

# ספר תדש ימינו פקדם

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We are blessed to offer here our fourth commentary on the Hanukah blessings. We first analyzed the thirteen words of the first blessing and related them to the 13 attributes of mercy

[ אֵל (א) רַחוּם (ב) וְחַנוּן (ג) אֶרֶךְ (ד) אַפַּיִם (ה) וְרַב חֶסֶד (ו) וְאֱמֶת: (ז) נֹצֵר חֶסֶד (ח) לְאֶלְפִים (י) נִשְׂאָה (יא) עֵוֹן (יב) וְחַטָּאָה (יג) וְנִקְיָה ] .

The next year we examined each day of Hanukah as it pertained to their mystical sefirotic correlations. And last year we did a similar analysis for the *Al Nissim* prayer [the 2nd prayer], corresponding each day to the miracles in our lives. This year we intend with Gd's help to take the *Sheheheyanu* prayer said on the first night one lights candles and apply it [without saying it!] to each of the remaining seven (7) nights of Hanukah.

Why?

The *Sheheheyanu* blessing (שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ "Who has given us life") is a common prayer said to celebrate special occasions. It is said to be thankful for new and unusual experiences. The blessing has been recited by Jews for nearly 2000 years. It comes from the Talmud (Berachot 54a, Pesakhim 7b, Sukkah 46a, etc.)

Hebrew	English	Transliteration
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי	Blessed are You, L-rd	<i>Baruch atta Adonai</i>
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ	our G-d, Ruler of the	<i>Eloheinu melekh</i>
הָעוֹלָם	Universe,	<i>ha'olam</i>
שֶׁהָחַיְנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ	who has granted us life,	<i>she-echeyanu</i>
	sustained us	<i>ve'qiye'manu</i>
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן	and	<i>va'higiy'anu laz'man</i>
הַזֶּה:	enabled us to reach this	<i>hazeh</i>
	occasion.	

Here's the famous Ashkenazic melody:

- [MP3 file](#) -

Before lighting the candles on the first night of Hanukah, Rav Eli Mansour writes that we recite the Beracha of “*Shehehiyanu*” in addition to the two Berachot recited on every night of the holiday. If a person did not, for whatever reason, recite this Beracha on the first night, then he recites “*Shehehiyanu*” when he lights the candles on the second night, or on whichever night he remembers. The Tur (Rabbi Yaakov Ben Asher, 1270-1340), citing his father, the Rosh (Rabbenu Asher Ben Yehiel, 1250-1327), addresses the similar case of a person who was away home on the first night of Hanukah, and was unable to light the Hanukah candles until the second night (listen to audio recording for precise citation). In such a case, the Tur writes, the individual recites “*Shehehiyanu*” on the second night. Similarly, one who lit the Hanukah candles on the first night but forgot to recite “*Shehehiyanu*” should recite this Beracha when he lights on the second night.

[If a person forgot to recite “*Shehehiyanu*” on all of the eight nights of Hanukah, and remembers on the eighth day, should he recite “*Shehehiyanu*” at that point? This issue hinges on the question of whether the recitation of “*Shehehiyanu*” on Hanukah relates specifically to the Mitzva of lighting the candles, or also to the occasion of Hanukah. On Yom Tob, the Beracha of “*Shehehiyanu*” which we recite at Kiddush refers not merely to the Mitzva of Kiddush, but rather to the occasion of Yom Tob. Therefore, a person who forgot to recite “*Shehehiyanu*” at Kiddush recites it at whichever point during Yom Tob he remembers, wherever he is, even in the street. Regarding Hanukah, however, one might argue that the Beracha is recited specifically in reference to the Mitzva of lighting the Hanukah candles, such that if one remembered to recite the Beracha after lighting the candles on the eighth night, he may no longer recite the Beracha. The Meiri (Rav Menahem Meiri, France, 13th century) compared Hanukah to Yom Tob in this regard, and therefore, in his view, a person in the case described above would recite “*Shehehiyanu*” on the eighth day of Hanukah. This is the view taken by the Mishna Berura (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1895-1933), in his Sha’ar Ha’siyun (676:3). Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, cites other authorities who disagreed, and maintained that the Beracha of “*Shehehiyanu*” on Hanukah may be recited only at the time of lighting the candles. He thus applies to this case the rule of “*Safek Berachot Le’hakel*” – we do not recite a Beracha if its requirement is subject to doubt – and maintains that one should not recite “*Shehehiyanu*” in such a case. adapted from R. Eli Mansour]

One would not be permitted to say *Shehehiyanu* every night, for it would constitute a vain prayer. On the other hand, there is certainly a "newness"

aspect to every night as we see the light getting stronger and stronger while candles are added nightly. And according to the mystic tradition, each night has a different--even a "new" energy--from the previous. It is to this "new" energy that we give our attention in the present work.

### **Mystical Unifications for the Blessings**

There are special *Kavanot*/mystical intentions for each of the three blessings said on the first night, intentions involving *yichudim*/unifications.

[http://www.armoni.info/modules.php?name=kavanot&d\\_op=viewkavana&cid=48](http://www.armoni.info/modules.php?name=kavanot&d_op=viewkavana&cid=48)

The first prayer we unite Shem Ab and Shem KaSA:

יוד אלף הי הי ויו יוד הי הי

The second prayer we unite Shem Sag and Shem Elokim:

יוד א הי ל ואו ה הי ים

The third prayer (*Shehehiyanu*) we unite Shem Mah and Shem Adanut:

יוד א הא ד ואו נ הא י

But wait! How do we do the third unification when we don't say the *Shehehiyanu* prayer past the first night?

According to the Rashash, we intend the unification when we say the second prayer after the first night.

That tells me that in some sense the *Shehehiyanu* energy is present--albeit through the third unification--on every night.

And that is the jumping off/starting point for our current project **סֵפֶר חֲדָשׁ יְמֵינוּ** **פְּקֻדִים** *Sefer Chadash Yamenu K'Kedem*, renew our days as of old.

We want to renew our days daily during Hanukah, ideally to cleanse ourself completely, like **יְמֵינוּ פְּקֻדִים** the ancient days before the sin of Adam!

### **Hanukah and Sukkot(adapted from Sichos in English)**

***"They celebrated a festival to Hashem for eight days, just as the days of the Sukkot festival." (Sefer Hasmonean II, 10:9)***

So, what do *Sukkot* and *Hanukah* have in common?

According to a *Midrash* the Greeks issued a decree forbidding the Jews to observe the *Sukkot* festival, and they were unable to bring the sacrificial offerings of *Sukkot* in the *Beit Hamikdash*. Hence, Hashem said, "You wanted to abolish the eight days of *Sukkot*; I will therefore give them an additional festive period of eight days - *Hanukah*."

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Alternatively, in *Humash Vayikra*, there is a listing of all the festivals of the year, concluding with *Sukkot*. This is followed immediately by the *Parshah* in which Hashem says to Moshe, "Command the Children of Israel that they take to you pure olive oil, to kindle a lamp continually," (23:1-44, 24:14). The juxtaposition of *Sukkot* to olive oil is an indication that on the eighth day of *Hanukah* we recite the entire *Hallel*, just as it is said in its entirety all the eight days of *Sukkot*.

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Alternatively, the *Beit Yosef* (*Tur, Orah Haim* 417) writes in the name of his brother Rabbi Yehudah that the three festivals *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* correspond to the patriarchs Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

When the angels visited Avraham, he told Sarah, "*Hurry! Three se'ahs of meal, fine flour! Knead it and make cakes!*" (*Bereishit* 18:6). The visit took place on *Pesach* (see Rashi, *ibid.* 18:10), and the cakes she baked were actually *matzot*. Since it was *Pesach*, he wanted her to prepare the dough herself to guard against leavening (*Alshich*). *Shavuot* commemorates the giving of the Torah and corresponds to Yitzhak because it was heralded by the blast of the *shofar*, which came from the ram which was offered in his stead (*Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer*, 31). *Sukkot* is for Yaakov, as the *pasuk* says, "*Yaakov journeyed to Sukkot and built himself a house, and for his livestock he made shelters; he therefore called the name of the place 'Sukkot'*" (*ibid.* 33:17).

The name "Yaakov" has the numerical value of one hundred and eighty-two. Since *Sukkot* is in his honor, one hundred and eighty-two sacrifices were offered during the festival.

The three patriarchs were prototypes of the three things (Torah, service [of G-d], and deeds of kindness) upon which the world stands. Avraham was the prototype of *Gemilut Hassadim*, Yitzchak represents *Avodah* - sacrifice and prayer, and Yaakov, who is described in the Torah as "*A wholesome man, abiding in the tents* [the *yeshivot* of Shem and Eiver (*Bereishit*, 25:22, Rashi)]," is the prototype of Torah.

The Greeks endeavored to detach the Jews from Torah study, which is compared to light, and have them pursue secular knowledge. *Hanukah*, which is connected with light, is thus the holiday in which we celebrate our renewed opportunity to engage in Torah study. So *Sukkot*, which is the festival associated with Yaakov (the prototype of Torah), is most compatible with *Hanukah*, the festival which commemorates our salvation from those who wanted to make us forget Torah.

### **Increase in Holiness**

One *Amora* said that *Beit Shammai's* reason for requiring a continual decrease from eight lights to one corresponds to the bull sacrifices of *Sukkot*, and *Beit*

*Hillel's* reason for requiring a continual increase from one to eight is that in sacred matters we increase and do not decrease." (*Shabbat* 21b)

The rule of "*ma'alin bekodesh*" - [in sacred matters] we increase" - is mentioned many times in *Gemara* and is a widely accepted rule. This also indicates the *Shehehiyanu* energy of Hanukah, for just like Sukkot the full Hallel is said since every day being different is like a separate Yom Tov, on Hanukah we can intend [but not recite] the third *yihud* mentioned above to commemorate the increase in light, and the difference in each night's lighting.

### **Zot Hanukah**

The eighth day of Hanukah is called "*Zot Hanukah*" after the daily Torah reading. Rejoicing on "*Zot Hanukah*" is a *minhag* of the Baal Shem Tov observed by many Chassidim. (Cf. *Likkutei MaHaRiCH, Seder Dinei u'Minhagei Hanukah*, p. 714) Teachings of Kabbalah and Hasidism explain that *Zot Hanukkah* is a day to repent similar to Yom Kippur celebration.

It is the final day in which to do teshuva, following Yom HaKippurim and Hoshana Rabba, the last chance to get a negative decree dissolved.

This "*Zot*" corresponds to **בְּזֹאת** יבא אֱהָרֹן, אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ the "*Zot*" that Aharon would bring into the Holy of Holies on Yom HaKippurim, the day of at-onement. *Zot* has gematria 408, which is 3 times 136, 136 standing each for *Tzom*/fasting, *Kol*/prayer, and *Mamon*/charity, the three things to nullify an evil decree. Instead of chest beating, be a Hassid and dance! After all Aharon the Kohen corresponds to the Man of Hesed, lovingkindness, and it is to he and his vestments do we now turn our attention.

### **The Eight Garments of the Kohen Gadol/High Priest**(adapted from Third Temple Institute and wikipedia.com)



## PRIESTLY GARMENTS

OF THE HIGH PRIEST & THE ORDINARY PRIESTS



The Torah provides for specific vestments to be worn by the priests when they are ministering in the Tabernacle: "*And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for dignity and for beauty*" (Exodus 28:2). These garments are described in detail in Exodus 28, Exodus 39 and Leviticus 8. The high priest wore eight holy garments (*bigdei kodesh*). Of these, four were of the same type worn by all priests, and four were unique to the Kohen Gadol.

Here are the main texts from Exodus 28:

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶם וּמְעִיל, וְכִתְנֵת תְּשֻׁבֵץ, מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט; וְעָשׂוּ בְגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחָיֶה, וּלְבָנָיו-- לְכַהֵנוֹ-לִי.

**4** And these are the garments which they shall make: a **breastplate**, and an **ephod**, and a **robe**, and a **tunic** of chequer work, a **mitre**, and a **girdle**; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיָּן, זָהָב טָהוֹר; וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו פְּתוּחֵי חֹתֶם, קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה.

**36** And you shall make a **plate** of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet: *Holy to Hashem*.

וְעָשִׂיהָ לָהֶם מְכֻנְסֵי-בָד, לְכַסּוֹת בָּשָׂר עָרְוָה; מִמְתְּנֵי וְעַד-יָרְכָבִים, יִהְיוּ.

**42** And you shall make them **linen breeches** to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach

Those vestments which were common to all priests, were:

- Priestly undergarments (Hebrew *michnasayim*) (breeches)—linen pants reaching from the waist to the knees "to cover their nakedness" (Exodus 28:42)
- Priestly tunic (Hebrew *ketonet*) (tunic)—made of pure linen, covering the entire body from the neck to the feet, with sleeves reaching to the wrists. That of the High Priest was embroidered (Exodus 28:39); those of the priests were plain (Exodus 28:40).
- Priestly sash (Hebrew *avnet*) (sash)—that of the High Priest was of fine linen with "embroidered work" in blue and purple and scarlet (Exodus 28:39, 39:29); those worn by the priests were of white, twined linen.
- Priestly turban (Hebrew *mitznefet*)—that of the High Priest was much larger than that of the priests and wound so that it formed a broad, flat-topped turban; that for priests was wound so that it formed a cone-shaped turban, called a *migbahat*.
- On the front of the turban was a golden plate inscribed with the words: "*Holiness unto YHWH*" was attached to the mitznefet.

The vestments that were unique to the High Priest were:

- Priestly robe (*me'il*) ("Robe of the Ephod")—a sleeveless, blue robe, the lower hem of which was fringed with small golden bells alternating with pomegranate-shaped tassels in blue, purple, and scarlet - tekhelet, argaman, tolaat shani.
- *Ephod*—a richly embroidered vest or apron with two onyx engraved gemstones on the shoulders, on which were engraved the names of the tribes of Israel
- Priestly breastplate (Hebrew *hoshen*) — with twelve gems, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes; a pouch in which he probably carried the Urim and Thummim. It was fastened to the Ephod

### **The Garments Atone for Sins**

Another important quality of the priestly garments is that their very presence, worn by the priests during the Temple service, serves to atone for the sins of Israel. It is taught that just as the sacrifices facilitate an atonement for sin, so do the priestly garments (BT Zevachim 88:B). This is one of the deeper aims of wearing these garments, and something for the priest to ponder while they are upon him. *For his everyday actions in the Temple transcend his own personal idiom and take on a more universal theme...he makes atonement and spiritual rectification for all humanity.*

Thus we are taught (ibid.):

R. Eineini bar Sason asks: Why did the Torah write the Parshah of Korbanos next to that of Bigdei Kehunah? This teaches that just like Korbanot Mechaper, also Bigdei Kehunah:

1. The Ketonet atones for murder - "*va'Yitbelu Es ha'Kutones ba'Dam*" (the Ketonet will be a Tevilah, i.e. Kaparah, for blood(shed));
2. The Michnesayim atone for Giluy Arayot - "*...Michnesei Vad Lechasot (i.e. cover up) Besar Ervah*";
3. The Mitznefet atones for haughtiness. What is the source of this? R. Chanina answers: It is proper that something worn at the highest place (the head) atones for elevating oneself.
4. The Avnet atones for thoughts of the heart, for it is worn there.
5. The Choshen atones for [improper] judgment - "*v'Asita Choshen \*Mishpat\**".

6. The Efod atones for idolatry - "*v'Ein Efod u'Srafiim*." (This implies that when there is an Efod, there is no [liability for] Terafiim (idols).

7. The Me'il atones for Lashon ha'Ra. What is the source of this? R. Chanina answers: It is proper that something with a voice [the bells on the Me'il are heard when the Kohen Gadol walks] atones for misuse of voice.

8. The Tzitz atones for audacity - "*v'Hayah Al Metzach Aharon*". The forehead is where audacity is seen - "*u'Metzach Ishah Zonah Hayah Lach*".

So in summary:

-The tunic, which covers most of the priest's body, atones for killing.

- The pants atone for sexual transgressions.
- The turban, worn on the head, atones for haughtiness.
- The belt, wound about the body and worn over the heart, atones for “sins of the heart”—improper thoughts.
- The breastplate atones for errors in judgment.
- The ephod atones for idolatry.
- The robe atones for evil speech.
- The High Priest's crown atones for arrogance.

### The Dressing of the High Priest

Now, when Aharon was consecrated in Leviticus 8, we read of the order of dressing him:

וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת-הַכֹּתֶנֶת, וַיַּחְגֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּאַבְנֵט, וַיִּלְבַּשׂ אֹתוֹ אֶת-הַמְּעִיל, וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת-הָאֶפֶד; וַיַּחְגֹּר אֹתוֹ, בְּחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד, וַיֵּאָפֵד לוֹ, בּוֹ.

7 And he put upon him the **tunic**, and girded him with the **girdle**, and clothed him with the **robe**, and put the **ephod** upon him, and he girded him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith.

ח וַיִּשֶׂם עָלָיו, אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן; וַיִּתֵּן, אֶל-הַחֹשֶׁן, אֶת-הָאֲוִרִים, וְאֶת-הַתְּמִיּוֹם.

8 And he placed the **breastplate** upon him; and in the breastplate he put the Urim and the Thummim.

ט וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת-הַמִּצְנֶפֶת, עָל-רֹאשׁוֹ; וַיִּשֶׂם עַל-הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל-מִוֶּלֶת פָּנָיו, אֶת צִיָּץ הַזָּהָב, נֹזֵר הַקֹּדֶשׁ, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה, אֶת-מֹשֶׁה.

9 And he set the **mitre** upon his head; and upon the mitre, in front, did he set the **golden plate**, the holy crown; as Hashem commanded Mosheh

When we light the Hanukah candles, we take the place of Aharon HaKohen



Gadol, the High Priest. And we garb ourselves like he does on Yom HaKippurim because we are focussing during these Eight days of Hanukah on doing *teshuvah sheleimah*/perfect return.

So that is our basic meditation: Contemplate as you light the Hanukah candles that you are the Kohen Gadol, representing the entire nation of Yisrael, in lighting the Menorah.

Intend each day the mystical correspondence that follows below, with the desire to complete and perfect and fix any blemishes associated with that garment.

### **Mystical correspondence**

Eight days of Hanukah. Eight garments of the High Priest. How do they correspond?

It has appeared to me with help of both Heaven and my teacher Rabbi Kalman Worch, that the order in which the Gemara Zevachim 88b appears to dictate an ascent from the Sefirah Malkut to Binah, from the first day of Hanukah until *Zot Hanukah*:

**Night One:** Ketonet = **Malkut** = atones for murder, and is the ultimate type of din/judgment, which falls in **Malkut**, the "lowest" of the emanations.

**Night Two:** Michnesayim = **Yesod** = atone for sexual transgression, whose root is in the **Yesod**, related to the genital area

**Night Three:** Mitznefet = **Hod** = atones for haughtiness. **Hod** has a sense of humility and acknowledgment, something that a haughty person is lacking. Moreover the Mitznefet/Turban is worn on the head, and we know from the Zohar that the energy of **Binah** [located in the head] extends until Hod.

**Night Four:** Avnet = **Netzach** = atones for thoughts of the heart. These thoughts are constant and persistent, and the Avnet helps to overcome them with the power of **Netzach**.

**Night Five:** Choshen = **Tiferet** = atones for improper judgment. Mishpat/judgment is the place of **Tiferet**, the place of balance.

**Night Six:** Ephod = **Gevurah** = atones for idolatry. This is the first "negative" commandment, just say no, which relates to **Gevurah**, on the left, the place of strange worship.

**Night Seven:** Me'il = **Hesed** = atones for evil speech. The Me'il was *techelet blue*, representing water which is all **Hesed/kindness**. Cf Zohar Vol. 3 p. 227a.

**Night Eight:** Tzitz = **Binah** = atones for audacity, and it is worn on the head, the place of **Binah**, with the words "Holy to Hashem" written on it.



*Choshen*/breastplate, for a man must consider carefully in order to know Blessed Gd, for with Him there is no anger against the souls of Yisrael [whose 12-tribe names were engraved on it], for "His wrath is for a moment, yet a lifetime in His favor." לְשָׁמוֹעַ "To hear" relates to the *Me'il*/robe, meaning that a man must hear and lend his ear to his foundation and root...the Holy Zohar mentions that the *Me'il* is the secret of reincarnation. לְלַמֹּד "To learn" corresponds to the *Mitznefet*/turban, for it makes atonement for coarseness of spirit, meaning to receive the truth from the one who spoke it. וּלְלַמֵּד "To teach" represents the *Tzitz*/headplate, for of it is said, "and it shall be on his forehead continually that they may be accepted," meaning one needs a good eye in order to teach his fellow. לְשָׁמֹר "To guard" relates to the *Ketonet*/tunic, for it makes atonement for the spilling of blood. It teaches man to guard himself and to see that because of him no damage is done to his fellow. Then his peers will not suspect him, and then be punished for suspecting him in vain. He too will then be punished for causing his fellow to be punished. וְלַעֲשׂוֹת "To do" corresponds to the *Ephod*/breastplate, and teaches of reliance, and the point of reliance is the performance of commandments so that one can stand in prayer and support himself on them... וּלְקַיֵּם "To fulfill" corresponds to the *Michnesayim*/pants, whose purpose is to cover his genitals. This is a place where one can suffer a loss, as it is written, "the nakedness of the land" meaning the vulnerable place by which the land can be conquered.

So the *Mei HaShiloah* would list the following correspondences:

*Avnet*: *Lehavin* to understand  
*Choshen*: *uLehaskil* to discern  
*Meil*: *Lishmoa* to hear  
*Mitznefet*: *Lilmod* to learn  
*Tzitz*: *ulelamed* to teach  
*Ketonet*: *Lishmor* to guard  
*Ephod*: *La'asot* to do  
*Michnesayim*: *uLekayem* to fulfill.

### **Other Mystical Views of the Garments (adapted from [www.kabbalahonline.org](http://www.kabbalahonline.org)):**

#### ***Or HaHayyim*:**

*And you shall make holy garments for your brother, Aaron, for splendor and beauty.* (Ex. 28:2)

The Torah commanded that the High Priest wear 8 garments, 4 made of white linen and four containing gold. The Torah says that the reason is "for splendor [in Hebrew, '*kavod*'] and beauty [in Hebrew, '*tiferet*']". We find the following comment in the introduction of *Tikunei Zohar*: "The four golden garments are an allusion to the four letters in the name *Havayah*, whereas the four white linen garments are an allusion to the four letters in G-d's name *Ado-nai*." We should remember that the name *Havayah* reflects G-d's attribute of "*tiferet*", whereas G-d's name *Ado-nai* reflects his attribute of "*kavod*". According to this, the word "*tiferet*" in our verse would refer to the golden garments, whereas the word "*kavod*" would refer to the white garments. The Torah listed varying degrees of

holiness in ascending order, hence the attribute "*kavod*" precedes the attribute "*tiferet*". G-d decreed that eight garments were to be made for the High Priest in order for him to be able to obtain atonement for his people for the various imperfections that people are guilty of as a normal part of their lives. Aaron's wearing these garments would enable the Israelites concerned to achieve their proper place in the higher regions.

***Shelah:***

We have already explained at length in *parashat Teruma* how the Tabernacle was a re-enactment of the work of Creation [i.e. a microcosm] and that it served as man's rehabilitation for the damage to G-d's universe brought about by Adam's sin. We have also explained that there was a parallel Tabernacle in the Celestial Regions.

Aaron, as High Priest, symbolized the rehabilitation of man who had become distant from G-d as a result of Adam's sin.

Concerning Aaron, the Torah writes: "*As for you [Moses], bring close Aaron your brother etc.*" (Ex. 28:1) Here the Torah expresses a mystical dimension of the verse: "*No man shall be inside the tent.*" (Lev. 16:17) This is a reference to original Adam. The universe was created under the aegis of loving-kindness, as we know from "*The universe was built with loving-kindness*" (Psalms 89:3).

The "The structure corresponding to the physical universe in the Celestial Regions," contains the secret of the seven days of creation and commences with the *sefira* of *chesed* down to the *sefira* of *malchut*, i.e. seven emanations.

We find that in connection with Aaron, the man of kindness [representing the attribute of *chesed*], the Torah (Deut. 33:8) speaks about the "Urim and Tumim". We have explained that the three groups of Israelites, i.e. the Priests, Levites, and Israelites, corresponded to the three *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevura*, *tiferet*, respectively.

The original "jewelry" had been taken from Man due to the powerful impact of Adam's sin. At that time Man's original vestments were exchanged from "*kutanot or*" [spelled with an *alef*], "garments made of light", for "*kutanot ohr*" [spelled with an *ayin*], "garments made of hide" (Gen. 3:21). In our portion, the Torah orders that "*kutanot*", tunics, be made for Aaron's sons (Ex. 28:40), who had to be dressed in sacred vestments. They put on holy anointing oil on their bodies before they dressed in the sacred vestments.

By following this procedure, the priests ceased being "strangers" or "outsiders", as they had been before putting on garments which could not be worn by non-priests. When Adam became an "outsider", this was due to the pollutant with which the Serpent had infected him. It was this pollutant from which he had to be purified.

Aaron was the human being through whom this rehabilitation of Man was achieved. He had to be separate to sanctify his body. He thereafter dressed in the sacred vestments which conferred upon him "honor and glory", the very kind of visible distinction that Adam enjoyed while dressed in garments made

of light. The pollutant present in Man because of the serpent's infection was converted into something positive by means of the breastplate Aaron wore on his heart. The ineffable name of G-d was engraved on the stones of the breastplate, as well as the names of the 12 Tribes. The names of the 12 Tribes as well as the names of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were engraved between the 12 gemstones set in it. The latter represented the Holy Chariot, whereas the former represented the twelve possible ways of arranging the letters of the Ineffable Name.

While Aaron and his sons were thus sanctified, the people were sanctified by restrictions in their diet as outlined in Leviticus chapter 11. This was parallel to G-d telling Adam in the Garden of Eden that Man was allowed to eat from all the tress in that garden except from the Tree of Knowledge.

Concepts of the various types of disqualifications of sacrificial matter all derive from the Tree of Knowledge from which Adam ate. Just as the priests were separate in sanctity, their clothing was separate and their food and drink were separate. In order to enable them to eat and drink some of the things that had been sanctified and offered on the altar, the place where such service was performed also had to be separate and sanctified so as to lend an additional level of sanctity to the service they performed.

This element of sanctity of the site applied both to the general area of the Tabernacle, i.e. the courtyard surrounding it, the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, as well as to different levels of sanctity of the different types of sacrifices. Sacrifices offered on the "outer" copper altar possessed a different degree of holiness from the incense which was offered on the golden altar within the Sanctuary. The latter was the offering dearest to G-d and drew G-d's goodwill down to His creatures on earth. The Aramaic word for "*keshet*", meaning "connection", is the same as the Hebrew word for "*keter*", referring to smoke, or incense. The smoke created the connection.

Since the essence of the incense offering consisted of the fragrance it exuded, something that is closest to - spirit - i.e. a spiritual concept, it was especially close to G-d, Who is pure spirit. It can be appreciated only by the soul, not by the body. It was therefore uniquely designed to establish close communion with the *Shechina*. This is why it was offered inside the Sanctuary, for most animal offerings could not be offered inside the Sanctuary; even incense could only be offered inside the Sanctuary when it was the incense of the public. Private incense offerings were not offered there. It was considered incense of an alien nature.

Even Aaron only had the right to enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement once a year, as stated by the Torah, "He must not enter at will into the [Holy of Holies] behind the curtain, in front of the cover which is upon the Ark, lest he die" (Lev. 16:2). Our sages comment on this that it was only Aaron who was not allowed into the Holy of Holies whenever he wanted; Moses, however, was allowed to enter at will (*Sifra* on Lev. 16:2).

We must understand that Moses was not a stranger/alien, because the raw-material he was made of had been so refined that it was itself pure and holy, similar to being garbed in garments of light. This is why according to Talmud *Sotah* 12, at his birth, the house of his parents was filled with light. The material Aaron's body was made of did contain some parts tainted by the residue of the pollutant of the original serpent; it was incumbent upon him to rid himself of that element, something that he was able to do only with the help of the holy oil of anointing. Even with the help of that holy element he did not attain the level of Moses [and required the advent of the Day of Atonement so that he might be free, at least temporarily, of foreign elements.

Keeping this in mind we can answer the question how Moses could have performed service in the Sanctuary during the seven days preceding the eighth day of *Nissan* mentioned in Lev. 9:1. Our sages answered this question saying that Moses went in wearing a white shirt (*Taanit* 11).

At first glance the question does not seem to fit the answer. If the questioner wanted to know whence Moses had taken the sacred vestments to enable him to perform the service in the Sanctuary [because he presumed that such service could not be performed without the sacred vestments] then the answer simply skirts the issue. If, on the other hand, the questioner did not consider the wearing of the sacred vestments as an absolute prerequisite before such service in the Tabernacle could be performed, what was the point of the question?

We therefore have to assume that the questioner presumed that the sacred vestments were an absolute prerequisite for such service to be performed. This is why he wanted to know where Moses took such garments from, seeing the Torah had not mentioned anything about sacred vestments at that point in time. He was told that Moses performed the service wearing a white shirt because there was no requirement for him to wear sacred vestments. The reason Moses did not need them was because he had never been an "outsider", meaning he had never been alienated from his original level of sanctity, as had all the other human beings including his brother Aaron.

The "white shirt" mentioned by the Talmud is an allusion to the garments of light worn by Adam prior to his sin. Since Moses personally was of distinguished material, "honor and glory", he did not need sacred garments to achieve such an image.

To return to the main issue that Aaron, the man of *chesed*, rehabilitated the original Adam and that the universe is built on *chesed*. Since the world was constructed during the seven days of Creation, which in turn paralleled the seven *sefirot* employed in its construction, seven days of inauguration of the Tabernacle were required before it commenced functioning as a microcosm in the fullest sense of the word. The Zohar quotes Rabbi Yitzchak on the verse: *The light of the moon will equal the light of the sun in brilliance, and the brilliance of the light of the sun will be seven times greater than during the seven days of Creation.* (Isaiah 30:26) Rabbi Yuda said that the prophet referred to the seven days during which the Tabernacle was inaugurated. The world had

been plunged in darkness so that it might re-emerge bathed in light on the occasion of the inauguration of the Tabernacle. On that occasion the moon shone brilliantly as it had done before it was diminished, so as not to embarrass it at a time when the universe had been rehabilitated. Rabbi Yuda based himself on the verse: *A quarrelsome one alienates a friend.* (Proverbs 16:28)

### Our Daily Work During Hanukah

What follows are the daily meditations to do as we gaze into the growing Hanukah lights, intending to renew and repair ourselves this week. Before you light the candles each night, read the appropriate selection below with the focus on the tikkun/repair offered by respective garment of that particular evening. Contemplate how you might have missed the mark, and how you can do better. Then focus on

- regreting missing the mark
- abandoning the blemish, and
- silently verbally confessing the miss-take.

The time of candle lighting is an *Eit Ratzon*, a time of Divine Favor. Use it or lose it!

### **First Night: Ketonet atones for murder**

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר  
יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶד וּמְעִיל,  
וְכִתְנֹת תְּשֻׁבֵץ, מִצְנֶפֶת  
וְאַבְנֵט; וַעֲשׂוּ בְגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
לְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ, וּלְבָנָיו--  
לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a **tunic of chequer work**, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew ourselves as we don a spiritual tunic.



The priestly tunic (Hebrew *ketonet* כֶּתֹנֶת) was as an undergarment or shirt worn by the High Priest and priests when they served in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem. The Hebrew noun *ketonet* (כֶּתֹנֶת) is the generic term for a tunic in Hebrew. The first use is the "coats" of skins made for Adam and Eve in Eden, the best known use would be the coat of many colors of Joseph. It is related to, and may be the source of, the Greek noun *kiton* "tunic."

It was made of pure linen, covering the entire body from the neck to the feet, with sleeves reaching to the wrists. That of the High Priest was embroidered (Exodus 28:39) ; those of the priests were plain (Exodus 28:40).

On Yom HaKippurim, the High priest would change into a special tunic made of fine linen that was not embroidered when he would enter the Holy of Holies. This tunic could only be used once, with a new set made for each year.



According to the Talmud, the wearing of the tunic and the rest of the priestly garments atoned for the sin of bloodshed on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).

### **Teshuva for Bloodshed:**

In the light of the candles, we silently confess from the Al Cheit of Yom Kippur:

For the sins for which we incur the penalty of death by the hand of Heaven.

And for the sins for which we incur the penalty of excision and childlessness.

And for the sins for which we incur the penalty of the four forms of capital punishment executed by the Court: stoning, burning, decapitation and strangulation.

Next we contemplate:

"*You Shall Not Murder*," also includes how we murder another's spirit by our words and actions

A rabbi in the Talmud opines that putting one's fellow man to shame, in the same category as murder (B. M. 58b)

It is prohibited to waste seed. Those that do it, not only is it a serious sin they also place themselves in spiritual excommunication and is equivalent to an act of murder. **(Tur A.H. 23/1)**

It is prohibited to waste seed . This is the most severe of all sins in the torah. Those who spill seed in waste, not only do they commit a major sin, they also place themselves in excommunication. Referring to them the verse says "your hands became filled with blood". It is as if he kills a person. Sometimes as a punishment for this, heaven forbid his children die young or end up evil people. This also causes poverty. **(Kitzur Shulcan Aruch 151)**

Wasting seed is more severe than manslaughter, for here he is spilling his own blood and the blood of his children. In the Zohar parshas *Vayechi* it says all evil people can repent except those that commit this sin. In addition a person under the age of mitzvot is not held accountable for his sins except this one, for Er and Onan were underage and got punished. In addition the generation of the flood who were wiped off the face of the earth was only for this sin. **(Sharai Kedusha)**

More severe than all sins is one who spills seed, for he spills the blood of his kids for all eternity. In addition all sins can be rectified, but this one has no rectification. **(Sharai Kedusha 2/8)**

**מִי כַמּוֹדֵךְ אֵב הַרְחֵמֵנוּ זִכְרֵי יְצוּרֵינוּ בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים**

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life.*

**מי** is a code-word for **Binah**, for its gematria of 50 hints to the 50 Gates of Binah. However, **מי** spelled backwards is **ים** which means "sea". **Malkhut** signifies the sea into which the river flows. **Malkhut** represents the sea, the part of the physical world which is concealed from view under the water. (*Likkutei Torah, "Hayam Ra'ah Vyanos", page 16*)

Perhaps the first question we need to ask on starting our final work in Teshuva is **מי** "Who", as in "Who am I really?" This can open us up to contemplating the What's and How's of our project in the next 7 nights.

**Hassidut:** **לשמור** "To guard" relates to the *Ketonet*/tunic, for it makes atonement for the spilling of blood. It teaches man to guard himself and to see that because of him no damage is done to his fellow. Then his peers will not suspect him, and then be punished for suspecting him in vain. He too will then be punished for causing his fellow to be punished

Second Night: **Michnesayim atone for sexual transgression**

<p><b>וַעֲשֵׂה לָהֶם מִכְנְסֵי-בָד,</b>  <b>לְכִסּוֹת בָּשָׂר עֲרוֹהָ; מִמֵּתְנִים</b>  <b>וְעַד-יְרֵכֵם, יִהְיוּ</b></p>	<p><b>42</b> And you shalt make them <b>linen breeches</b> to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach</p>
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We renew ourselves as we done spiritual undergarments.

The **priestly undergarments** (Biblical Hebrew: **מִכְנְסֵי-בָד** *michhnsay-bad*) were "**linen** breeches" worn by the priests and the High Priest in ancient Israel. They reached from the waist to the knees and so were not visible, being entirely hidden by the priestly tunic.

The biblical commandment instituting their use is found in the Book of Exodus 28:42

*And you shall make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach.*

The following verse (Exodus 28:43) applies not only to the undergarments but to all the priestly garments:

*And they shall be upon Aharon, and upon his sons, when they go in unto the tent of meeting, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die; it shall be a statute for ever unto him and unto his seed after him.*

Unlike the other priestly vestments which were "for *glory and for beauty*" (Exodus 28:2), the purpose of the michnasayin was for modesty, "*to hide their nakedness*". In the Book of Leviticus when Mosheh consecrates Aharon and his sons as High Priest and priests, respectively, the linen undergarments are not mentioned (Leviticus 8:7, 8:13), though their use is obviously presumed.

The Talmud records the worn out undergarments and priestly sashes were used for torch wicks in the Temple. The linen undergarments symbolized the abolition of the distinction between the heavenly and the mortal part of man, as contrasted with the divine nature, which is absolutely holy and living. According to the Talmud, the undergarments atone for the sin of sexual transgressions on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).

### **Teshuva for sexual transgressions:**

In the light of the two candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You with immorality.

We now contemplate the Torah, Vayikra 18, where the Torah now continues and details a long list of sexual offenses (6-23). At the end of the list, there is a conclusion which draws the consequence of violating the "constitution" of Jewish society.

*Do not defile yourselves with any of these (practices), for the nations whom I am expelling before you defiled themselves with all these. And the land was defiled, and I visited its iniquity on it, and the land ejected its inhabitants.*

*But you shall observe my laws and edicts, and not do any of these abominations, neither a citizen or a stranger who dwells in your midst.*

*For all of these abominations were done by the people who preceded you in the land, and the land was defiled.*

*Let not the land eject you when you defile it, as it ejected the nation that preceded you.*

*For anyone who does any of these abominations, and the performing souls shall be cut off their people.*

*And you shall observe My observance, not doing these abominable laws which were done before you, and not be defiled by them, I am HaShem. (24-30).*

Rambam in *Hilkhos Teshuvah* 2.1. ask:

What is “perfect repentance”? This is when a person is faced with some thing in which he has sinned in the past, and he has the opportunity to do it again, but he turns away and does not sin because of teshuvah, not out of fear or through lack of strength. How so? One who had illicit relations with a certain woman, and after a certain period of time was alone with her again, and he still feels love for her, and still has bodily potency, and is in the same place where he committed the transgression, and he turns away and does not sin—such a one is a perfect penitent

R. Yehonatan Chipman writes that the example chosen, that of sexual transgression, is singularly well chosen to illustrate this point. In many human cultures, sexual misbehavior is seen as emblematic of all sin: because of its innate attractiveness and fascination, and its potential ubiquity; because of the role of the imagination therein; because an essential dimension in the choice of an ethical path in life is that between moral uprightness and integrity vs. the pursuit of pleasure. Hazal, too, see it as paradigmatic: the very term *aveirah* (“transgression”), when used without further elaboration, refers to sexual sin; the archetypal *Yetzer ha-Ra* (“The Evil Urge”) is the sexual impulse; Rambam likewise notes the widespread nature of this transgression in the peroration to *Issurei Bi’ah*, §22.19.

But there’s more to it than that. The sexual encounter is not a purely instinctual physical act fulfilling immediate physical need, but a meeting between two persons, treasured as much for its emotional overtones as for its erotic sensations. It is for this reason that Maimonides includes in this section the words, “and he retains his love for her”—a phrase that does not appear in the Talmudic source, which merely states “with the same woman, the same place, the same time period”.

For that very reason, because of the ebb and flow of human emotions, it is difficult for me to imagine a second encounter between a man and woman who were once illicit lovers ever being exactly the same as the initial encounter. Perhaps when they first met and engaged, say, in an adulterous liaison, one of them was lonely, confused, feeling rejected; when they meet again, years later, he/she is happy, contented, perhaps married to a new, more loving spouse. But even if this is not the case: for two people who have already made love, any second or subsequent time will somehow *ipso facto* be different; there is something special, unrepeatable, in an intimate encounter of this kind. Two lovers who meet again, even after years of separation, have already crossed that barrier. It may be easier to repeat the act—but for that reason will also be less interesting, less intensely gratifying.

The point here is of course not the intricacies of sexual emotion, but something much deeper: the real point of teshuvah is to repair ones impaired moral faculty in such a way that, next time one is confronted with a difficult decision, with a deep moral temptation, one will succeed in making the “right,” ethical, godly choice. Yet, in fact, one can never know how successful one will be in confronting the next challenge, the next moral junction in ones life, until one gets there—because it will never be quite the same. Hence, when Rambam writes, “and one still feels the same love for her,” he seems to be begging the

question: Does one ever really feel exactly the same love, even for the same woman, after passing through X, Y, and Z life experiences? Thus, it seems to me that Rambam is telling us that one can never have total, perfect closure on any situation of sin. One does one best to purify ones character in the smelting pot of difficult life tests, but in the end one comes full circle to the teshuvah of Chapter 1, to throwing oneself upon the Divine mercies: "forgive us, pardon us, atone us." (Perhaps that, too, is the deeper meaning of the seemingly contradictory idea of praying for teshuvah: that repentance is not only an act of human will, but also entails a certain element of Divine help)

מִי כַמּוֹדָה אָב הַרְחֵמֵנוּ זֹכֵר יִצְוֵרֵינוּ בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים

Who *is like you*, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life

**כַּמּוֹדָה** Chamocha hints to the **Yesod**, for it concerns relationship, comparison between things, showing unification at the place of bonding. It's gematria of 96 is that of **אל אדני** related to the World of Action, where the energies of Yesod are deposited into the Malkut. It also has the same gematria **צו** showing command between parties

Hassidut: **וּלְקַיִם** "To fulfill" corresponds to the *Michnesayim*/pants, whose purpose is to cover his genitals. This is a place where one can suffer a loss, as it is written, "the nakedness of the land" meaning the vulnerable place by which the land can be conquered.

Third Night: **Mitznefet** atones for haughtiness

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֻּד וּמַעִיל, וְכִתְנוֹת תְּשֻׁבָּעַן, מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט; וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחָיִהּ, וּלְבָנָיו-- לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew ourselves by doning a spiritual turban.

The priestly mitre or turban (*mitznefet* מִצְנֶפֶת) was the head covering worn by the High Priest when he served in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem. The Hebrew word *mitznefet* (מִצְנֶפֶת) has been translated as "mitre" or "headdress". It was most likely a "turban", as the word comes from the root "to wrap".



The turban worn by the High Priest was much larger than the head coverings of the priests and wound so that it formed a broad, flat-topped turban, resembling the blossom of a flower. The head covering of the priests was different, being wound so that it formed a cone-shaped turban, called a *migbahat*.



HIGH PRIEST IN ROBES AND BREASTPLATE.  
—Lev. viii. 8.

According to the Talmud, the wearing of the **turban** atoned for the sin of haughtiness on the part of the Children of Israel (B. Zevachim 88b).

**Teshuva for haughtiness:**

As we gaze at the 3 candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You by scoffing.  
And for the sin which we have committed before You by a haughty demeanor.  
And For the sin which we have committed before You with proud looks.

We contemplate the repair of haughtiness through Humility-*Anavah*.  
What is humility according to Mussar?

The prophet, Micah, says (6:8)

*He has told you, O man, what is good,  
And what Hashem requires of you:*

*Only to do justice*

*And to love goodness*

*And to walk modestly with your Gd;* (Using the root *tzade nun ayin* here)

Why does Micah speak of walking humbly with Gd and not just of walking humbly?

Perhaps because if we are certain that Gd is on our side we can easily become arrogant and even cruel. Certain types of so called religious people walk arrogantly with Gd when they justify violent or cruel acts in the name of Gd. (Telushkin) Mussar helps us work on walking humbly with Gd.

All virtues and duties are dependent on humility according to the great Medieval Mussar teacher, Bahya Ibn Pakuda. Humility-*Anavah* is the primary soul trait because it entails an unvarnished and honest assessment of who we are. Maimonides clarifies this trait as well in the great law code, Mishnah Torah: Humility-*Anavah* is not the opposite of conceit, which would be self effacement, but rather stands between conceit and self effacement. Humility is not an extreme quality, but rather a balance, moderate, accurate understanding of ourselves.

Consider this visually. Mussar places humility in between these extremes.

Self debasement	humility	pride	arrogance
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Arrogance (*Ge'ut*), in contrast to humility-*Anavah*, is accurately described by one modern Mussar teacher

“Generally, man finds his delight in examining his own virtues, in discovering even the smallest of his positive attributes and the most minute faults of his fellows, for he can then find reason to be proud even when in the company of great ones whose little fingers are thicker than his loins. “

Self effacement is also considered extreme in Mussar. Here is a passage from the Talmud that hints at the spiritual problem of self debasement:

*“Rava said: Who possesses haughtiness of spirit deserves excommunication, and if he does not possess it he deserves excommunication.”*

This is a peculiar teaching, but it insightfully addresses the problem of extreme tendencies. Not only is there great spiritual danger in having an ego that is overinflated, but there is just as much spiritual danger in being devoid of self esteem.

Telushkin defines *Anavah* as

1. Not regarding ourselves as more important than other people, including those who have achieved less than we have.



2. *Anavah* implies judging ourselves not in comparison with others, but in light of our capabilities and tasks we believe Gd has set for us on earth.

The great Mussar Rabbi, Israel Salanter (19th century) said, “I know that I have the mental capacity of a 1000 men, but because of that my obligation is also that of 1000 men.” The meaning is that If we have greater wisdom, we have greater responsibility to bring people to understanding. If we are blessed with greater wealth, then we have a greater responsibility to help those in need. If we have achieved great power, then we have an obligation to help those without power achieve justice.

Why is humility as a trait deemed so important in Mussar?

Consider the greatest figure of Judaism, Moshe: Nowhere does the Torah refer to Moses as courageous, a defender of justice, or compassionate, although it is clear from various incidents in the Torah that he is all these things. Rather the only description of Moses is this : “Now *Moshe was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth.*” (Num 12:3). Astonishingly this is the only virtue attributed to Moshe in the entire Torah. (Telushkin)

If humility is so important, why is it not one of the 613 commandments? Michel of Zlotchov, a Hasidic master suggests this: “Because if a person were to think, ‘Now I am fulfilling the commandment of being humble, and would then believe that he was becoming humble. That would be the worst vanity of all. Humility is not an achievement-but a target in the distance.

Being *Anav*-humble, allows to keep accomplishment in perspective. ” All of the good things I do are a drop in the ocean in comparison to what I ought to do.” *Orchot Hahayim*.

Finally, humility, according to Allan Morinis, a modern author of the Mussar Movement, is best understood as a sense of our place in the world. This teaching can be rightly understood as a critique of our celebrity worshiping culture. Mussar both embraces the central Jewish teaching that each of us is made in the image of God. To believe this insight of the Torah is to find a middle path between our hunger to occupy lots of space and our tendency when beaten down by life to occupy too little. He calls us to "Occupy a rightful space, neither too much nor too little. Focus neither on your own virtues nor the faults of others."

מִי כַמּוֹדֵךְ אֵב הַרְחֵמֵן זֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life.*

אֵב has gematria 3, hinting to this the Third Night of Hanukah.

Hassidut: לְלַמּוֹד "To learn" corresponds to the *Mitznefet/turban*, for it makes atonement for coarseness of spirit, meaning to receive the truth from the one who spoke it

**Fourth Night:** *Avnet* atones for thoughts of the heart, for it is worn there.

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר  
יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֻּד וּמַעֲיֵל,  
וּכְתֹנֶת תְּשֻׁבָּן, מִצְנֶפֶת  
וְאַבְנֵט; וְעָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחָיו, וּלְבָנָיו--  
לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a *girdle*; and they shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew by wearing a spiritual sash. The priestly sash or girdle (Hebrew *avnet* אַבְנֵט) was part of the ritual garments worn by the Jewish and priests of ancient Israel whenever they served in the Tabernacle or the Temple in Jerusalem. The "*sash*" or "*girdle*" worn by the High Priest was of fine linen with "embroidered work" in blue, purple and scarlet (Exodus 28:39, 39:29); those worn by the priests were of white, twined linen. The sash should not be confused with the embroidered belt of the ephod. Like the other priestly vestments, the purpose of the sash was "for *glory and for beauty*" (Exodus 28:41). On the Day of Atonement the High Priest changed into special linen garments that included a sash of fine linen without any embroidery (Leviticus 16:4). These linen garments were worn only once, with new ones being made each year.

According to Rabbinical literature, Midrash and Maimonides, the sash was 32 cubits long and 2, 3 or 4 fingers wide. At this length, it would have to have been wound around the body several times. Theories differ as to how this was accomplished: some say it was wound around the waist only, while others say it was wound around the waist and over the shoulders, crossing over the heart. In any event, the ends would have been tied and allowed to hang down in front. According to the Talmud, the wearing of the sash atoned for "sins of the heart" (impure thoughts) on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).



**Teshuva for thoughts:**

As we gaze at the 4 candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You by improper thoughts.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by a confused heart.

We next contemplate the words of Rebbe Nachman who taught (as did the Baal Shem Tov, the Ramban and others) that you are where your thoughts are:

**PURITY OF THOUGHT**

Man's mind is his very essence. Wherever your thoughts are, that is where you are - all of you.

This is why it is so important to avoid all evil thoughts, because otherwise that is where your place will be.

You must force yourself to think good thoughts in order to be worthy of knowing God.

Then your place will be with Him and you will be merged with Him. The greater your perception of God, the more fully merged with Him you will become, and then you will attain eternal life.

Likutey Moharan I, 21

\* \* \*

**Guard your thoughts**

Guard your thoughts very carefully, because thought can literally create a living thing. The higher a faculty, the further it can reach. You can kick something with your foot, but you can throw it even higher with your hand. With your voice you can reach even further, calling to someone far away. Hearing reaches further still - you can hear sounds like gunfire from a very great distance. Vision reaches even further: you can see things high in the sky.

The higher the faculty, the further it can reach. Highest of all is the mind, which can ascend to the loftiest heights. You must therefore guard your mind and thoughts to the utmost.

Sichot Haran #46

(translations by azamra.org)

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֲבִי הַרְחֵמֵן זֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life*

*HaRahaman* modifies Father, Abba, who is the head of the right column, of which Netzah--the energy of tonight) is at the bottom. Moreover the words אֲבִי הַרְחֵמֵן are in gematria 306 which is דבש *Devash*, the sweet honey, emblematic of the Evil inclination, of which Netzah's power of overcoming is needed.

Hassidut: לְהַבִּין "To understand" corresponds to the *Avnet/girdle*, for the *Avnet* atones for the fancies of the heart (Arachin 16a), so too was it worn over the heart and its length was 32 cubits [32 being the gematria of Lev/heart].

**Fifth Night: The Choshen** atones for improper judgment

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר  
יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּד וּמַעִיל,  
וּכְתָנֶת תְּשֻׁבֵן, מִצְנֶפֶת  
וְאַבְנֵט; וְעָשׂוּ בְגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
לְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ, וּלְבָנָיו--  
לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a **breastplate**, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew by wearing a spiritual priestly **breastplate** (Hebrew *hoshen* חֹשֶׁן), for it was a sacred breastplate worn by the High Priest for the Israelites, according to the Book of Exodus. In the biblical account, the breastplate is sometimes termed the *breastplate of judgement*, because the Urim and Thummim, which were used in divination, were placed within it. According to the description in Exodus, this breastplate was attached to the ephod, by gold chains/cords tied to the gold rings on the ephod's shoulder straps, and by blue ribbon tied to the gold rings at the lower parts of the ephod (Exodus 28:15-19) the biblical description states that the breastplate was also to be made from the same material as the Ephod - embroidered linen - and was to be a square, a cubit in width, two layers thick, and with four rows of three engraved gems each embedded upon it, each jewel being framed in gold. The description states that the square breastplate was to be formed from two equal rectangular pieces of cloth - suggesting that its appearance was similar to a backless waistcoat, with a pouch inside to contain the Urim and Thummim. The term for the breastplate, *hoshen*, appears to be connected either to its function or to its appearance; some scholars think that it is probably derived from Hebrew *hasuna*, meaning "beautiful," while others

think that it is more likely to derive from Hebrew *sinus*, meaning "a fold for containing something."



According to the Talmud, the wearing of the **Hoshen** atoned for the sin of errors in judgement on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).

### **Teshuva for Improper Judgment:**

As we gaze into the 5 candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You in passing judgment.  
And for the sin which we have committed before You by a begrudging eye.

We next contemplate that the repair of improper judgement is *dan l'kaf z'chut*:

**Rabbi Yisrael Salanter** said that when he first started learning **Musar**, he became angry at the world, but remained at peace within. As he studied further, he also became angry with himself. Finally, only the anger for him remained while his anger for others melted away and he became *dan l'kaf z'chut* – judging others favorably.

**Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev spotted a man greasing the wheels of his wagon** while he was wearing his *tallit* and *tefillin*. Instead of being furious at this sacrilege, the rabbi turned his eyes toward heaven and proclaimed, “See, Master of the World, how holy Your children are! Even when he is engaged in greasing his wheels, he nevertheless remembers to pray to You.” The person who judges his neighbor in the scale of merit is himself judged favorably [by God].” **Reb Levi Yitzchak trained himself to be *dan l’kaf z’chut*** – to judge everyone positively. However, favorable judgment by an onlooker does not diminish the error made by a person who misuses objects of *kedushah*, (holiness), such as a man who wears *tallit* and *tefillin* when he attends to everyday, common activities.

from *Sefer Kavanos Halev*

The benefit of the doubt has an ancient Jewish pedigree. In Hebrew, the concept is called *dan l’kaf z’chut*. It begins, in Leviticus chapter 19, verse 15: “...*in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.*” It is a fragment of a verse, which the rabbis in *Pirkei Avot* (The Chapters of the Fathers) broke open. Inside, they discovered how that abstract notion can be understood to apply to the real life of real people:

**וְהוּא דֵן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת.**

*Ve’heveh dan et kol ha-adam l’kaf z’chut –*

“Judge everyone on the positive side of the scale.” (Pirkei Avot 1:6)

In other words, it’s innocent until proven guilty. If you see someone doing something, and you can ascribe either a bad motive to that person’s actions or a good motive, then ascribe a good motive. There’s a heavy weight in our tradition against making snap judgments.

'A negative way of looking at things is a product of one’s own ego.'

Restraining our darker, seamier urge to judge indiscriminately no doubt would blunt the fangs of public discourse. That would lead to a more civil society. After all, good manners exist to make life more pleasant, civilization more civilized. But if you think that’s the point of *dan l’kaf z’chut* and other middot, Alan Morinis writes: “If these behaviors cause the world to be civilized, I’m all for that.” That statement sets up a “but” that reverberates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and back. This is where the practical, behavior-modification aspects of middot begin a strange shift into the mystical.

Morinis, who teaches at the Mussar Institute, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, agrees that middot have a practical effect on the outer life. What interests him, though, is their effect on a Jew’s inner life. “In the past, the inner

life was important,” he says. “But the Jewish world today is not paying enough attention to the inner life.”

Men and women have a lower nature and a higher nature. The lower nature is grasping, animalistic. The higher nature is loving, generous and spiritual. Jewish life wants to lift us up into the higher reaches of our nature. *Dan l'kaf z'chut* is about lifting your perceptions and not seeing people immediately as a threat. If you can see they are on a journey, you can cut them a lot of slack.

Ultimately, *dan l'kaf z'chut* is an inner response to the outside world, Morinis says. “You have to take responsibility for your inner life.”

If you follow Morinis’ line of thinking, you will reach the spot where Musar meets mysticism. That is in Breslov, where an understanding of the middot is based on the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a late-18<sup>th</sup>, early-19<sup>th</sup> century chasidic rebbe, whose discourses were collected in a monumental work called “Likutey Moharan.” Rabbi Nachman’s Lesson 282 picks up where Pirkei Avot leaves off, in its call for us to judge others according to the scale of merit – in other words, on the *positive* side of the scale. This is good for everyone, because “a negative way of looking at things is a product of one’s own ego.” Doing the positive, according to Rabbi Nachman, is divine. And often difficult. Even a person who is a thoroughgoing evil person – you have to search for a little point of good in him. And in that point, he is not a wicked person.

By focusing on that single point of good, “you can transform that person without even saying a word – you can cause him to turn in *teshuvah* [repentance].”

What Rabbi Nachman is saying “is that evil is not the essence. It’s secondary. Good is the essence. “Evil is not primary. What’s *true* is primary, essential and divine.”

Whether it is filled with mystical implications, a discipline to raise ourselves to a higher level of humanity, one of a set of good manners or simply a reminder to mind one's own business, *dan l'kaf z'chut* has been a part of the Jewish lexicon for ages.

It is also the way to start fixing improper judgment. Start now!

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֵב הַרְחֵמֵן זֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life.*

*Remember the day of Shabbat, Keep the day of Shabbat. "Remember/Zakor" זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת according to the Holy Zohar stands for the Masculine Day, while "Keep/Shamor" stands for the Feminine Night. The Masculine is*

represented by Zeir Anpin, related to the Sefirah **Tiferet**, the energy of this 5th Night. **זוֹכֵר** 's gematria of 233 plus Yod and Heh = the 248 positive (masculine) commandments, as well as 233 is HaBrachah and the 4 fillings of Ab, Sag, Mah, and Ben plus one for the kollel, as well as **יְהִי אוֹר** plus the kollel, light standing for the revealed Masculine.

Hassidut: **לְהַשְׁכִּיל** "To discern" represents the *Choshen*/breastplate, for a man must consider carefully in order to know Blessed Gd, for with Him there is no anger against the souls of Yisrael [whose 12-tribe names were engraved on it], for "*His wrath is for a moment, yet a lifetime in His favor.*"

Sixth Night: **Ephod** atones for idolatry

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר  
יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדִי וּמַעֲיִל,  
וּכְתֹנֶת תְּשֻׁבָּת. מִצְנֶפֶת  
וְאַבְנֵיט; וְעִשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחָיִה, וּלְבָנָיו--  
לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an **ephod**, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aharon your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew by wearing a spiritual ephod. We can see how the ephod atones to idolatry, which splits the unification of one Gd into several entities. The gematria of **אַפֹּדִי** is 91, the famous number standing for the unification of **יְהוָה** Shem Havaya and **אֲדֹנָי** Adanut like this **יֵאֱהֻדוּנְהִי**

An ephod (Hebrew **אַפֹּדִי** ) was an article of clothing, and a worship object, in ancient Israelite culture, and was closely connected with oracular practices. In the Books of Samuel, David is described as wearing an ephod when dancing in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6:14) and one is described as standing in the sanctuary at Nob, with a sword behind it (1 Samuel 21:9) in the book of Exodus and in Leviticus one is described as being created for the Jewish High Priest to wear as part of his official vestments (Exodus 28:4+, 29:5, 39:2+; Leviticus 8:7).





The ephod is depicted in yellow.

In the Book of Judges, Gideon and Micah each cast one from a metal, and Gideon's was worshipped (Judges 8:26-27, Judges 17:5).

Within the Bible, in the contexts where it is worn, the ephod is usually described as being linen, but did not constitute complete clothing of any kind, as the Books of Samuel describe David's wife Michal as taunting him for indecently exposing himself by wearing one. David was "*clothed with a robe of fine linen.....David also wore an ephod of linen.*" [1 Chronicles, 15:27] "*and David was wearing a linen ephod*" [2 Samuel, 6:14] There appears to have been a strong religious and ceremonial implication to wearing an ephod, since the eighty-five priests at Nob are specifically identified as being the type of people who wore an ephod; though the Masoretic text here describes them as being *linen ephods* (1 Samuel 22:18) the word *linen* is not present in the Septuagint version of the passage, nor is it present when the Septuagint describes David and Samuel as girding themselves with an ephod.

A passage in the Book of Exodus describes the Ephod as an elaborate garment worn by the high priest, and upon which the breastplate, containing Urim and Thummim, rested. According to this description, the Ephod was woven out of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet threads, was made of fine linen, and was embroidered "with skillful work" in gold thread (Exodus 28:6-14) the Talmud argues that each of the textures was combined in six threads with a seventh of gold leaf, making twenty-eight threads to the texture in total (Yoma 71b). The Biblical description continues without describing the shape or length of the ephod, except by stating that it was held together by a girdle, and had two shoulder straps which were fastened to the front of the ephod by golden rings, to which the breastplate was attached by golden chains; (Exodus 28:6-14) from this description it appears to have been something like a minimalist apron or a skirt with braces, though Rashi argued that it was like a woman's riding girdle. The biblical description also adds that there were two engraved gems over the shoulder straps (like epaulettes), made from *shoham* (thought by scholars to mean *malachite* by Jewish tradition to mean *heliodor*

Textual scholars attribute the description of the Ephod in Exodus to the priestly source and to a date later than the other mentions of *Ephod*; biblical scholars believe that the Ephod may have evolved over time into this highly ceremonial form from more primitive beginnings (the simple linen form described in the Books of Samuel). Besides use as a garment, an Ephod was also used for oracular purposes, in conjunction with Urim and Thummim the books of Samuel imply that whenever Saul or David wished to question God via oracular method they asked a priest for the ephod. Since the oracular process is considered by scholars to have been one of cleromancy, with the Urim and Thummim being the objects which were drawn as lots, the Ephod is considered by scholars to have been some form of container for the Urim and Thummim; to harmonise this with the descriptions of the Ephod as a garment, it is necessary to conclude that the Ephod must have originally been some sort of pocket, which the priests *girded* to themselves. However, the biblical text states the Urim and Thummim were placed in the breastplate, not the ephod (Leviticus 8:8).

The object at Nob, which must have been somewhat freestanding since another object is kept behind it, and the objects made by Gideon and by Micah, from molten gold, logically cannot have just been garments. The object made by Gideon is plainly described as having been worshipped, and therefore the idol of some deity while the object made by Micah is closely associated with a Teraphim, and the Ephod and Teraphim are described interchangeably with the Hebrew terms *pesel* and *massekah*, meaning *graven image*, and *molten image*, respectively. Even the ephods used for oracular purposes were not necessarily just pieces of cloth, as they are not described as being worn, but carried (though some translations render 1 Samuel 2:28 as *wear an ephod* rather than *carry an ephod*); the Hebrew term used in these passages for *carry* is *nasa*, which specifically implies that the Ephod was carried either in the hand or on the shoulder. The conclusion thus is that *Ephod*, in these cases, referred to a portable idol, which the lots were cast in front of; some scholars have suggested that the connection between the idol and the garment is that the idol was

originally clothed in a linen garment, and the term *Ephod* gradually came to describe the idol as a whole.

According to the Talmud, the wearing of the ephod atoned for the sin of idolatry on the part of the Children of Israel.

### **Teshuva for Idolatry**

As we gaze at the 6 candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You by casting off the yoke [of Heaven].

And for the sin which we have committed before You by desecrating the Divine Name.

We then contemplate that all the various forms of modern idolatry have one thing at their core: *the self*. We no longer bow down to idols and images. Instead we worship at the altar of the god of self. This brand of modern idolatry takes various forms.

First, we worship at the altar of materialism which feeds our need to build our egos through the acquisition of more “stuff.” Our homes are filled with all manner of possessions. We build bigger and bigger houses with more closets and storage space in order to house all the things we buy, much of which we haven’t even paid for yet. Most of our stuff has “planned obsolescence” built into it, making it useless in no time, and so we consign it to the garage or other storage space. Then we rush out to buy the newest item, garment or gadget and the whole process starts over. This insatiable desire for more, better, and newer stuff is nothing more than covetousness. The tenth commandment tells us not to fall victim to coveting: "*You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor*" (Exodus 20:17). Gd doesn't just want to rain on our buying sprees. He knows we will never be happy indulging our materialistic desires because it is Satan's trap to keep our focus on ourselves and not on Him.

Second, we worship at the altar of our own pride and ego. This often takes the form of obsession with careers and jobs. Millions of men—and increasingly more women—spend 60-80 hours a week working. Even on the weekends and during vacations, our laptops are humming and our minds are whirling with thoughts of how to make our businesses more successful, how to get that promotion, how to get the next raise, how to close the next deal. In the meantime, our children are starving for attention and love. We fool ourselves into thinking we are doing it for them, to give them a better life. But the truth is we are doing it for ourselves, to increase our self-esteem by appearing more successful in the eyes of the world. This is folly. All our labors and accomplishments will be of no use to us after we die, nor will the admiration of

the world, because these things have no eternal value. As King Solomon put it, “*For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless*” (Ecclesiastes 2:21-23).

Third, we idolize mankind—and by extension ourselves—through naturalism and the power of science. This gives us the illusion that we are lords of our world and builds our self-esteem to godlike proportions. We reject God’s Word and His description of how He created the heavens and the earth, and we accept the nonsense of evolution and naturalism. We embrace the goddess of environmentalism and fool ourselves into thinking we can preserve the earth indefinitely when God has declared the earth has a limited lifespan and will last only until the end of the age. At that time, He will destroy all that He has made and create a new heaven and new earth. .

Finally, and perhaps most destructively, we worship at the altar of self-aggrandizement or the fulfillment of the self to the exclusion of all others and their needs and desires. This manifests itself in self-indulgence through alcohol, drugs, and food. Those in affluent countries have unlimited access to alcohol, drugs (prescription drug use is at an all-time high, even among children), and food. Obesity rates in the U.S. have skyrocketed, and childhood diabetes brought on by overeating is epidemic. The self-control we so desperately need is spurned in our insatiable desire to eat, drink, and medicate more and more. We resist any effort to get us to curb our appetites, and we are determined to make ourselves the god of our lives. This has its origin in the Garden of Eden where Satan tempted Eve to eat of the tree with the words “*you will be like Gd*” (Genesis 3:5). This has been man’s desire ever since—to be Gd and, as we have seen, the worship of self is the basis of all modern idolatry

מי כמותך אב הרחמן זוכר יצוריו ברחמים לחיים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls **His creations** with mercy for life.*

**יצוריו** hints to **צור** /stone or knife, related to **Gevurah**, as well as to Yetzer **יצר** , which too is from the left column related to **Gevurah**.

Hassidut: **ולעשות** "To do" corresponds to the *Ephod*/breastplate, and teaches of reliance, and the point of reliance is the performance of commandments so that one can stand in prayer and support himself on them.

**Seventh Night: Me'il** atones for evil speech

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר  
יַעֲשׂוּ, חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶם וּמְעִיל,  
וּכְתָנֹת תְּשֻׁבֵץ, מִצְנָפֶת  
וְאַבְנֵט; וַעֲשׂוּ בְגָדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ  
לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחִידָה, וּלְבָנָיו--  
לְכַהֵנוּ-לִי.



4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, **and a robe**, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office

We renew by wearing a spiritual robe. The priestly robe (Hebrew *me'il* מְעִיל), sometimes robe of the ephod (*meil ha-ephod* מְעִיל הָאֶפֶד), is one of the sacred articles of clothing (*bigdei kehunah*) of the Jewish High Priest. The robe is described in Exodus 28:31-35. It was worn under the Ephod.



*The robe of the High Priest as created by the Temple Institute*

The Hebrew noun *meil* occurs 30 times in the Bible, and refers not only to the robe of the high priest but also any robe worn over a tunic by men of rank, such as the robe Jonathan gave to David, or his mantle which Job in desperation tore, and also the outer cloak of women - such as the robe worn by David's daughters.

It was a sleeveless, purple-blue or violet (*techelet*) robe (*me'il*), woven in a single piece. The opening in the center for the High Priest's head to pass through was woven, not cut or torn (Exodus 28:32). The lower hem of the garment was fringed with small golden bells alternating with pomegranate-shaped tassels of blue (turquoise), purple and scarlet wool (Exodus 28:33-34). The golden bells are a necessity, and they must ring when the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, lest he die (Exodus 28:35).



Rashi deduces a law for all the priestly vestments: “From the negative one can derive the positive: if he will have them he will not be liable for death; thus, if he enters lacking one of these garments he is liable for death at the hands of Heaven.” Maimonides rules likewise.

According to the Talmud, the wearing of the priestly robe atoned for the sin of evil speech on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).

In traditional Rabbinical teaching, each of the priestly robes is intended to atone for a particular sin on the part of the Children of Israel. The eminent sage Rashi points out in his commentary on the Talmud that the robe was fashioned to atone for the sin of an evil tongue, speaking poorly about someone else. As the High Priest, adorned with the priestly garments, walked, the bells noisily announced his presence, and because the noise emanated from the robe, it served as a reminder for people to refrain from gossip. The Talmud also states that the tassels between each bell on the robe were made of three materials: turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool. These three materials signify to the three people who are injured when lashon hara is spoken: the speaker, the listener, and the one who is spoken about.

### **Teshuva for Lashon HaRa:**

As we gaze at the 7 candles, we silently confess our longest laundry list yet:

For the sin which we have committed before You with an utterance of the lips.

And for the sin which we have committed before You through speech.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by verbal [insincere] confession.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by impurity of speech.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by foolish talk.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by false denial and lying.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by the prattle of our lips.

And for the sin which we have committed before You by tale-bearing

Next we contemplate that the Hebrew term *lashon hara* (or *loshon hora*) (Hebrew לשון הרע; "evil tongue") is a term for gossip. It also refers to the prohibition in Jewish Law of telling gossip.

*Lashon hara* differs from defamation in that its focus is on the use of true speech for a wrongful purpose, rather than falsehood and harm arising. By contrast, *motzi shem ra* ("spreading a bad name") consists of untrue remarks, and is akin to slander or defamation.

Speech is considered to be *lashon hara* "evil tongue" if it says something negative about a person or party, is not previously known to the public, is not seriously intended to correct or improve a negative situation, and most importantly, is true. Statements that fit this description are considered to be *lashon hara*, regardless of the method of communication that is used, whether it is through face-to-face conversation, a written letter, telephone, or email.

The sin of *lashon hara* is considered to be a most serious sin. Therefore, scholars proclaim, how much more serious is such a statement that is false

The term *lashon hara* does not explicitly occur in the Hebrew Bible, but "*keep your tongue from evil*" (נָצַר לְשׁוֹנֵה מִרָע) occurs in Psalm 34:14. The Hebrew Bible also contains general injunctions against gossip such as: "*You shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people; neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor: I am Hashem.*" Leviticus 19:16

The Talmud (*Arakhin* 15b) lists *lashon hara* as one of the causes of the Biblical malady of *tzaraat* (traditionally translated as leprosy in Leviticus). In *Sotah* 42a, the Talmud states that habitual speakers of *lashon hara* are not tolerated in God's presence. Similar strong denouncements can be found in various places in Jewish literature.

In Numbers chapter 12, Miriam gossips with her brother Aaron. She questions why Moses is so much more qualified to lead the Jewish people than anyone else. God hears and strikes her down with *tzaraath*. Miriam had to stay outside of the camp for a week due to the *tzaraath*. During this time, all of Israel waited for her.

Yisrael Meir Kagan, the *Hafetz Hayim*, wrote two major halakhic works on the evil tongue: *Hafetz Hayim* ("Desirer of Life") and *Shmirat HaLashon* ("Guarding the tongue"), both 1873. The *Hafetz Hayim* lists 31 speech-related commandments mentioned in the Torah. An English translation, *Guard Your Tongue*, (2002) anthologizes the teachings of these two books, and is well-recommended.

There are times when a person is obligated to speak out, even though the information is disparaging. Specifically, if a person's intent in sharing the negative information is for a *to'elet*, a positive, constructive, and beneficial purpose, the prohibition against *lashon hara* does not apply. *Motzi shem ra*, spouting lies and spreading disinformation, is always prohibited. And if the *lashon hara* serves as a warning against the possibility of future harm, such communication is not only permissible, but, under certain conditions, compulsory.

### Common Fallacies

Beware of the excuses children and adults often use for speaking *lashon hara*:

- "But it's true!" *Lashon hara* specifically refers to sharing derogatory information when it is true. Spreading vicious lies is far worse!
- 
- "If she were here I would say it to her face." Maybe you would, and maybe you wouldn't. In any case, it is still forbidden.
- 
- "Everyone knows about it." Does this justify you adding fuel to the fire? Even if it is on the front page of the newspaper, you are still forbidden to speak about it.



At least for tonight, perhaps for the rest of the Holiday, try to watch your speech!

מִי כַמּוֹדֵךְ אָב הַרְחֵמֵן זֹכֵר יִצְוֵרֵי בְרִיתָיִם לְחַיִּים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy for life*

Mercy is another Name for **Hesed** in some translations, but it usually implies **Tiferet/Harmony**. RaMaK in Tomer Devorah teaches us that **Tiferet** needs to tilt to the right, toward **Hesed**, in order to do its role. So Rahamim/mercy therefore suggests "more" **Hesed** than **Gevurah/ severity**.

**Hassidut:** "To hear" relates to the **Me'il/robe**, meaning that a man must hear and lend his ear to his foundation and root...the Holy Zohar mentions that the **Me'il** is the secret of reincarnation

**Eighth Night: Tzitz** atones for audacity

וְעָשִׂיתָ צִיץ, זָהָב טָהוֹר;  
וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו פְּתוּחֵי חֹתֶם,  
קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה.

**36** And you shalt make a **plate** of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet: *Holy to Hashem*.

We renew by wearing a spiritual crown.

The priestly crown or frontlet (**tzitz** צִיץ) was the golden plate or tiara worn by the Jewish High Priest on his mitre or turban whenever he would minister in the Tabernacle or the Temple in Jerusalem.

The word **tzutz** (*tsade, vav, tsade*), which in some grammatical forms becomes **tzitz** (*tsade, yud, tsade*), may be translated as "to look" or "to gaze upon." The word **metzitz** is used, for example, in the Song of Solomon 2:9.

דוֹמָה דוֹדֵי לְצַבִּי, אוֹ לְעַפָּר הָאֲנִלִּים; הִנֵּה-זֶה עוֹמֵד, אַחַר כְּתֻלְנוֹ--מִשְׁגִּיחַ מִן-הַחַלְלוֹת, מִצִּיץ מִן-הַחַרְפִּים

*My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he stands behind our wall, he looks (**metzitz**) forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice.*

Zohar Parshat Shelah III: 174b adds:

It is written "And you shall make a plate (**tzitz**) of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, "Holiness to the L-rd" (Exodus 28:36). We have learned about this secret of the **Tzitz** already, that it was to adorn the High Priest. It was called **Tzitz** because the eyes of all would focus ("**Tzitz**") on it. It was a sign of the higher spiritual world that

adorned the High Priest. This was the reason that looking upon it atoned for the sin of insolence (Talmud Zevachim 88b), for it was impossible to stand before the High Priest with other than an honest straight face - the true face of Jacob.

The High Priest wore the **Tzitz** on his forehead "*Metzach*". In Hebrew the word "insolence" is "*Azut Metzach*". Thus gazing on the tzitz on the forehead of the High Priest atoned for the upward tilt of the forehead of the insolent.

The commandment regarding the crown is found in Exodus 28:36-38:

And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet: HOLY TO HASHEM. And you shall put it on a thread of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the front of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aharon's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity committed in the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow, even in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Hashem.

The **Tzitz** was a small rectangular plate of solid gold, engraved in Hebrew letters with "*HOLINESS TO HASHEM,*" and having holes drilled in each of the four corners through which blue cords were threaded (Exodus 39:31) which held the tiara onto the High Priest's priestly turban. Traditionally, it is understood that one set of cords went around the High priest's head at the base of the tiara, and the other went over the forehead, all meeting at the back of the head to hold the tiara in place.



Exodus 39:30 refers to the *tziytz* as the "*holy crown*".

According to the Talmud, the wearing of the **golden frontlet** atoned for the sin of arrogance on the part of the Children of Israel (B.Zevachim 88b).

### **Teshuva through Holy *Chutzpah*/Audacity:**

In front of all 8 candles, we silently confess:

For the sin which we have committed before You by obduracy.  
And for the sin which we have committed before You with impudence.

For those of us on a spiritual path, despite the fact that we've been studying and making our connections, we believe there are just some things we cannot change. We all have a wall, a barrier we cannot push beyond. And yet the truth is, our spiritual work is not to push ourselves to the limit of our abilities. It is to push beyond our abilities.

Beyond our abilities. How do we achieve that? How do we do what we can't do and draw what we don't deserve? There is a way. It's through what the Kabbalists call "**holy *chutzpah*/audacity**," meaning when we have a desire to become stronger and a drive to create real change in our lives and in the world, we can awaken that strength even if we do not think it exists within us. When it's for the sake of sharing with others, not only do we have to, but we must push against the barriers of our capabilities.

There's a beautiful story in Gemara Avodah Zara 25a that speaks to this idea. During the time the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, three times a year people would travel there from all over the world in order to make their spiritual connections. One such time there was a great water shortage, and the influx of visitors put a terrible strain on the water supply.

To avert a health crisis, a man by the name of Nakdimon responded by approaching one of the wealthiest landowners in the city and asked him to loan him water from 12 of his wells, with the promise of repayment at a later date in either the exact amount of water borrowed or 12 loaves of silver. The landowner agreed and the crisis was averted.

The months passed, and when the day for repayment arrived, Nakdimon could not give back the water because not a drop of rain had fallen in months. That morning, a messenger arrived at his door, demanding either the water or the silver. He responded, "I have all day to repay you. If it doesn't rain by the end of the day, I will repay you in silver."

In the afternoon a messenger arrived again at his door with the same message, and he sent back the same response. As the sun was about to set, the messenger returned yet again and was told the same thing, the day is not yet over.

Upon hearing this final response, the landowner laughed because he knew it was impossible for that much rain to fall in such a short period of time. He felt so elated that he went into the local bathhouse to freshen up before he met with Nakdimon to retrieve his money.

Meanwhile, Nakdimon was sad, and he went into the temple where he began to pray. His prayer was short. “I did not borrow water from those 12 wells for myself,” he told the Creator, “I did it only for the sake of sharing.” That’s was his entire prayer.

Immediately afterwards, the sky became full of clouds and rain came pouring down. It rained so hard in those few minutes that not only did the 12 wells become full of water, but there was an overflow of water.

As he left the temple, he saw the landowner and said to him, “Now you owe me money! Because of the overflow of water, I've paid you back too much.”

The landowner responded, “I know the only reason it rained is because the Creator wanted to make this miracle for you. But in truth, if I wanted to argue with you, I could, because if you look up in the sky, it's dark. Maybe it's already nightfall, and this rain really came on the next day, after nightfall, and therefore it's not your water. It's my water.”

Upon hearing this, Nakdimon turned around and went back into the temple where he prayed another short prayer to the Creator: “Master of the World, let it be known that you have people in this world that are close to You.” That was his entire prayer.

Immediately the clouds dispersed, and the sun resumed shining.

What’s powerful about this story is that in both prayers Nakdimon didn’t beg or plead with the Creator. He simply asserted what needed to happen. He did not earn these miracles, nor was he a great scholar or a spiritual giant. And yet, because his singular purpose was for the sake of others, he went in with this audacity, and he requested in short terms what he wanted to happen. And it happened.

Of course, not everyone is at the level where they can ask for the skies to open. Yet, the purpose of this story is to teach us the importance of living this consciousness of assertiveness, provided that our singular aim is the welfare of others. We are each meant to aspire to reach this place where, because our lives are so dedicated to elevating others, we can utilize this tool of holy audacity.

Today, *live with holy chutzpah/audacity!* Remember that you can ask for more than you have earned or deserve. But it’s more than just asking – it’s living in this consciousness. If you are going to do something that involves assisting others, don’t hope for it to turn out well. Insist that it does. Push beyond your personal boundaries of what you think you can do and what you think you

deserve. Because as long as you are focusing on drawing these abilities for the sake of sharing, you can ask for everything.

מִי כְמוֹךָ אָב הַרְחֵמֵן זוֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו בְּרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים

*Who is like you, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creations with mercy **for life**.*

*Chayyim/life חַיִּים is gematria 68, which is one more than **בינה Binah (67)**, the energy of the 8th Night, the most powerful night for Teshuva/return.*

**Binah** too relates to Supernal Mother, the source of life in earthly form too.

Hassidut: וּלְלַמֵּד "To teach" represents *the Tzitz/headplate*, for of it is said, "and it shall be on his forehead continually that they may be accepted," meaning one needs a good eye in order to teach his fellow.