments, are designed to distinguish the Kohen Gadol from the other kohanim. Through wearing his special vestments, the Kohen Gadol distinguishes himself as the leader of the kohanim and the people. Because he represents the entire nation, the prayers Kohen Gadol have special significance. The passage assures that when the Kohen Gadol is adorned in the vestments of his office and is acting as his

people's representative, then his sincere prayers will be heard.[3]

Gershonides offers a unique approach to explaining the bells of the jacket and the meaning of our passage. He explains that the Kohen Gadol's garments are not merely designed for visual beauty. These vestments also communicate important ideas. These various messages motivate the Kohen Gadol to concentrate exclusively on his spiritual mission. For example, the Choshen – the breastplate – worn by the Kohen Gadol includes a series of stones. Engraved on these stones are the names of the Shevatim – the Tribes of Israel. The Choshen conveys to and

reminds the Kohen Gadol that he represents the entire nation. However, these various messages can only be communicated to the Kohen Gadol when he is aware of his special vestments. His attention must be drawn to them. The bells call the Kohen Gadol's attention to his garments. This, in turn, allows the vestments to convey their messages to him. Based on this interpretation of the bells, Gershonides explains our passage. The Kohen Gadol hears the ringing of bells adorning his vestments. This focuses his attention upon his garments and their special messages. His focus on these messages raises him to an elevated spiritual plane. As a result of his spiritual ascent, Hashem hears his voice and prayers.[4]

It is noteworthy that Ibn Ezra's interpretation of the bells is consistent with his overall perspective on the vestments of the Kohen Gadol. Ibn Ezra maintains that the garments of the kohanim are designed to bestow honor and glory upon them. He interprets the bells as one of the elements of the vestments that distinguish the Kohen Gadol.

Nachmanides contends that the vestments are designed to glorify Hashem. His understanding



of the bells is consistent with this perspective. He explains that the bells are required in order to show proper reverence when entering before Hashem and leaving His presence.

Gershonides' understanding of the bells is somewhat unique. He contends that the vestments are designed to communicate to the Kohen Gadol. The bells facilitate this communication. They focus the Kohen Gadol's attention of the garments. The bells are not a fundamental element of the vestments. They do not communicate any idea. However, they enhance the performance of the other vestments. ■

[1] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam/Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Klai HaMikdash 10:11.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban/Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Shemot 28:35.

[3] Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra, Abbreviated Commentary on Sefer Shemot, 28:35.

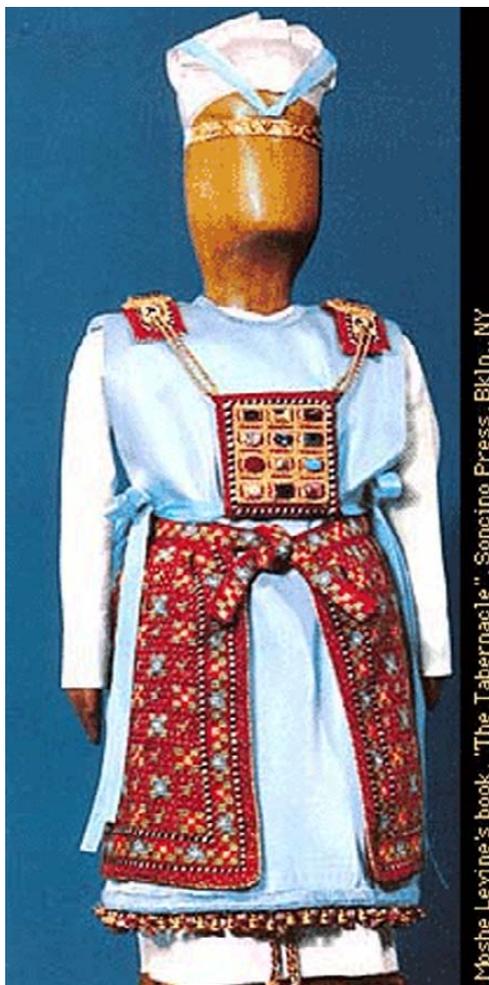
[4] Rabbaynu Levi ben Gershon (Ralbag/Gershonides), Commentary on Sefer Shemot, (Mosad HaRav Kook, 1994), p 382.

obtuse and the chachma contained within. An example of this can be found in the Talmud, which helps enlighten us as to how mining these specifics can offer an incredible bounty of knowledge.

The Talmud (Yoma 5b) introduces a debate that, at first glance, seems to be of little import. As a backdrop, God commands Moshe (Shemos 27:2) to manufacture special clothing for the kohanim. There was one set of clothing that was worn by every kohen (including the kohen gadol), and an additional set worn exclusively by the kohen gadol over his other garments. The Talmud focuses on the clothing worn by all the kohanim, and explains that not only was Moshe commanded in the manufacture of these outfits, but he also was required to dress the five kohanim (Aharon and his four sons) prior to the usage of the Mishkan. The question the Talmud takes up has to do with the order of Moshe's dressing of the kohanim upon receiving their priestly garments. Initially, a debate is cited between the sons of R' Chiya and R' Yochanan as to who was dressed first. According to the sons of R' Chiya, Aharon was dressed in the four "universal" garments first, and then his sons. According to the other opinion, it was all done at the same time. Abaye qualifies this debate, explaining that the only discrepancy between the above opinions involves the avnet, the sash worn by the kohanim. Everyone agrees that Aharon preceded his sons in donning the collective garments; the question, then, is how the avnet fits into the order. Nothing of a practical nature changes according to the first opinion – Aharon was dressed in all four garments first, followed by his sons. It is the second opinion that the Talmud elaborates upon. To paraphrase, and with the help of Rashi, the second opinion maintains that the avnet for Aharon was comprised of different materials (it was actually kilayim) than the avnet worn by the other kohanim. Therefore, the order would be Aharon is dressed with the first three garments, then his sons with the first three, back to Aharon for his avnet, and then to his sons with their avnetim.

There are numerous questions one can raise reading this piece from the Talmud. The most important one is what exactly is the basis for this argument? Why does it make any difference who went first? Furthermore, it is clear Aharon, as kohen gadol, had separate garments set up just for him. Why the need to specifically mention a different avnet?

Let's first introduce a basic insight into the importance of the bigdei kehuna. The Chinuch (99) writes that it is imperative that the kohen, in his role as mechaper for the nation, be



Moshe Levine's book, "The Tabernacle", Soncino Press, Bklyn., NY

entirely focused on the avodah taking place before God. The bigdei kehuna were created to assist the kohen in this task. His entire body was covered with these garments, each one reflecting a fundamental idea concerning God. Therefore, these clothes served as a constant reminder of his role, keeping him focused on the task at hand. One clear implication from the Chinuch is how the kohen needed this constant reinforcement through the begadim while performing the avodah. Clearly, this role was a dangerous one, easily distorted and lending itself to wavering thoughts and emotions. These bigdei kehuna served the pivotal role of keeping the kohen on the straight and narrow throughout his avodah.

In this week's parsha, we are not only told of the different garments to be manufactured for the kohanim; we also see, for the first time, the division between Aharon and his sons, between the kohen gadol and the other kohanim. The kohanim occupied an exclusive position amidst the nation, dedicated to the avodah and teachers to the nation. The kohen gadol had an even more prestigious role, expressed both through the unique type of avodah he engaged in as well

as the kavod the nation was obligated to express towards him. In general, this difference in roles was expressed through the garments worn by each. The extra garments donned by the kohen gadol demonstrated, based on the reasoning of the Chinuch, the even greater need for his focus on the avodah. It also demonstrated the danger he faced in his role – he needed the constant, vivid reminder of his place before God.

This helps lay the groundwork for understanding the nature of the debate regarding the order of donning the priestly garments. The premise that nobody questions in this debate is that there is a distinction between the kohen gadol and the other kohanim. The issue they are grappling with is what the nature of this differentiation was. According to the first opinion, the position of the kohen gadol is qualitatively distinct from the other kohanim. He is a different halachic category of kohen, so to speak. When it came time to dress the kohanim, Aharon had to be completed first to demonstrate this qualitative difference and the kavod that was afforded him as a result of his position. The second opinion agrees with the general concept of the kohen gadol as distinct from the other kohanim. However, according to this opinion, the kohen gadol is not a qualitatively distinct category of kohen – instead, he is considered the most important of all the kohanim. He is essentially no different from the other kohanim; however, within the category of kohen, he is on the top rung. This concept is reflected in the different avnet worn by the kohen gadol. The purpose of the altered avnet is to distinguish him within the body of kohanim. The avnet was not a new garment; rather, it was a modified garment, with different materials used to demonstrate his status amongst the kohanim. Whether the kohen gadol was a qualitatively distinct halachic category of kohen or had the greater status amidst the other kohanim., what is clear is that his distinction is revealed to us in the seemingly innocuous and mundane activity of dressing.

This idea helps bring to light the importance of methodology in analyzing the Torah and its myriad of details. To the average observer, the verses are a manual, where the specifics are important merely for the construction and nothing else. The reality, though, is that there are importance concepts lying beneath the surface. The Torah's depiction of this episode, like all episodes whether they be riveting and dramatic or ordinary and routine, discloses to us the fundamental ideas that are crucial in understanding chachmas Hashem. ■

How might we respond when asked by someone who rejects Revelation at Sinai and who is knowledgeable of the Torah when he says "Prove the Jewish God". I would respond as follows:

"There is a staggering number, and a high intellectual calibre of those universally-accepted Jewish minds who have accepted the Jewish God, based on Revelation at Sinai: Maimonides, Nachmanides, Rashi, Sforno, Tosfos, Ibn Ezra, Samson Raphael Hirsch, Judah HaLevi, Kuzari, The Talmudic Rabbis, The Prophets, Kings David and Solomon...the list goes on of the wisest of men; men who have written brilliant works like Proverbs, Psalms, Koheles, all possessing intellectual greatness attested to by today's leaders, and great thinkers gone by like Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yosef Soloveitchik, z"t. These minds dwarf us. And the Kings dwarf them.

Regarding Revelation at Sinai, Maimonides goes so far as to say "our own eyes saw it, and not a stranger" to impress how latter generations equate to the eye-witnesses regarding this proof of the Jewish God. As you are well aware of the broad, orthodox acceptance of Sinai as proof, I have two questions for you:

1) Whether you agree or not...what specific element of the account of Revelation at Sinai caused these countless, superior minds to accept this as proof of the Jewish God?

2) If you are suggesting that all of the aforementioned thinkers made an identical error regarding Revelation at Sinai, please explain what you judge their error to be.

**How non-believers and heretics respond:** That might have impressed me back in high school. Giving a list of names doesn't prove anything. I'm sure the Muslims can also list a bunch of brilliant minds who accepted the Koran; is that proof? Maimonides can write whatever he wants...does that prove the event happened specifically in the manner the Torah states? They accepted the account because they all grew up with these tales as their culture, in the same way that all brilliant minds in other religions accept their stories as being the truth. It's the error of accepting a story based on cultural acceptance and not based on conclusive evidence.

**My response:** You contradict yourself, as you too were taught these stories, yet you don't accept them. Evidently, free will is alive and well.

You also avoid the facts, for if you read these thinkers' words explaining why they each accepted Sinai, you would realize it is not as you conveniently suggested, without opening their books. Read the Kuzari for example. You will quickly retract what you imputed above.

Once you have read the writings of a number of those thinkers I cited above, tell me if you still feel they all accepted Sinai based on cultural belief, or on reasoning. Then tell me what's wrong with that reasoning, unless you now accept Sinai based on the rationality of their writings."

### Anatomy of a Heretic

Heretics and non-believers typically shift topics. They suggest that the ancient thinkers didn't have the science we have today. Of course, that plays no role in historical transmission: eyewitnesses and speech are all that's required. After resisting a request to respond to initial questions, we abandon our discussion. For a discussion can only continue, if both parties hear and respond to the other's words.

It is astonishing how egotistical one can be. Heretics feel capable of not only rejecting someone like Maimonides as functioning out of peer pressure, but they collectively dismiss all these great minds as making foolish errors. All of them, and despite their brilliant writings. These include prophets and world leaders, who the world attested to their wisdom. Yet a nobody, with no resume, feels superior to these leaders.

Understand the heretic's approach. First, he ridicules, "That might have impressed me back in high school." In doing so, he feels this strengthens his point. He is operating from an emotional standpoint, not a rational one. But our response must be related only to truth, meaning the facts and proper reasoning and not the person, if we are to allow truth and proof to triumph.

### Avoiding the Facts

Heretics suggest these thinkers succumbed to the emotional appeal of the masses or simply followed their culture without analyzing their beliefs. They deny the volumes of writings authored by these Jewish leaders, suggesting they accepted Sinai blindly. So we respond by showing them they do not have the facts. Asking a heretic to quote the words of these thinkers will force the heretic to admit his first position was wrong: they in fact accepted Sinai out of clearly written rational arguments, not cultural appeal.

Additionally, we engage a very effective maneuver. We show him what he is doing: not succumbing to the Jewish view! If he can resist being blinded by cultural stories, why can't others?! Thus, from his own actions, the heretic is caught in a contradiction. So it is important not only to address his words, but to also monitor his steps and contrast his actions with his claims. This heretic's first and primary corruption is that he disregards facts; he is not searching for truth, but desires to justify his free lifestyle. If truth does not propel his decisions, then it can only be emotion...

### Escapism

The heretic will change the topic when he sees he has no answer. So we must be firm and repeat a question until he addresses it. When he has no response, we then pronounce this to him, asking also why he is avoiding the issue by changing topics. Make it known to him what he does, as he does it. Do not feel compelled to respond to new issues or questions he raises, until he admits error on the current issue. This is crucial when an argument might have a

few steps, where each subsequent point relies on validating or rejecting a previous point. Do not allow him to escape any question.

### Doubts do not Revoke a Proof

"Where is all the evidence of 2 million Jews dwelling in the desert for 40 years?"

The heretic will run from issue to issue until he finds one that may not be answered. Since he is desperate to be relieved of Torah obligations, he justifies irreligious life with flawed thinking. He feels one unanswered question justifies a rejection of all else that has been proven. To this, we might ask him as follows: "If there existed a judge who proved the right decision on hundreds of cases, but one time a question was raised on one of his cases, would we then say all cases now lack proof?" Of course, all other cases stand firm as proper judgments. An unanswered question does not affect the other cases. In fact, it would be wise to assume the questionable case will bear-out a correct verdict, since the judge has a perfect record. We should side with the track record.

Similarly, lack of evidence of the Jews in the desert – part of Jewish history – does not revoke the remaining, universally transmitted Jewish history. It doesn't even disprove that very history in the desert. It's a question, that's all. One which may soon be answered. And the very act of this heretic attacking Sinai's truth from a different matter – 40 years of wandering – exposes his inability to invalidate Sinai internally.

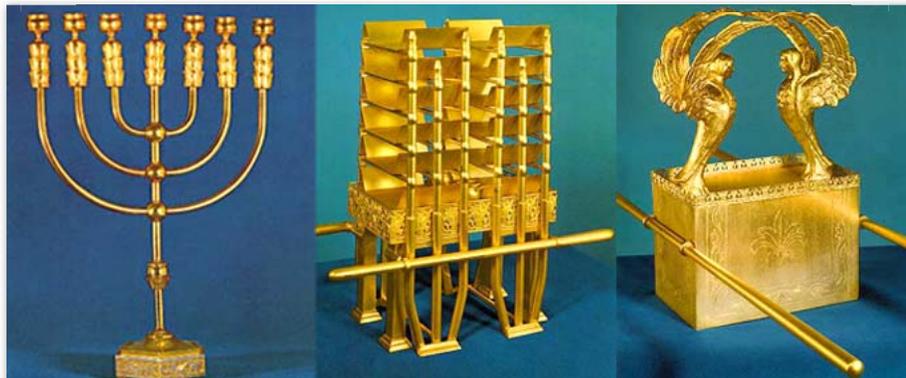
Furthermore, lack of evidence is precisely a "lack" and not a positive. Meaning "proof" is not derived from a doubt. "Proof" exposes all other possibilities as impossible, and this is not something "doubt" does. Doubt merely poses a question, but is not exhaustive in nature. Therefore, doubt cannot prove. But the heretic and the fool are seeking an out, so they latch on to anything...

This method – grabbing at straws – is also seen in the heretic's "numerous" arguments. Heretics will throw at us many issues. I have also heard it suggested that based on the varying "writing styles" (I still don't understand this one) this proves the Torah was slowly written by various writers over many years, until we have the Torah we have today. But again such theories ignore the facts, as there is no version that Torah was written by many writers, or in a piecemeal fashion. In fact, there exists only one transmitted version for how we received the story of the Jews and Revelation at Sinai.

Knowing how to answer the heretic means we not only expose his ignorance of facts, but we also comment on the contradictory steps he takes. At times we may not even need to answer his questions. As we expose his flawed or contradictory premises and steps, the heretic is shown to be wrong. His arguments are dismantled, and there is in fact nothing to answer. So know how to answer the heretic, but as the Talmud teaches, do not engage the Jewish heretic. ■

# Tabernacle

## LADEN with TREASURE



RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

On more than one occasion, I have heard sermons on these current Torah sections addressing the Tabernacle, where the Rabbi apologizes for its "dry nature" or his difficulty in presenting exciting ideas. The Jerusalem Talmud (Shviyis 2b) says as follows, "It [Torah] is not a vain matter from you". (Deut. 32:47) It is not vain, and if it is, then "from you" it is vain."

The Talmud addresses the usage of "from you" to mean this: Moses was teaching the Jews that if they view any part of Torah as vain or empty, it is due to their own shortcomings that they cannot see the gems within those verses. Let us now search for the exciting treasures in the Tabernacle!

In the opening chapter of Hilchos Bais Habechira, Maimonides says one of the essential principles governing the Temple's construction is a room called the "Holy of Holies". Yet, in the very next law when listing the various vessels, the Ark – the centerpiece of this Holy of Holies – is glaringly absent from the list. How can the room be called a "essential principles" taking precedence over its centerpiece?

Even in chapter 4 when Maimonides touches upon the Ark, he focusses on the chambers where it was to be hidden upon the prophesied destruction of the Temple. And he does not focus on its measurements as he did regarding the other vessels. How do we explain this second omission? And why was the Ark alone hidden? No other vessel is hidden! What is this unique character belonging to the Ark alone?

Hilchos Klay Hamikdash chapter two addresses the incense. After formulating 11 laws governing this incense, Maimonides includes two final laws...concerning the carrying of the Ark! What are these two laws doing together with the incense?

These two laws include restrictions of transporting the Ark via wagon or animal, and that it must be carried by man, with their faces towards the Ark, and not to remove its poles.

What's the meaning of the medrash that the Ark didn't occupy any measurement? Meaning, the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits square, yet if one measured from any side of the Ark to the wall, he measured 10 cubits. This means the Ark did not diminish space on this room. What is the need for such a miracle, and what is the lesson?

Maimonides states that the Ark rested upon the Evven Shesiyah (a stone) from which the formation of the Earth took place. Of what relevance is this stone to the Ark?

Exodus 30:36 says "...and you shall place of it in front of the Testimony (the Ark containing the Tablets of Testimony) in the Tabernacle where I meet you there..." The problem is that the incense altar is not in front of the Ark. It is distanced. (Figure 1) and also, the Ark is behind the Paroches curtain. So in what manner is the incense burned "in front" of the Ark? I believe one answer addresses all of our questions.

Let us step back. Why did God command man to build the Tabernacle? Sforno teaches it was a response to the sin of the Gold Calf; a concession to man's nature. The Jews expressed an inability to relate to God purely abstractly. "Moshe, the man who took us out of Egypt, we know not what has happened to him" was said by the Jews before sculpting the Gold Calf. They were crippled by the loss of Moshe; a tangible relationship with God. Thus, they created the Calf as a replacement. God's response to this sin was to offer man a highly structured approach to his religious life...intended to prevent another Gold Calf catastrophe. The Temple is replete with laws governing each move the Priests make. There exists no room for man to outlet his religious emotions, as expressed when creating the Calf. He must conform to God's will and not imagine he knows how to approach God.

Thus, the centerpiece of Tabernacle is the Ark, an object housing the Law, which reflects God's wisdom. But this law is in a room – the Holy of Holies – which is off-limits. No one may ever enter, lest he suffer death, save the high priest on Yom Kippur. The purpose of this restriction parallels the restriction upon the Jews to ascend Mount Sinai at Revelation. Man must demonstrate that God is "unapproachable" or unknowable. Those who feel they can approach God, or feel there is something tangible about the Creator, forfeit their lives, as seen in Ahron's two sons who were killed for approaching God without being commanded; the Jews during the Gold Calf event; and the Jews who opened the Ark upon its return from the Philistines.

In addition to this room's restriction, God commanded us in the daily incense. When the priest enters the Tabernacle, he is first confronted with the incense altar. Although spatially distanced from the Ark and separated by a curtain, ideationally the incense cloud is to create a veil between us and God; between the priest and the Ark. In this sense, the incense is "in front" of the Ark. It is amazing how the verse indicates this central concept.

Now, although the design of the Tabernacle indicates a veil between man and God, simultaneously we must never lose focus of a life of searching out God; a life pursuing wisdom. Therefore, the carrying of the Ark on man's shoulders, facing it, and not placing it on wagons or animals all target one idea: we must never lose focus of our primary objective...the pursuit of God's wisdom. These two ideas – God's unapproachable nature and wisdom as life's focus – are two sides of one coin, and appropriately joined in Maimonides' laws of Klay Hamikdash. The laws of incense and carrying the Ark belong together, for it is in the



Figure 1

(continued on next page)

(Tabernacle continued from previous page)

## Weekly Parsha

transport of the Ark that one might view it as luggage or dormant. Not so. Wisdom is to be engaged at all times. The Ark is to be viewed and cared for at all times. We must never lose focus of God's wisdom or treat it lightly, as in transporting the Ark on wagons or animals.

This also explains why King Solomon commanded the Ark be stored in hiding. It is not something that man can approach. No other vessel was meant to teach this lesson, so no others were hidden upon the Temple's destruction. Perhaps also, the Holy of Holies is formulated as primary to the Tabernacle, and not the Ark. For it is the concept of "restricted area" that intends to convey our ignorance of God's nature. In that law (Bais Habechira 1:5) Maimonides also includes the laws of creating a courtyard around the Tabernacle, for this too intends to limit one's approach. So it is the approach that is the central lesson, not the object of the approach.

Maimonides omits the Ark in his listing of all the vessels in Tabernacle. This could be due to the fact that the Ark is not utilitarian. A "vessel" on the other hand is used, as were the altars, the Table and the Menorah. Therefore, Ark is simply not considered a vessel. But the Ark had to be made, so why does Maimonides omit mentioning the Ark's measurements, unlike the other vessels? A friend suggested the Ark was the one vessel made only once, therefore in his book of laws for all generations – the Mishneh Torah – Maimonides does not include laws about its creation. That is a one-time occurrence, not a perpetual law. However, I have no confirmation that this is true and welcome your sources.

What's the meaning of the medrash that the Ark didn't occupy any measurement? Meaning, the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits square. Yet if one measured from any side of the centrally-located Ark and to any wall, he measured 10 cubits. This means the Ark did not diminish space on this room. What is the need for such a miracle, and what is the lesson?

Perhaps this teaches that wisdom is not of this world. Yes, it is reflected in all of God's creations, but the physical world is a "result" of that metaphysical wisdom, and not a "location" of wisdom. The fact the Ark did not take up measurable space makes it akin to wisdom, directing us to this further realization or a world of wisdom "outside" Earthly confines.

Finally, the Ark rested upon the Even Shesiyah – Earth's the formation stone. This relationship teaches the purpose of the Earth. Without man's pursuit of wisdom – what Ark represents – the Earth fails in its purpose. The Earth's very formation, inhabitable by humans, enables the existence of the lone creature that can perceive God. ■



# NYDesign.com

Corporate Identity Website Design Marketing  
Advertising Fund Raising Package Design  
Presentations Flash Animations Business Plans

Developers of Mesora & the JewishTimes

516.569.8888 info@NYDesign.com

Free, live classes online  
Sundays – 11:15 AM Eastern.  
Audible classes with text chat.

**2/13/11 Koheles Ch.8**

**Talk  
LIVE**

[www.Mesora.org/TalkLIVE](http://www.Mesora.org/TalkLIVE)

*Parshas*  
TETZAVEH

RABBI REUVEN MANN



*Does  
Clothing*



**MAKE**

*the*

**MAN?**



This week's parsha, Tetzaveh, continues to describe the construction of the Mishkan. A great deal of attention is directed at the materials and design of the priestly garments. The Kohen was not permitted to serve in the Temple in ordinary clothing, however dignified. To do so would be a grave sin and invalidate the service. It is easy to understand why there would have to be a "dress code" for something as serious as the Temple Service. What requires explanation is the Torah's prescription for the exact materials, measurements and design of the apparel to the exclusion of any element of the Kohen's personal "taste".

There is a lot we can learn from the Torah's insistence on the sanctity of the "bigdei Kehuna" (priestly garments). For many of us clothing is more than just a functional necessity. We consider it vitally important to dress "in style" even though our "outdated" apparel is in perfect condition. In many ways clothing serves as an extension of one's "image." We all seek to project a certain social persona which reflects how we wish to be perceived by others. Every day we put on our "masks" when we enter into the public domain. We do not want to be seen as we truly are. We invest a lot of money and energy to fashion an appearance we hope will be admired by others.

Our behavior is affected by the clothing we wear. Certain professions require a specific uniform. Pilots, doctors, nurses, policemen, etc. must wear their outfit while at work. Why must it be this way? A skilled professional can perform his craft no matter what he is wearing. Nevertheless the uniform plays an important psychological role. It reminds him of his professional identity and the sacredness of his

mission. While this may not affect his technical skills, it increases the seriousness and dedication with which he approaches his mission.

We can now appreciate the importance of the Bigdei Kehuna. The verse proclaims: "You shall make garments of holiness...for honor and glory." Before entering the temple the Kohen had to remove his regular clothing which represents his superficial social image. His priestly garments, however, reflect the true essence of man, ie. the Divine soul which is fashioned "in His Image." The uniqueness of man consists in his ability to apprehend the Creator and imitate His ways of truth, justice and compassion. G-d permits us to perform His Temple Service on the condition that we abandon all forms of vanity and focus exclusively on that which is true and eternal.

There is much we can learn from this teaching. We should dress appropriately but not be excessively preoccupied with "externals." We should affirm that human dignity consists in the fact that all people are created in G-d's image. Let us appreciate the full significance of one of the first blessings we recite upon awakening each morning: "My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure. You created and fashioned it and safeguard it within me and will take it from me and restore it to me in the future. As long as the soul is within me I thank You Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers Master of all worlds, L-rd of all souls. Blessed are You Hashem Who restores the soul to those whose bodies have expired." May the theme of this blessing be the guiding principle of our temporary sojourn on earth.

Shabbat Shalom

## Remain competitive, or lose sales.

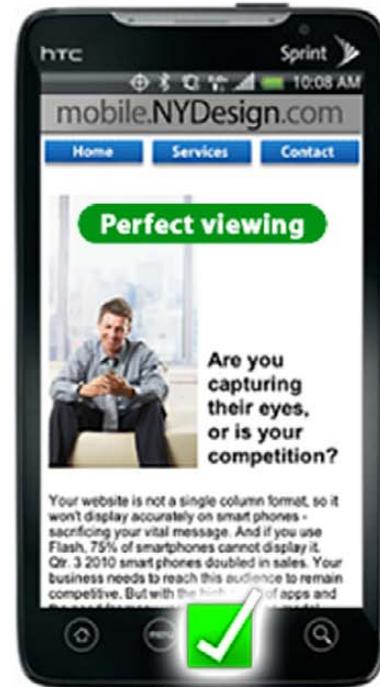
The one industry recently reported to have doubled in sales: **smartphones**. Almost 50% of Americans - 150 million - own smartphones. They want info on-the-go. But your current site won't display properly. If you haven't built a mobile-optimized website, you will lose business to competitors offering smartphone-friendly experiences.



Standard websites display improperly on smartphones. Text and images are cut off. This disorients visitors and drives them to your competition offering user-friendly mobile sites.



If your site is Flash-based or contains Flash, it cannot appear on 75% of all smartphones.



Our mobile-optimized sites display perfectly, delivering all content within your visitors' smart phone screen. They'll return to you, not the competition.

**Almost 150 million Americans own smartphones. Obtain a low-cost, mobile site and answer the call of today's on-the-go audience. If you don't, the competition will.**

Learn more: [Mobile.NYDesign.com](http://Mobile.NYDesign.com) Email: [info@NYDesign.com](mailto:info@NYDesign.com)