



THE CHEVRA

Young Israel of Fair Lawn
The Morris J. Kraut z'l Torah Center

Joe Smith - President

This Shabbat:

Shabbat Parashat Tetzavve Parashat Zachor

13 Adar, 5767, March 2, 3 - 2007

The Haftorah for Parshas Zachor is from
Samuel I 15:2-34

Friday

Candle Lighting 5: 30 PM
Mincha 5: 35 PM

Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM
Shacharit 9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9: 18 AM (Gra"h)

Mincha 5: 25 PM
Shabbat Ends 6: 31 PM
Megilah Reading: 7:30 PM

Sunday Shacharit 8:30 AM
Megilah Reading 9:00 AM (approximately)

Monday-Friday Shacharit 7:00 AM

Parahat Zachor

"Zachor Et Asher Asa Lecha Amalek
BaDerech Betzetchem MiMitzrayim"

"Remember what Amalek did to you on
your way out of Egypt! (Dvarim 25)"
There is a mitzvah in the Torah to
remember Amalek and his descendants
and to orally recall their iniquity.

Daily Minyan

Our daily Minyan is at 7:00 AM.
Sunday Minyan is at 8:30 AM.
Please help us with the Minyan. Any
day(s) you could come to help would be
greatly appreciated.

Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat
TeTzaveh/Purim
Exodus 27:20-30:10

By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – A number of
questions beg to be asked relating
both to the Biblical portion of the
week as well as to the festival of
Purim, which takes place both
before (Ta'anit Esther, the fast of
Esther, on Thursday) and
immediately following the Sabbath
of TeTzaveh (Saturday night and
Sunday being the time when we
read the Esther Scroll and
participate in all of the
concomitant festivities and acts of
loving kindness). Firstly, in the
Biblical portion why the emphasis
on the various garments worn by
the priests (from special
vestments) and the High Priest
(eight special vestments). If "The
Merciful One desires the heart,"
why such significance made about
external garb?! Secondly – and
also concerning dress – a very
difficult gloss of Rav Moshe
Isserless (16th Century Ashkenazi
decisor) relating to the laws of
Purim says as follows:

"Concerning the custom to wear
costumes on Purim ("false faces,"
partzufim) and for men to dress in
women's clothing, there is no
prohibition of this conduct. Their
intent is merely for the sake of
rejoicing" (Shulhan Arukh, Orah
Haim, end of 696).

Now why should Purim rejoicing
outweigh the Biblical prohibition of
men dressing in women's garb? Is
masquerading – dressing like
someone else – so central to the
festivities of Purim?

In order to understand our Sages,
I believe it is necessary to go back
to the very first Biblical personality
who masqueraded: Father Jacob,
who dressed in the garb of his
elder brother Esau (Gen 27:
15,16) in order to receive his
father's blessing. What would
cause Jacob, Biblically described
as a "wholehearted individual, a
studious tent dweller" (25:27) to
don the aggressive and out-door
garb of Esau? The truth is because
Jacob wanted to become Esau,
because Jacob's naive,
introspective and serious
personality had been rejected by
his father in favor of the more
extroverted, silver – tongued ("His
entrapment was in his mouth"
25:28) and materialistic-minded
Esau. Jacob wanted to become
Esau because Jacob yearned for
his father's love and embrace!

Jacob assumed a masquerade of
the other – and, as happens so
very often when someone
masquerades, that individual
becomes the other, forsaking his
true and essential self; Jacob
forsook his pure, whole-hearted
self which was the truest
expression of the Divine spark
within him and exchanged it for
the outer garb of Esau. And so the
Jacob we watch in action for the

more than two decades he spent with his Uncle Laban became an accomplished and aggressive businessman – herdsman, a materially successful cattleman who knew very well how to look out for “number one”. The outer garb of Esau quickly replaced the inner voice of Jacob.

Perhaps this is why our English word “personality,” or “persona,” comes from the Latin which means mask; many of us begin to continually wear the masks with which we masquerade, forsake our essential and truest selves for those whom we are pretending to be. And in this sense, Judaism would demand that external clothes do not necessarily make the man, but – very often, - clothes fake the man. That’s why the Hebrew begged or garment comes from a root verb which means to deceive, and the Hebrew me’il, which means outer cloak, comes from a root verb which means to embezzle.

From this perspective, we can better understand the characters of the Esther Chronicle. Jews in exile, especially Jews who wish to be part of the Gentile class of their host country, often masquerade or assimilate, appearing to be as Gentile as possible. Hence Esther, whose real Hebrew name was Hadassah (a myrtle branch, which blooms even in the desert) was the Gentile sobriquet – or external calling card, as is were- Esther, from the Persian goddess Astarte; Mordecai assumes the Persian Marduk. Esther hides her true self – her Jewish identity – by not revealing her nation or her homeland (Esther 2:10). She spends twelve months in preparation for her nocturnal meeting with Ahashverosh, being externally perfumed and cosmeticized so that her wholesome and pure body be “masked over” with all sorts of external fragrances. When she

ascends to her lofty majestic position, she certainly does not dress as a Jewess would or reveal in any way her true identity. In like manner, “Mordecai told the courtiers that he was Jewish “ (Esther 3:4) in order to explain his refusal to bow down to Haman. Obviously he did not dress as a Jew with phylacteries and ritual fringes; if he had, he wouldn’t have had to inform them of his Jewish ancestry. Esther and Mordecai began as masquerading Persians in order to retain and maintain positions of influence within the Persian Magisterial Court.

Remember, however that just as the masquerader puts on a false exterior façade, from which comes our English “face,” the Hebrew word for face is panim, which literally means the internal (self), the true and interior being. Similarly, although Exile by its very nature encourages assimilation and masquerade, nevertheless, the Hebrew word galut actually means to reveal or uncover, and – as the Bible guarantees – there will always come the moment of truth in which the assimilated Jew will return to his true self and re-establish his deepest roots in his homeland (Gen. 15:16, Ex 1:7,8: Lev.26:44,45). The masquerading Jew will either come to himself by throwing off his masquerade in a profound moment of repentance, as when Jacob succeeded in exorcizing the spirit and envy of Esau from within himself and returned to “whole” to his ancestral home and homeland as Yisrael (he strove against beings divine and human, and he prevailed Gen 32:29), or as when an anti- Semite such as Haman forced a moment of truth upon Mordecai and Esther, and they decided in favor of their truest selves as Jews ready to risk their lives for their people and their G-d. At the end of the day, the

masquerade falls to the ground and the true Jew must re-discover himself.

Now we understand why so much attention is paid to the garb of the Priests, with their emphasis of the twelve tribes and their statement on the High Priest’s forehead turban, “holy unto the Lord”: the outer garb of the sacred ministers of the Temple must reflect their inner sanctity and mission, the very antithesis of the initial Purim masquerade, when neither Esther nor Mordecai appeared to be who they really were. And our commandment to drink on Purim reflects our faith that even under the influence of large quantities of wine drunk by the Persian aristocrats, the true Jew will emerge with words of Torah and praise to G-d as did Mordecai and Esther.

Shabbat Shalom

Shlomo Riskin

Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone
Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel