

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

TESAVEH – Shabbat Zachor
Haftarah: Shemuel I 15:1-34

FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015 9 ADAR 5775

Fast of Esther is Wednesday and Purim is Thursday

Mazal Tov and Mabrook to our daughter Mikhayla on her engagement to Daniel Reidler.
Mazol Tov to Daniel's parents Harry and Lori and to the entire family

Candle lighting Friday evening February 13 at 5:25 p.m. Mincha at 5:25

SHABBAT: Perasha class with Rabbi David at 8:30AM this week
Shaharit - Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:40AM

Kiddush Sponsored by the Yusupov Family in memory of their father, Simcha Ben Shlomo
By the Samoilov family in memory of Marina's mother, Chana bat Miriam
and by the Wagner family in memory of Alan Wagner

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one

Early Mincha after Kiddush - Begin at 12:20 and Amidah after 12:36

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer
Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach all February at 3:30 PM
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:30

Shabbat Ends at 6:25 - Return for Arbit at 6:45
Movie Night Tonight 02/28/15 sponsored by the Herman Family at 7:30
Movie Night next week 03/07/15 sponsored by Bob Kraus at 7:30

Sunday morning class with Sam Yusupov at 9AM
Krav Maga at 10AM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00

PURIM SCHEDULE – See Attachment
Wednesday March 4th Taanit Esther and Purim Eve
Fast Begins 5:10 AM
Shaharit 6:55 AM
Minha 5:20 PM
Arbit 5:50PM
Megilla Reading 6:15 PM
Purim Break Fast and Party ...7:00 PM

After Megillah Reading, Please join us for a Fantastic Purim Party with music and friends featuring a costume contest, delicious food, a scavenger hunt, music and balloon animals for every child!

Thursday March 5th PURIM
Shaharit 6:30 AM
Megilla Reading 7:15 AM
Minha Followed by Arbit 5:30 PM

The Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach will be hosting Chana Frumin, M.S.W. and the Director of the **Jerusalem Narrative Therapy Institute** (www.jnti.net) in Israel. Chana is an international teacher of beginning and advanced topics in narrative therapy practice with over 30 years of experience. Chana has taught experiential workshops in South Africa, Denmark, England, Israel, Australia, Canada and the US.

One Day Intensive Workshop in Marriage Therapy Techniques
**Skill Building Course for those
Advising/Counseling Couples**

Sunday May 10th 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

\$149 per person. \$36 registration fee credited towards the workshop fee is required to reserve your spot.
Light refreshments will be served.
Enrollment is limited to 20 people.

Shortcuts to Shalom Bayit
How to Make Any Marriage Better
Experiential Couples Workshop

Monday May 11th 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

\$99 per couple, \$18 registration fee credited towards the workshop fee is required to reserve your spot.
Light refreshments will be served.

Please pay via PayPal at JerusalemNarrativeTherapy@gmail.com or Make your checks payable to Chana Rachel Frumin

Rabbinic Advisor, Rabbi Zev Leff א"שליט: For more than 20 years, Rabbi Leff has served as the Rav of Moshav Matityahu. He received his semicha ordination from the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland Ohio, where he studied under Rav Mordechai Gifter, zt"l. You can read more about Rabbi Leff at <http://www.rabbileff.net/>

For further information please call Rabbi Yosef Colish at 516-589-6102 Or Chana Frumin at 011-972-54-479-9441

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 Israel or something of interest

**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at NEW TIME OF 4:30
 PM Thru Purim – Please join us! 212-289-2100 –
 Mincha– The most important tefilah of the day –
 followed by and Arvit all winter! Give us 22
 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

THE WINNING TICKET

**Imagine a man who holds the \$400 million
 winning lottery ticket. It remains in his pocket
 and never gets cashed while he bemoans his
 situation. What a fool! Well the fool is me and
 that fool is you. With mounting scholarship
 requests, we long for assistance for our
 schools, our children and their parents. But
 help is there and we simply don't take it.
 Hundreds of millions of dollars has been set
 aside for Jewish education in the Diaspora.
 Because we don't step up and vote, that
 money is being directed by our reform and
 conservative neighbors to their schools, to
 their synagogues and to their programs. Isn't
 it time that we woke up and took our seat at
 the table? Vote in the World Zionist
 Organization's election. Visit
www.myvoteourisrael.com and cast a ballot
 for the slate of our World Sephardic Zionist
 Organization – Ohavei Zion. For our
 children's sake, help us cash in that lottery
 ticket. Spread this message and get everyone
 on your own lists to vote. For more
 information visit ohaveizion.com or contact
 Lana Eliyahu at lana.eliyahu@gmail.com**

Editors Notes

On Tuesday morning we ended our class with a
 question to ponder. The Torah tells us that G-d
 commands Moses to make clothing for Aaron and his
 four sons, "to sanctify him, [so] that he serve Me [as a
 kohen]". Rashi comments: to sanctify him, to initiate
 him into the kehunah through these garments [so]
 that he would be a kohen to Me.

To be initiated into the priesthood, Aaron and his
 sons must first have the priestly clothes placed on
 them. We wondered, if God imbued Aaron and his
 sons with some priestly holiness, why does it take
 clothing or an exterior cover to bring it out? On the
 simplest level it appears that the clothes make the
 man which is a bit strange when we focus so strongly
 on the internal. We compared the donning of priestly
 vestments to a king being coroneted through the
 placement of a crown on his head. Still I challenged
 everyone to consider that as with everything in the
 Torah, there must be something more.

We thought about the question that night and
 continued our discussion the next morning.

We recalled that the week prior we were discussing
 Eliyahu HaNavi, Elijah the prophet. As we all know
 Elijah is commanded to visit us on two specific
 occasions. The first is at the brit milah or circumcision
 and the second is at the Passover Seder. In each
 case he is invited. At the circumcision, the invitation
 comes when we announce that this is the chair of
 Elijah. At the Passover Seder it is when we set aside
 his cup for him (and many of us extend this by
 opening the door to let him in).

The Hebrew word for chair is kiseh. The Hebrew
 word for cup is kos. Both share a similar root which
 we see in the word Kisuy which means to cover as
 we see in the misvah of kisuy dam or covering the
 blood based on the commandment from Vayikra -
 "And he shall pour out its blood, and cover it with
 earth". The root of both chair – kiseh and cup – kos
 has something to do with covering. And through the
 covering of kos and kiseh, Elijah is revealed. As an
 aside we find it interesting that the rabbis tell us a
 person's true nature is revealed through kiso, koso,
 and kaaso; his pocket, his cup and his temper. The
 cover acts to reveal.

Rabbi Abittan, z'sl explained to us that in this world it
 is impossible to see or even perceive the soul on its
 own. It is only when that soul is covered within the
 body. The covering hides and yet reveals. In the
 same way, we don't take our naked bodies out into
 the street, we dress our bodies, so the clothes which
 cover our bodies allow our bodies to be revealed. He
 would say that thoughts of a man are hidden until
 they are covered with words. Words can mask our
 true thoughts and yet only through them can our
 thoughts be expressed.

So it appears that in order to reveal the sanctity of the
 priest, the priest must be covered within the priestly
 garments.

This idea of covering in order to reveal extends into the holiday of Purim. The Megilah does not mention Hashem once. It covers or hides Hashem, yet within that cover Hashem is revealed. It is suggested that this is why we dress in masks on Purim. Perhaps this was meant to assist us as we entered a period of time where overt miracles would no longer be the norm; a period where G-d goes into what we call hiding, leaving it up to us to lift that cover and find him whether in nature or coincidence. Is this perhaps the reason the word Megilah is chosen for the book of Esther as Megilah seems to come from the word Megaleh – to reveal?

It's a deep thought to ponder this Shabbat as we read Zachor and prepare for Purim. Through the cover, the interior is revealed.

PART 2

Our class continued with a new question. What does all this have to do with the King ordering Haman to dress up Mordechai in King Ahasuerus's royal garments? When the king asks Haman how he should honor someone, he is told, "Let them bring the royal raiment that the king wore and the horse that the king rode upon, and the royal crown should be placed on his head." The use of past tense makes me think that these are the clothes worn at coronation. Stranger is that the King agrees to this, but we wonder what kind of reward is this? The king orders Haman to do all of this for Mordechai and the king is specific, "let nothing fail of all that you have spoken." He is telling him to dress Mordechai in the clothes of the coronation.

The one character who displays the strangest behavior throughout the book of Esther is the King. Some call him a fool, others a rabid anti Semite, and others a spineless king whose behavior is so fickle perhaps due to his lack of confidence. I believe that the answer to the King's behavior can be found in this order to dress Mordechai up in his own coronation clothes. He hopes to achieve something and he hopes to allay his own fears. Let me know what you think and B'H, we'll get out next week's newsletter on Wednesday before Purim with a single answer which I believe will answer so many of the Megilah's questions especially those revolving around the king.

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

PS ... See this beautiful thought forwarded by Nathan I Dweck

The gemara in Hulin Daf 139 asks where is there a hint to the name Haman in the Torah. And the gemara answers from the pasook in Bereshit "**ha'min** ha'etz asher siviticha le'bilti achol mimenu achalta (did you eat from the tree I commanded you not to eat from)". It's very nice that we found a word in the Torah with the same letters as Haman but what is this coming to teach us? I heard a nice idea. Adam ha'rishon had everything in the world. There was only one tree he couldn't eat from . and he only couldn't eat from the tree so too we see that same idea by Haman. He had everything in the world (kids, wealth, stature) and he only didn't have one thing. He only didn't have Mordechai bowing to him and still he couldn't be happy. This is the nature of ta'avah (desire). And this is the connection between Adam and Haman. And we all have a little of this in us. And we can learn a lesson from Haman that when we focus on the things we don't have rather than the things we do have then as Haman said "kol zeh enenu shoveh". When we focus on the things we don't have then even the things we do have are not worth anything. Because we can't appreciate or enjoy them since we are so distracted with what we are missing. And this is valuable lesson for us and to teach our children. The root to happiness is to focus on what we have and not what we don't.

See the following published in the Post by Jeffrey Wiesenfeld who is, a private wealth manager, is an officer of several Jewish organizations and a former aide to Gov. George Pataki, Sen. Alfonse D'Amato and Mayor Ed Koch.

Under the guise of keeping politics out of the Iran Bomb debate, a cynical ploy by some members of Congress, including Jewish Democrats, has emerged: a move to boycott the address of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to a joint session on Tuesday.

Their excuses are mere protocol — that the upcoming Israeli election supposedly makes the speech political, and that Speaker John Boehner did not consult the White House before inviting the prime minister.

In fact, Iran has been at the top of Israel's threat list for nearly two decades.

Nor is Netanyahu's opposition in that election any more willing to embrace an agreement that, like the one the Obama administration is negotiating with

Iran, clearly leads to Iranian development of nuclear weapons.

Any member of Congress who boycotts the address will present himself as placing protocol above national security for the American people and our allies.

The Iranian government's goals are a threat not only to Israel, but to this nation and the entire West.

Any member boycotting should be regarded as exhibiting hostility toward the Jewish state, and indifference to America's own security, out of some imagined "respect" for the president who has brought us to this crisis.

Iran is already at least 80 percent of the way to becoming a nuclear power, and has continued to make progress throughout the years of these negotiations.

Its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been clear that his terms for any final agreement are vastly different from anything discussed in the West as the minimum needed to guarantee Iran doesn't build atomic weapons.

The timing of the speech has nothing to do with Israel's election, and everything to do with the March 24 due date for the framework agreement with Iran.

The facts so far publicized about that agreement make it plain that it will be untenable for Israel and foolish for America.

Yet President Obama seeks to move forward on that framework, leaving America and the West at the mercy and whim of Iran and its soon-to-be-loaded ICBMs.

Israel will be left to its own devices, which may well bring the conflict that the president has so professed he wants to prevent.

Netanyahu's address is not about an election, nor about him. It is about Israel's survival and the fate of the West.

Any prime minister of Israel would have an absolute obligation to tell anyone who will listen just what Israel — and we — face.

Holocaust history provides considerable guidance here. During World War II, the Washington power elite regarded Rabbi Stephen Wise as America's leading Jew. Yet his chief concern was acceptance

by the Gentile elite — and demanding attention to the ongoing Holocaust didn't serve that goal.

Thus Wise and others of similar views effectively encouraged President Franklin Roosevelt and most of the nation's leaders to look away from the greatest state-sponsored industrialized genocide of any people in history.

This, when a united Jewish-American front might have brought action on the demands from heroes like Ben Hecht and the Bergson group that we bomb Auschwitz to stop that death factory from murdering 10,000 Jews a day.

As it happens, the Allies were bombing oil fields just five miles from the death camp. Hearing those explosions, the doomed prisoners vainly believed that their captors and their death machinery would be hit next.

They preferred being bombed, as a better chance than joining their brethren in the gas chambers.

No bombs came.

Thus did these self-conscious Jews urge the same course as the anti-Semites of the day. And 6 million Jews were left to their accursed fate.

Seven decades ago, Rabbi Wise fought tooth-and-nail to prevent "the wrong" Jews from influencing the president. Today, our Jewish Democrats and liberals fight over protocol and "respect" for our president.

Do they not realize that these negotiations have only benefitted Iran, which has continued its nuclear progress the whole time? Do they not believe Iran is developing a bomb and intends to use it?

Israel has always been a rare bipartisan issue in American politics. No longer?

Gentiles who boycott Netanyahu will earn a scarlet letter for their naïve (or cynical) defense of the president's Iran policy. Jews who boycott will earn two, the second for being the spiritual heirs of Rabbi Wise.

And a widespread Democratic boycott will seal the case in the minds of American supporters of Israel: The catcalls against Israel at the last Democratic convention were no aberration, but the party's heart.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: The Parsha opens with the commandment to use pure olive oil in lighting the Menorah. Aharon and his four sons were selected to be the Kohanim. The basic garments of a Kohain consisted of a turban, shirt, pants, and belt. The Kohain Gadol wore four additional garments: the Me'ill - a long outer robe; the Ayphod - a quilted vest or bibbed apron; the Choshen - jeweled breastplate; and the Tzitz - engraved, golden, forehead plate. The quilted vest is described in this Aliya along with the two Shoham stones. These were engraved with the names of the 12 Tribes and set on the shoulders of the Kohain Gadol.

2nd Aliya: The cloth settings for the Shoham stones are described along with the jeweled breastplate. The method of fastening the breastplate to the quilted vest is explained. The breastplate was a quilted garment set with 12 stones, each engraved with the name of a Tribe.

3rd Aliya: The long outer robe is described. The hem of this garment was edged with small bells intended to announce the presence of the Kohain Gadol as he walked through the Bais Hamikdash. (From this the Gemara derives that a husband, prior to entering the door of his own home, out of respect for his wife, should announce his arrival by knocking on the door.) The engraved, golden forehead plate and the Kohain Gadol's turban are described, along with the four basic garments worn by all Kohanim. All the garments were hand made of the finest white linen. The special vestments of the Kohain Gadol were woven from a special thread spun from five different colored threads, including a thread made of pure gold.

4th, 5th, & 6th Aliyot: The seven day ceremony consecrating the Kohanim into their priestly service is detailed along with the consecration of the Mizbeach - Altar.

7th Aliya: The last vessel to be described is the inner, golden Altar, used to burn the daily incense offering. This offering, as well as the daily preparation for the lighting of the Menorah, could only be performed by the Kohain Gadol. The special mixture of incense called the Kitores, could only be formulated for this purpose. (The renowned biblical archeologist, Vendell Jones, claims to have unearthed a hidden cache containing 600 kilos of the Kitores, buried before the 1st Bais Hamikdash was destroyed.)

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"And you will command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you clean olive oil crushed for illumination to light a lamp continually." (Shemot 27:20)

The Midrash says: The soul and the Torah are compared to a candle. The soul, as it says, "The soul of man is the candle of Hashem (Mishlei 20) and the Torah, as it says, "The candle is a misvah and the Torah is light." Hashem says, "May My candle be in your hand and your candle in Mine. My candle in your hand, this is the Torah, and your candle in My hand, that's your soul. If you watch over My candle, I will watch yours. If you put out My candle, I will extinguish yours."

This is true in life, that if a person keeps the Torah fully without compromise, no suffering will come to him, as King Solomon said, "The observer of misvot will not know of any evil" (Kohelet 8:5). Listen to a true story (Tuvcha Yabinu). Once there was a young Torah scholar who got very sick. This young man, who was learning in yeshivah, had tremendous painful suffering. The doctors now said he needed chemotherapy in the hospital. When he arrived the nurse told him that in order to get the treatment he must wear special sterile clothing; therefore he must change before he receives treatment. The young man agreed, but since the hospital didn't have sterile sisit, he brought with him a freshly laundered sisit to wear when the hospital required sterile clothing.

When the nurse saw the sisit he was wearing she said very clearly that he can't get the treatment until he removed the sisit. He tried over and over again to explain to her that it was very clean, but to no avail. The young man held his own, refused to remove his sisit, and sat in the hallway waiting. After three hours in the hall outside the treatment area, one of the senior doctors walked by. He asked the yeshivah boy why he was waiting. After hearing from the boy the problem, the doctor went inside. A few minutes later the doctor emerged, but he was clearly upset; it was written all over his face. The young man asked what was wrong. The doctor said, "The first thing is to go in and get you treated with the sisit on. I spoke to the nurse. It's alright. And we will talk after to explain why I'm upset." After the painful treatment the doctor approached the patient with tears in his eyes. "I am a Jew who is not observant, but this time I was able to witness how Hashem watches over those that observe the misvot. When I went in to convince the nurse that the sisit is not a problem, I also looked over the procedure that you were supposed to receive. I was shocked to learn that the nurse was about to administer to you something that was not right for you. Had she given

you what she wanted to give you, it would have caused a quick death!"

The doctor added that "It was a mistake, but had you not stubbornly refused to remove the sissit you would have gotten the treatment by now and who knows what your situation would be. Now that you refused the treatment you were saved."

As the Midrash stated, if you watch Hashem's candle, He will watch yours.

Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

The holiday of Purim gets its name from the pur, the lottery which Haman used to determine the day on which to destroy the Jews. This seems to be a very minor detail in the whole scheme of the Purim story. Why choose this aspect to give us the name of the holiday?

The answer is that Haman comes from Amalek, who believes everything in this world is random happenings. Amalek was willing to buck the Creator Himself as the cause of everything that takes place and Haman followed in his grandfather's footsteps. There is nothing more symbolic of chance than a lottery. This was the method that Haman chose to decide the fate of the Jews. The entire story of Purim shows how all random events are linked up to bring about the great miracle of Purim. Therefore, the name Purim is meant to bring home to us that our destiny is carefully planned with precision and detail. Just as a lottery is really the will of Hashem, so too are our every day happenings, from the greatest events to the smallest detail.

When we read the story of Purim, we should strengthen our faith in Hashem, thereby meriting to have miracles and salvation speedily in our days. Amen.

Happy Purim and Shabbat Shalom! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
Visit DailyHalacha.com, DailyGemara.com,
MishnaBerura.com, LearnTorah.com
What Goes Around Comes Around

Parashat Tesaveh speaks at great length about the Bigdeh Kehuna, the priestly garments worn by the Kohanim, and about the consecration of Aharon as the Kohen Gadol (high priest).

The Sages teach that originally, it was Moshe, Aharon's brother, who was to have been anointed as Kohen Gadol. As the greatest person who ever lived, Moshe was to have assumed not only the roles of leader, teacher and prophet, but also the role of the high priesthood. But God denied Moshe this privilege because of his initial refusal to accept the mantle of

leadership. When God appeared to Moshe at the burning bush and instructed him to go to Egypt and lead Beneh Yisrael out of bondage, Moshe refused, arguing for seven days that God should appoint somebody else. Moshe eventually accepted the assignment, but as punishment for his arguing he was denied the privilege of serving as the Kohen Gadol.

When the time came for Moshe to anoint his brother as the Kohen Gadol, we might have assumed that he harbored hard feelings and resentment. He now had to consecrate his brother for this distinguished position – which was originally supposed to have been his! But this was not the case at all. The Talmud relates that as Moshe poured the anointing oil over Aharon's head, and the oil trickled down onto his beard, Moshe felt as though the oil dripped onto his beard. Meaning, he rejoiced and celebrated Aharon's anointing as though he himself was anointed Kohen Gadol. Not only did Moshe not harbor any hard feelings toward his brother – he was as happy as he would have been if he had been appointed Kohen Gadol!

Moshe's positive response to his brother's appointment as Kohen Gadol was not coincidental. Besides being a testament to his noble character, it was likely also the result of Aharon's similar response to Moshe's appointment as leader. The Sages teach that during the years Moshe spent in Midyan, away from Egypt, Aharon served as the religious leader of the people. Suddenly, Moshe arrived in Egypt with the news that God had appointed him leader. One might have expected Aharon to feel resentful. He had led the people very capably all these years. Why should he suddenly relinquish the role of leader and give it to his younger brother, who had been away for several decades? Yet, Aharon rejoiced at Moshe's appointment. He felt happy that his younger brother would assume the role. Aharon harbored no feelings of jealousy, and had no interest in the fame or honor of leadership. His younger brother's appointment did not upset him – it brought him genuine joy.

They say that what goes around comes around. Aharon's positive response to Moshe's appointment came around again when Moshe reacted lovingly to Aharon's appointment. If Aharon had reacted with resentment to Moshe's appointment as leader, then Moshe would have likely felt a similar tinge of resentment when anointing Aharon as Kohen Gadol. But Aharon succeeded in fostering mutual feelings of fraternal love and respect. His selflessness and humility impacted upon Moshe, and helped ensure that Moshe would react similarly when Aharon was consecrated as the Kohen Gadol.

This is a critical lesson for us to learn and implement. If we act kindly, patiently and selflessly with our peers, we create an atmosphere of goodwill and friendship that will only help us further down the road. If what "goes around" is love and respect, then this is what will eventually "come around." We should endeavor to avoid jealousy and animosity and treat others with genuine friendship and kindness, and then these feelings will ultimately be reciprocated and spread throughout our families, community, and all Am Yisrael.

Rabbi Wein IT IS OUR FAULT – REALLY?

The Israeli ambassador to Sweden was interviewed this week on a radio station in Stockholm. He was being interviewed in connection with the recent killing of a Jewish security guard outside of the synagogue in Copenhagen. The charming woman interviewer, after the ambassador expressed his horror and disgust over the matter, asked him: "Don't you think that the Jews also have to shoulder some of the blame for these anti-Semitic attacks?"

The ambassador said that he resented the question and that classic anti-Semitism always places the blame for its existence on Jewish faults and sins without stopping to be introspective about its own destructive and pernicious beliefs and behavior.

I have thought about the question that that Swedish woman asked the ambassador. There have been numerous proposals and plans advanced over the many centuries of Jewish existence to attempt to explain the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is irrational, based on false premises and conspiracy theories and in many cases a truly psychological and pathological disease that infects individuals and nations.

It is almost natural, in the absence of any logical or rational explanation for this never-ending destructive attitude and behavior, to turn one's gaze away from the perpetrators and fix it instead upon the victims. Franklin Roosevelt once said that Hitler had a point when he publicly complained that there were too many Jewish doctors in Germany. The inability to call a spade a spade, to face up to the reality of evil ideological violence and the moral and social failings of the dominant societies always forces a search for the causes of anti-Semitism to focus upon the Jews who are its victims rather than upon those who perpetrate and perpetuate it.

Of course, all of us know that Jews are not perfect people and that Jewish society has often times been sinful. Even the public practice of its faith in that society is lacking in perfect morality and absolute justice. Perfect morality and absolute justice are goals of Judaism and Jewish life but they are not always the reality. Given that, there always have been great and righteous people in the Jewish world that have attained lofty levels of morality and spirituality.

There is a drive within Jews to demand perfection from themselves, from their leaders and from their general community and society. This drive, admirable as it is, causes the Jewish world to engage in constant introspection, self-criticism and even eventual alienation from the beliefs and practices of Jewish life. Jews who are openly and bitterly dissatisfied with the Jewish people, the Jewish state and the shortcomings of the practice of the Jewish religion communicate this, whether consciously or otherwise, to the general world.

Since Jews obviously demand perfection from their society it is not untoward for the general non-Jewish society to also somehow raise the bar as far as the Jewish society is concerned and to expect perfection from it. It has ironically been said that the Jews are the only ones in the Western world who attempt to be good Christians. Since, invariably, Jews, Jewish practice and Jewish society will be found falling short of perfection, there is always fertile ground for the seeds of anti-Semitism to be planted and to flourish.

Anti-Semitism is not our fault. On the relative scale of human behavior over the past many millennia, the record of the Jewish people is an exemplary one. While we should always attempt to improve our standards and behavior of social justice and morality, we should never allow ourselves to believe that anti-Semitism is our fault.

Even asking that question to the Israeli ambassador to Sweden was itself an expression of the innate anti-Semitism that exists within the Scandinavian countries and in fact throughout Europe. It would be the height of racism to advance the theory that blacks are discriminated against in the United States because of the faults of individual blacks or even black society as a whole. Yet when it comes to Jews, people are willing to use such logic and ask such questions.

And it is always painful and ironic that many times it is Jews themselves that are the questioners and the perpetrators of anti-Semitic attitudes and even behavior. It is to be noted that the United States, the

United Nations and many other countries worldwide always find Jews to carry out their anti-Israel and anti-Jewish policies. The choice of these Jews provides the fig leaf that protects them from charges of blatant anti-Semitism. I advance no solutions that will lead to the eradication of anti-Semitism. But I can categorically state that this is not our fault nor is it justified by the behavior and state of Jewish society the world over

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Ethic of Holiness

With Tetzaveh something new enters Judaism: Torat cohanim, the world and mindset of the priest. Rapidly it became a central dimension of Judaism. It dominates the next book of the Torah, Vayikra. Until now, though, priests in the Torah have had a marginal presence.

For the first time in our parsha we encounter the idea of a hereditary elite within the Jewish people, Aaron and his male descendants, whose task was to minister in the sanctuary. For the first time we find the Torah speaking about robes of office: those of the priests and the high priest worn while officiating in the sacred place. For the first time too we encounter the phrase, used about the robes: lekavod ule-tiferet, "for glory and beauty." Until now kavod in the sense of glory or honour has been attributed only to God. As for tiferet, this is the first time it has appeared in the Torah. It opens up a whole dimension of Judaism, namely the aesthetic.

All these phenomena are related to the mishkan, the sanctuary, the subject of the preceding chapters. They emerge from the project of making a "home" for the infinite God within finite space. The question I want to ask here, though, is: do they have anything to do with morality? With the kind of lives the Israelites were called on to live and their relationships to one another? If so, how? And why does the priesthood appear specifically at this point in the story?

It is common to divide the religious life in Judaism into two dimensions. There was the priesthood and the sanctuary, and there were the prophets and the people. The priests focused on the relationship between the people and God, mitzvot bein adam la-Makom. Prophets focused on the relationship between the people and one another, mitzvot bein adam le-chavero. The priests supervised ritual and the prophets spoke about ethics. One group was concerned with holiness, the other with virtue. You don't need to be holy to be good. You need to be good to be holy, but that is an entrance requirement, not what being holy is about. Pharaoh's daughter

who rescued Moses when he was a baby, was good but not holy. These are two separate ideas.

In this essay I want to challenge that conception. The priesthood and the sanctuary made a moral difference, not just a spiritual one. Understanding how they did so is important not only to our understanding of history but also to how we lead our lives today. We can see this by looking at some important recent experimental work in the field of moral psychology.

Our starting point is American psychologist Jonathan Haidt and his book, *The Righteous Mind*. Haidt makes the point that in contemporary secular societies our range of moral sensibilities has become very narrow. He calls such societies WEIRD – Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic. They tend to see more traditional cultures as rigid, hidebound and repressive. People from those traditional cultures tend to see Westerners as weird in abandoning much of the richness of the moral life.

To take a non-moral example: A century ago in most British and American (non-Jewish) families, dining was a formal occasion. The family ate together and would not begin until everyone was at the table. They would begin with grace, thanking God for the food they were about to eat. There was an order in which people were served or served themselves. Conversation around the table was governed by conventions. There were things you might discuss and others deemed unsuitable.

Today that has changed completely. Many British homes do not have a dining table. A recent survey showed that half of all meals in Britain are eaten alone. The members of the family come in at different times, take a meal from the freezer, heat it in the microwave, and eat it watching a television or computer screen. That is not dining but serial grazing.

Haidt became interested in the fact that his American students reduced morality to two principles, one relating to harm, the other to fairness. On harm they thought like John Stuart Mill who said, that "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others." For Mill this was a political principle but it has become a moral one: if it doesn't harm others, we are morally entitled to do what we want.

The other principle is fairness. We don't all have the same idea of what is fair and what not, but we all

care about basic rules of justice: what is right for some should be right for all, do as you would be done to, don't bend the rules to your advantage and so on. Often the first moral sentence a young child utters is, "That's not fair." John Rawls formulated the best known modern statement of fairness: "Each person has an equal right to the most extensive liberties compatible with similar liberties for all."

Those are the ways WEIRD people think. If it's fair and does no harm, it is morally permissible. However — and this is Haidt's fundamental point — there are at least three other dimensions of the moral life as understood in non-WEIRD cultures throughout the world.

One is loyalty and its opposite, betrayal. Loyalty means that I am prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of my family, my team, my co-religionists and my fellow citizens, the groups that help make me the person I am. I take their interests seriously, not just my own.

Another is respect for authority and its opposite, subversion. Without this no institution is possible, perhaps no culture either. The Talmud illustrates this with a famous story about a would-be proselyte who came to Hillel and said, "Convert me to Judaism on condition that I accept only the Written Torah, not the Oral Torah." Hillel began to teach him Hebrew. The first day he taught him aleph-bet-gimmel. The next day he taught him gimmel-bet-aleph. The man protested, "Yesterday you taught me the opposite." Hillel replied, "You see, you have to rely on me even to learn the aleph-bet. Rely on me also about the Oral Torah." [1] Schools, armies, courts, professional associations, even sports, depend on respect for authority.

The third arises from the need to ring-fence certain values we regard as non-negotiable. They are not mine to do with as I wish. These are the things we call sacred, sacrosanct, not to be treated lightly or defiled.

Why are loyalty, respect and the sacred not how liberal elites think in the West? The most fundamental answer is that WEIRD societies define themselves as groups of autonomous individuals seeking to pursue their own interests with minimal interference from others. Each of us is a self-determining individual with our own wants, needs and desires. Society should let us pursue those desires as far as possible without interfering in our or other people's lives. To this end, we have developed principles of rights, liberty and justice that allow us peacefully to coexist. If an act is unfair or causes someone to suffer, we

are prepared to condemn it morally, but not otherwise.

Loyalty, respect and sanctity do not naturally thrive in secular societies based on market economics and liberal democratic politics. The market erodes loyalty. It invites us not to stay with the product we have used until now but to switch to one that is better, cheaper, faster, newer. Loyalty is the first victim of market capitalism's "creative destruction."

Respect for figures of authority — politicians, bankers, journalists, heads of corporations — has been falling for many decades. We are living through a loss of trust and the death of deference. Even the patient Hillel might have found it hard to deal with someone brought up on the creed of "We don't need no education, We don't need no thought control."

As for the sacred, that too has been lost. Marriage is no longer seen as a holy commitment, a covenant. At best it is viewed as a contract. Life itself is in danger of losing its sanctity with the spread of abortion on demand at the beginning and "assisted dying" at the end.

What makes loyalty, respect and sanctity key moral values is that they create a moral community as opposed to a group of autonomous individuals. Loyalty bonds the individual to the group. Respect creates structures of authority that allow people to function effectively as teams. Sanctity binds people together in a shared moral universe. The sacred is where we enter the realm of that-which-is-greater-than-the-self. The very act of gathering as a congregation can lift us into a sense of transcendence in which we merge our identity with that of the group.

Once we understand this distinction we can see how the moral universe of the Israelites changed over time. Abraham was chosen by God "so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the lord by doing what is right and just" (tzedakah umishpat). What his servant looked for when choosing a wife for Isaac was kindness, chessed. These are the key prophetic virtues. As Jeremiah said in God's name: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom, or the strong of their strength, or the rich of their wealth but let one who boasts, boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness (chessed mishpat u-tzedakah) on earth, for in these I delight" (Jer. 9: 23-24??).

Kindness is the equivalent of care which is the

opposite of harm. Justice and righteousness are specific forms of fairness. In other words the prophetic virtues are close to those that prevail today in the liberal democracies of the West. That is a measure of the impact of the Hebrew Bible on the West, but that is another story for another time. The point is that kindness and fairness are about relationships between individuals. Until Sinai, the Israelites were just individuals, albeit part of the same extended family that had undergone exodus and exile together.

After the revelation at Mount Sinai the Israelites were a covenanted people. They had a sovereign: God. They had a written constitution: the Torah. They had agreed to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Yet at the golden calf they showed that they had not yet understood what it is to be a nation. They were a mob. The Torah says, "Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies." That was the crisis to which the sanctuary and the priesthood were the answer. They turned Jews into a nation.

The service of the sanctuary performed by the cohanim in their robes worn le-kavod, "for honour," established the principle of respect. The mishkan itself embodied the principle of the sacred. Set in the middle of the camp, the Sanctuary and its service turned the Israelites into a circle at whose centre was God. And even though, after the destruction of the Second Temple, there was no more sanctuary or functioning priesthood, Jews found substitutes that performed the same function. What Torat cohanim brought into Judaism was the choreography of holiness and respect that helped Jews walk and dance together as a nation.

Two further research findings are relevant here. Richard Sosis analysed a series of voluntary communities set up by various groups in the course of the nineteenth century, some religious, some secular. He discovered that the religious communes had an average lifespan of more than four times longer than their secular counterparts. There is something about the religious dimension that turns out to be important, even essential, in sustaining community.

We now also know on the basis of considerable neuro-scientific evidence that we make our choices on the basis of emotion rather than reason. People whose emotional centres (specifically the ventromedial prefrontal cortex) have been damaged can analyse alternatives in great detail, but they can't make good decisions. One interesting experiment

revealed that academic books on ethics were more often stolen or never returned to libraries than books on other branches of philosophy.[2] Expertise in moral reasoning, in other words, does not necessarily make us more moral. Reason is often something we use to rationalise choices made on the basis of emotion.

That explains the presence of the aesthetic dimension of the service of the sanctuary. It had beauty, gravitas and majesty. In the time of the Temple it had music. There were choirs of Levites singing psalms. Beauty speaks to emotion and emotion to the soul, lifting us in ways reason cannot do to heights of love and awe, taking us above the narrow confines of the self into the circle at whose centre is God.

The sanctuary and priesthood introduced into Jewish life the ethic of kedushah, holiness, which strengthened the values of loyalty, respect and the sacred by creating an environment of reverence, the humility felt by the people once they had these symbols of the Divine presence in their midst. As Maimonides wrote in a famous passage in *The Guide for the Perplexed*,[3] We do not act when in the presence of a king as we do when we are merely in the company of friends or family. In the sanctuary people sensed they were in the presence of the King.

Reverence gives power to ritual, ceremony, social conventions and civilities. It helps transform autonomous individuals into a collectively responsible group. You cannot sustain a national identity or even a marriage without loyalty. You cannot socialise successive generations without respect for figures of authority. You cannot defend the non-negotiable value of human dignity without a sense of the sacred. That is why the prophetic ethic of justice and compassion, had to be supplemented with the priestly ethic of holiness.

[1] Shabbat 31a.

[2] Haidt, 89.

[3] Guide, III: 51.

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