



# Parshas Tetzaveh Parshas Zachor

For the week ending 9 Adar 5758  
6 & 7 March 1998

## Overview

**H**ashem 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. Hashem 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. Hashem 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.

## Insights

### THE HEIGHT OF FASHION

**“You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor.” (28:2)**

Darkest Africa a hundred years ago. The temperature is 103° F. The humidity is over 98%. The sun is setting over a vast stadium of trees. But in a clearing, in the midst of this jungle, an Englishman is changing into “tails” for dinner. It may be 5,000 miles from Piccadilly, but he wouldn’t be caught dead not changing for dinner.

When politicians pose for the camera there’s an interesting similarity between them. They may hold opinions which are diametrically opposed. They may come from places as far removed as Biloxi from Kuala Lumpur — but they all wear a suit and a tie. The business suit is a universal symbol of status and position.

The Torah tells us that clothes lend status and splendor to a person. Hashem told Moshe to make the priestly vestments for his brother Aharon “for glory and for splendor.” In other words, *clothes* give a person honor and status.

*In which case, why doesn’t everyone wear a suit?*

If it’s so easy to gain honor for ourselves, why do people wear cutoffs and T-shirts? Since everyone wants honor and status, why don’t we opt for the easy way and always wear formal clothing?

Man is a combination of two elements. A soul and a body. The soul wants honor. The body has a different agenda.

The body isn’t interested in wearing a suit, because it isn’t interested in honor. Honor implies responsibility. If people see us as worthy of being honored we feel the responsibility of having to live up to their expectations. Responsibility isn’t something which interests the body. The body wants the freedom to gratify itself without thinking about consequences.

The body wants to “let it all hang out.”

The soul wants to “tuck it all in.”

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## THE INSIDE STORY

### **“You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor.” (28:2)**

Why do we put on our finest clothes for Shabbos? One reason is to give honor to this special day. But there's another reason.

Another question.

When the *kohanim* performed the service of the *Beis Hamikdash* they had to wear special garments, and without these garments the service was invalid. Why didn't the *levi'im* have to wear special clothes as well?

The service of the *kohen* is internal. It takes place in private away from the eyes of the world. Anything internal requires covering. The soul, which is internal, requires covering when it comes to this world with the body. Spiritual envoys — angels — require a body when they enter this earthly dimension.

The work of a Levi is external, in public. The *levi'im* used to play musical instruments and sing in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Since their work was external it didn't require special garments.

Shabbos, too, is the dimension of the internal in this world. Shabbos shows us the inside of Creation, the center and the purpose of life. Since it reveals that which is internal, it needs covering — and thus we dress ourselves in special clothes on this special day.

## EARTH-SUIT

### **“You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon your brother, for glory and splendor.” (28:2)**

When an astronaut emerges from his spacecraft, he wears a large, rather bulbous suit. The purpose of the suit is both simple and vital. Without the suit, his blood would boil in the vacuum of space in a few seconds. The suit is vital to the existence of the man inside it, but no one would ever mistake the suit for being part of the person inside it. The distinction is clear.

Your body is really a space-suit. It allows your soul to exist in this world. That is its purpose. Without this “space-suit for the soul” we could not survive in the world at all.

Prior to the sin of *Adam* and *Chava*, there was no shame, and therefore no need for clothing. They perceived clearly that the *neshama*, the soul, is the essence of a person, and the body is only its “space-suit.” After their sin, however, this distinction became blurred, and it was necessary to *show* that the body is of importance only insofar as it supports the *neshama*. Since the body is visible, man is easily misled into attributing to it primary importance. Clothes, by

covering the body, stress that the inner spiritual essence, the *neshama*, which is hidden from view, is of essential significance.

The *Midrash (Tanchuma Bamidbar 3)* relates that when the *Mishkan* was erected, Hashem said that *tznius* (concealment, modesty) is extremely fitting here. The *Mishkan* itself was covered like a bride, with a veil in front and a train behind. The essence of the *Mishkan* is the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence, that dwells there. *If one sees only the glorious structure, attributing intrinsic sanctity to the materials themselves while forgetting the spiritual essence, the Mishkan becomes something akin to an idol.*

Similarly, the Torah mandates an extra degree of *tznius* (modesty) for the Jewish woman. In secular cultures, women are de-valued, sometimes even reduced to physical objects. Emphasis is placed on what meets the eye — the space-suit. The Jewish woman, however, dresses so as to stress the essence of her inner being. *“All the glory of the daughter of the King is inward.”*

## LIGHT WORKING

### **“This is what you shall offer upon the Altar: Two sheep within their first year every day (lit. to the day), continually.” (29:38)**

There are times in life when everything seems to be bathed in the rosy glow of morning sun. Life is full of promise and optimism. There are times, too, when the future seems cloudy and obscure, when darkness and the uncertainty loom ominously.

When describing the mitzvah of the daily offering, the Torah employs an unusual grammatical construction. Instead of saying *BaYom* — in the day — it chooses to say *LaYom* — to the day. From this anomaly, we learn a law: The slaughtering of the daily offering was to be done in direct sunlight. The morning offering was to be slaughtered in the western part of the courtyard so the eastern wall should not block the rays of the rising sun. And the afternoon offering was to be slaughtered in the eastern part of the courtyard so the western wall should not obstruct the rays of the setting sun.

Nowadays, we no longer have the closeness to Hashem that the service of the *Beis Hamikdash* brought us. However, in its place, we have the service of the heart — prayer.

Whichever light is shining into our lives, whether the optimistic rays of the rising sun or the faltering evening twilight, we must take that light and illuminate our hearts to serve Hashem.

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P.C.

### **“Pure pressed oil for illumination” (27:20)**

The light of the Menorah represents the light of Torah. The oil for the Menorah had to be pressed gently, one olive at a time, until it yielded its oil. It could not be crushed, because this would leave in it particles of olive and sediment. And even though these could be filtered out afterwards, the oil for the Menorah had to be pure *from the start*, not “fixed up” later.

We can understand this as a paradigm for the teaching of Torah itself: We must transmit the Torah pure and unadulterated, not dressed up to pander to what is “politically correct.” The Torah needs no re-vamping or re-decorating to make it more palatable.

Hype is like sediment in oil.

Even though we may think we can filter it out afterwards, the Torah, like the oil of the Menorah, must be pure from the start.

## **Haftorah Parshas Zachor Shmuel I , 15:1-34**

### **THE LAST OF THE AMALEKI**

The second of the “Four Parshios” that we read in the months of Adar and Nissan is *Parshas Zachor*. *Zachor* means “Remember.” The Torah tells us “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, when you came out of Egypt.” On Shabbos Zachor we fulfill this mitzvah by reading this section from the Torah.

*Parshas Zachor* is always read the week before Purim, because on Purim we celebrate our deliverance from Amalek’s most notorious descendent — Haman.

The Haftorah of *Parshas Zachor* depicts another encounter with the descendants of Amalek: King Shaul was commanded to annihilate Amalek, but he failed to kill their king, Agag. While in captivity, Agag, the last of the Amaleki, managed to sire a child. It was from this child that Haman was descended.

Sources:

*The Height of Fashion* - Rabbi Shaul Miller, zatzal, heard from Rabbi Reuven Subar

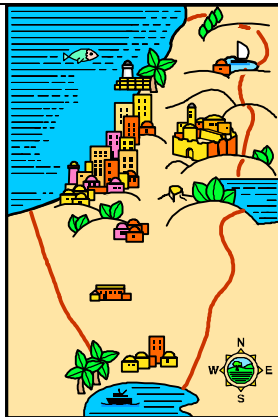
*The Inside Story* - Admor Rabbi Avraham from Sokachov

*Earth-Suit* - Rabbi Zev Leff, “Outlooks and Insights”

PC - based on Rashi

## **LOVE OF THE LAND**

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



### **A CITY AND A THRONE**

Omri was the general at the head of the army of the Kingdom of Israel. When a junior officer by the name of Zimri rebelled against the king and usurped the throne, the people crowned Omri who crushed the rebellion and reigned as king for seven years. Why did Omri merit this greatness?

The answer is found in the account of Omri purchasing a hill in Shomron and building a new city on it (*Melachim 1 16:24*). Because Omri added one city to *Eretz Yisrael*, he rose to become a king.

*Mesechta Sanhedrin 102b*

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