

Kol Rina  
*An Independent Minyan*  
Parashat Tetzaveh  
February 24, 2024 \*\*\* 15 Adar I, 5784

Tetzaveh in a Nutshell

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/1320/jewish/Tetzaveh-in-a-Nutshell.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1320/jewish/Tetzaveh-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

The name of the Parshah, "Tetzaveh," means "Command" and it is found in Exodus 27:20.

G-d tells Moses to receive from the children of Israel pure olive oil to feed the "everlasting flame" of the menorah, which Aaron is to kindle each day, "from evening till morning."

The priestly garments, to be worn by the kohanim (priests) while serving in the Sanctuary, are described. All kohanim wore: 1) the ketonet—a full-length linen tunic; 2) michnasayim—linen breeches; 3) mitznefet or migba'at—a linen turban; 4) avnet—a long sash wound above the waist.

In addition, the kohen gadol (high priest) wore: 5) the efod—an apron-like garment made of blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool, linen and gold thread; 6) the choshen—a breastplate containing twelve precious stones inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; 7) the me'il—a cloak of blue wool, with gold bells and decorative pomegranates on its hem; 8) the tzitz—a golden plate worn on the forehead, bearing the inscription "Holy to G-d."

Tetzaveh also includes G-d's detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons—Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar—into the priesthood, and for the making of the golden altar, on which the ketoret (incense) was burned.

Haftarah in a Nutshell: Ezekiel 43: 10 -27

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/819846/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/819846/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

In this week's *haftarah*, the prophet Ezekiel describes a vision of the altar that will be built for the third Holy Temple and its dedication ceremony—paralleling this week's Torah portion which discusses the dedication of the Tabernacle's altar.

Shortly after the destruction of the first Temple, Ezekiel experienced a vision of the third Holy Temple that will be built by the Messiah. G-d tells Ezekiel to recount to the Jewish people this vision, and this hopefully will bring them to be ashamed of the deeds they did that caused the destruction of the Temple. "And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, let them know the form of the House and its scheme, its exits and its entrances, and all its forms, and all its laws and all its teachings..."

Ezekiel then goes on to describe in detail the third Temple's altar, and also describes its seven-day inauguration ceremony and the offerings which will be brought on each day of that special week.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Leadership Means Making Space by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

<https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/tetzaveh/leadership-means-making-space/>

Tetzaveh is, as is well known, the parsha in which for once Moses take second place. In fact, he is not mentioned by name at all, and all the focus is on his brother, Aaron, and on the role he came to occupy and personify, that of High Priest, the Kohen Gadol.

There are many conjectures as to why this went to Aaron as opposed to Moses himself, the most obvious being that this was Moses' punishment for refusing one time too many God's request that he lead the Israelites.

And Moses said, "Pardon Your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and He said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, he will be your spokesman, and you will be his guide. Ex. 4:13-16

There is, though, a deeper message, the principle of the separation of powers, which opposes the concentration of leadership into one person or institution. All human authority needs checks and balances if it is to remain uncorrupted. In particular, political and religious leadership, *keter malchut* and *keter kehunah*, should never be combined. Moses wore the crowns of political and prophetic leadership, Aaron that of priesthood. The division allowed each to be a check on the other.

That is the theory. What is especially interesting is how this works out in terms of personal relationships, in this case that between the two brothers, Moses and Aaron. The Torah says relatively little about their family dynamic, but the hints are fascinating.

Consider, first of all, the passage we've just seen from near the beginning of the book of Exodus, when God tells Moses that Aaron is "already on his way to meet

you, and *he will be glad to see you.*" These sound like simple words, but in reality they are far from common.

Moses was Aaron's younger brother, three years his junior. Would it not have been natural for Aaron to be more than a little envious that his younger brother was about to become the leader he himself was not destined to be – all the more so since Moses had not spent his life among his people. He had been, first, an adopted prince of Egypt, and had then taken refuge with Yitro and the Midianites. Relative to Aaron, Moses, his younger brother, was also an outsider.

Yet God says, "He will be glad to see you."

Aaron's ability to rejoice in his brother's rise to greatness is particularly striking when set against the entire biblical history of the relationship between brothers thus far. It has been a set of variations on the theme of sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. The Psalm says:

"How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together." *Ps. 133:1*

And in response, reading Bereishit, we are likely to add, "and how rare."

But now comes the second test, this time not of Aaron but of Moses. Moses is now being commanded to create a form of leadership he himself will never be able to exercise, that of the priesthood, and the person he must award it to is his elder brother. Can he do so with the same generosity of spirit that his brother showed toward him?

Note how the Torah emphasises God's insistence that it be Moses who bestows this honour on Aaron.

Three times the word *ve-atah*, "And you," is used early on in the parsha:

"*And you* shall command the Israelites to bring you pure oil" (for the Menorah that Aaron and his sons would keep alight). *Ex. 27:20*

"*And you* shall draw your brother Aaron and his sons close to you to serve Me as priests – Aaron and his sons Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar. Make sacred vestments for *your brother Aaron, for glory and for splendour.*" *Ex. 28:1-2*

"*And you* shall speak to all the skilled craftsmen whom I have endowed with a spirit of wisdom, and ask them to make Aaron's vestments; these will consecrate him to serve Me as priest." *Ex. 28:3*

Moses must show the people – and Aaron himself – that he has the humility,

the *tzimtzum*, the power of self-effacement, needed to make space for someone else to share in the leadership of the people. Someone whose strengths are not his, whose role is different from his, someone who may be more popular, closer to the people, than Moses is – as in fact Aaron turned out to be.

It's rare for a leader to be able to share the spotlight so generously. In 2005 the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin published an influential book about Abraham Lincoln entitled *Team of Rivals*. In it she tells the story of how Lincoln appointed to his cabinet the three men who had opposed him as candidate for the Republican party leadership. William Henry Seward, who had been expected to win, eventually said of him, "His magnanimity is almost superhuman . . . the President is the best of us."

It takes a special kind of character to make space for those whom one is entitled to see as rivals. Early on, Aaron showed that character in relation to Moses, and now Moses is called on to show it to Aaron.

True leadership involves humility and magnanimity. The smaller the ego, the greater the leader. That's what Moses showed in the parsha that does not mention his name.

### Is the Temple or the Tabernacle More Central to Judaism...Parashat Tetzaveh by Professor David Frankel

<https://schechter.edu/is-the-temple-or-the-tabernacle-more-central-to-judaism-parashat-tetzave/>

This week's parasha is parasha Tetzave. It continues to deal with the construction of the *Mishkan*, of the tabernacle that served the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan as a place of worship and cultic ritual.

So what is the *Mishkan* and what is the significance of the *Mishkan*?

This comes together with another question we might ask about the parashah, and really about the entire Torah as a whole. And that is the question, or the fact, that the Temple and the construction of a Temple is never commanded in the entire Torah.

The rabbis, who wanted to believe that building a Temple is a mitzvah, based their interpretation of this mitzvah on the parashot of the building of the *Mishkan*, where it says

ועשו לי מקדש

They shall make for me a temple or a sanctuary

ושכנתי בתוכם

So that I may dwell in them. (Exodus 25:8)

But it is clear that that is not a command to build a Temple! It is actually just a command to build a *Mishkan*, which is a one-time phenomenon that lasted 40 years.

So the question that I would like to raise is, why is there no command to build a Temple?

The answer, I believe, is found in the book II Samuel.

In the book of II Samuel, David is pondering his great house he had just built for himself and he decides it is time to build God a Temple.

Then God responds in a surprising way in the book of II Samuel, Chapter 7. God responds and says, "Shall you build me a house? I have never dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up out from the land of Egypt until this very day. I went about in a Tent and in a Tabernacle."

בכל אשר התהלכתי (II Samuel 7: 7)

"Throughout all my journeys with the children of Israel did I once tell any of the leaders of Israel saying, Why have you not built me a Temple?

NO."

This is a very startling response from God to David's very earnest request and desire to build a Temple. This passage is usually ignored, and I would like to spend just a few minutes contemplating its meaning.

Here we have an unusual Biblical passage which seems to actually consider the temple an undesirable institution. In spite of the fact that it is celebrated so often in other parts of the Bible, here it is clear that it is not what God wanted.

What did God want? He said well?? All the time from the Exodus what have I commanded, what have I used? A Tent and a Tabernacle, אהל ומשכן, that is what God really wants. Why?

One explanation is that a temple is solid, secure, immovable, and intransigent. That gives a sense that we know exactly where God is, and we can always know that he is with us. If he is with us, we are invincible.

God says NO.

I don't want a house. I don't want to give you that sense that you know where I am and who I am. I am the elusive God. I am the God that moves, that cannot be pinned down. Therefore, also, don't use me as a crutch. Don't feel that since you have my presence in some way, you can rely on being invincible and indestructible.

God teaches us in the book of Samuel and in the parasaha that his real presence is the presence of a *Mishkan*. It is the elusive, moving God that cannot be pinned down that is with us when he is with us; and that we may never and must never use the sense of God's presence as a foundation for overconfidence, because God can never be pinned down and we must always live humbly with God.

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*Jerusalem under the direction of Prof. Moshe Weinfeld. His publications include "The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School," and "The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel." From 1991 to 1996, Frankel was rabbi of Congregation Shevet Achim in Gilo, Jerusalem.)*

### Tetzaveh: From Death to Life by Aryeh Fingerer

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/parsha-knowledge/parshas-tetzaveh-from-death-to-life/2024/02/22/>

In this week's Parsha (28:4), we learn about the ornaments and vestments that were worn by Aharon the kohen Gadol in his service to Hashem. One of the articles that he wore was the choshen, the breastplate, which he wore on his heart. Inscribed on the breastplate were the names of each of the twelve tribes representing the Jewish people, symbolizing the fact that a leader holds his people near and close to his heart.

However, there was another piece of clothing called the eifod, and on the eifod were shoulder straps. Emblazoned and inscribed on the shoulder straps were the names of each of the twelve tribes again. There is a question here. Was it not enough for Aharon to have the Jewish people on his heart? Why the shoulders too?

I heard from my father Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the Be'er Mayim Chaim answers so beautifully that no, it's not sufficient to hold someone close to your heart. Sometimes, you've got to lift the person. Sometimes you've got to raise the person. There are some people that are drowning physically or spiritually who need to be saved.

How do you save someone? Firefighters, soldiers, and lifeguards put the person on their shoulders. To save someone you've got to raise them up. You've got to lift them. You've got to elevate them. You've got to take them and change them.

In South America, there was a slaughterhouse – a massive operation and one night the boss came in and asked the security guard why he hadn't yet locked up the facilities. The security guard replied that not everyone had left. The boss said, "What do you mean? I walked through the whole plant and it's a ghost town. No one is here. It's empty!

The security guard said it's not empty. The boss asked the guard who he thought may still be in there and the guard replied, "The Rabbi, the Mashgiach (head of kosher supervision) is still in there. The Rabbi worked here for 23 years and as long as he's worked here for 23 years, and when he left for the night he always said to me ¡Buenas noches! (have a good evening). He always took an interest in me and smiled at me. Tonight, the rabbi did not say ¡Buenas noches¡. Tonight, the rabbi did not wish me a good evening. That means that he is still here". The boss replied, "Listen, I checked and it's empty. Lock up the place! The guard said, "I

refuse to!"

The guard went and started to check. He went from room to room until he finally went down to the freezers, and he heard moaning and groaning. He opened the freezer and he saw the rabbi – he had hypothermia and was frozen on his last breath. He was almost dead. He had gotten locked in the freezer. The guard called medical personnel and they resuscitated and revived the rabbi. The rabbi's life was saved and Baruch Hashem he was able to return to his beautiful family.

Why was his life saved? Because he treated the security guard as someone important. He treated the guard as someone elevated! He cared about him; he didn't only have him on his heart but also on his shoulders. He treated the guard as someone special and unique. That's what we must try to do. Instead of holding someone close to your heart, sometimes you must put them on your shoulders. You must raise them up. Sometimes you've got to save them! (*Aryeh is the publisher of Parsha Knowledge, a weekly newsletter with Torah thoughts, stories, and inspiration on the weekly Parsha. Visit [www.parshaknowledge.com](http://www.parshaknowledge.com) )*

### [Clothing for the Soul by Avraham Levitt](https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/clothing-for-the-soul/2024/02/22/)

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/clothing-for-the-soul/2024/02/22/>

Last week we saw in Rimzei HaMishkan of the Malbim how the structure of the Mishkan corresponds to the form of the human being and the universe interchangeably. We will, G-d-willing, develop these ideas further next week. In this week's parsha, Tetzaveh, we learn about the special garments worn by the kohanim as they serve in the Mishkan. Malbim teaches that just as the "external" (i.e., physical) body must be clothed in garments, so the "internal" forms (the life force, spirit, or soul) wear "clothing" that protects us against moral corruption.

The Gemara in Zevachim (88b; see also Arachin) correlates each of these special garments to a negative attribute or transgression. The specific language of the Gemara indicates that the garment "atones for" – literally expiates liability for – violating the various transgressions, but it can also be understood as a corrective to the underlying defect. That is how the Malbim reads this Gemara. Consistent with the theme of "garments for the soul," he explains how each special article represents in its physical form (the externality) mechanisms for how these defects are tamed in the living spirit (internally).

The worst violations of Torah law, corresponding to defects in the underlying character of the perpetrator, are three crimes due to which the first Beit HaMikdash was destroyed and which Rambam famously decreed one must be martyred for rather than violate: wanton bloodshed (i.e., murder), fornication, and idolatry. To these the Gemara added the following character

defects to be atoned for by the garments of the kohen: crudeness, inconstancy (or susceptibility to temptation), being judgmental, gossiping, and haughtiness.

There are four garments worn by every kohen while performing his designated service, regardless of his particular role. Malbim associates these with the "animal spirit" that represents our baser motives and appetites and regarding which there is little distinction between humans and animals. These four garments "clothe" the animal spirit so that it won't violate the precepts susceptible to our baser nature.

The michnesayim (pants) cover the parts of the body that must remain covered and correct the temptation to engage in forbidden relations. The ketonet (tunic) is another garment that goes directly over the body, and it covers the torso which is the seat of the anger that might lead to bloodshed and murder.

The heart itself is "bound" by the avnet, or sash, wound around the upper body. The length of the avnet is 32 cubits, the numerical value of lev, the Hebrew word for heart. In this way, the impulses of the heart are constrained, mitigating the impetus to inconstancy, applied here by Malbim to (for example) jealousy, covetousness, and self-aggrandizement.

But the self-aggrandizement born in the heart also has a tendency to corrupt the mind and to bring one to expressions of haughtiness. Therefore, the kohen also wraps a sort of sash around his head in the form of a turban, the mitznefet. The idea of covering one's head is prevalent in Judaism generally, not limited to kohanim. It is a way of reminding us always that there is something above us. Malbim points out that the length of the mitznefet is 16 cubits because the Divine Chariot is drawn by four "beasts," each of which has four faces, for a total of 16 faces among these celestial entities who serve Hashem on high.

The special garments of the Kohen Gadol are designed to "atone for," or correct, the flaws that are unique to us as thinking, speaking beings. Even and especially in the aspects of our nature that are created in the Divine image, there are areas where we fail to fulfill our potential – or worse, desecrate that very image in which we are made. Thus, the Kohen Gadol wears a special coat with bells and pomegranates on the hem. The bells tinkle as he walks, reminding all who hear him not to be gossips, while the pomegranates have 613 seeds to demonstrate that we must use our power of speech only to serve Hashem and to fulfill His commandments, never to defy them.

Over the coat he wears the efod, a sort of vest or girdle incorporating two engraved stones on his shoulders with the letters of the names of the tribes of Israel. This garment emphasizes the distinction of Israel as separated from among the nations of the world and our concomitant responsibility to avoid their prohibited spiritual practices. Each stone had 25 letters engraved on it,



corresponding to the 25 letters of Shema on one side and the 25 letters of "Baruch Shem Kevod..." on the other. The efod is thus a corrective against idolatry.

Because Israel is distinct and uniquely sanctified, and because we have been set apart from the other nations of the world, we must maintain the highest level of integrity in the judgment of others and especially preserve the unity among ourselves. Our judges must always be beyond reproach. These characteristics are amplified by the choshen, the breastplate, also called the Choshen Mishpat, the breastplate of lawfulness.

Finally, as the Kohen Gadol has been singled out and given honor above that of his fellow kohanim, let alone of the rest of Israel and of humanity, it is necessary for him to always have a reminder of what he remains truly: a human being and a public and Divine servant. He must not exhibit the haughtiness that the mitznefet is meant to correct, but he must also take care not to speak crudely or abusively to his fellow. Upon the tzitz that rests upon his brow above his eyes is written the four-letter name of Hashem. By this the Kohen Gadol is reminded that when he serves in the Mishkan and the special garments are upon his body, he is a designated emissary of Hashem and his interactions with everyone must always be worthy of this status.

Just as his external body is adorned thus, so must his internal essence reflect the qualities demonstrated by the garments he wears. *(Avraham Levitt is a poet and philosopher living in Philadelphia. He writes chiefly about Jewish art and mysticism. His most recent poem is called "Great Floods Cannot Extinguish the Love." It can be read at [redemptionmedia.net/creation](http://redemptionmedia.net/creation). He can be reached by email at [avraham@thegeula.com](mailto:avraham@thegeula.com).)*

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### Yahrtzeits

Amy Cooper remembers her father Norman Pearlman on Sunday, February 25th