



*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
46 and upon finding a single pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:45*

30th April 2022

29th Nisan 5782

Acharei Mot

Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Shabbat Shalom Talmadim,

Blessings for a great Shabbat, and for the week ahead. From Shabbat to Shabbat may the name of the Lord be praised.

This week's parsha begins with the Lord speaking to Moses, instructing him to tell Aaron that he must not come near the Lord, into the Holy place whenever he desires. YHVH warns Moses that Aaron must obey this instruction because he will die as the presence of the Lord will appear over the ark.

The Parsha means 'After the death', and once again we see that the title only relates to the first two lines which remind us of the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, Aaron's sons — *Leviticus 10:1-2 But Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aharon, each took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and offered unauthorised fire before Adonai, something he had not ordered them to do. 2 At this, fire came forth from the presence of Adonai and consumed them, so that they died in the presence of Adonai.*

The parsha now begins:

16 Adonai spoke with Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they tried to sacrifice before Adonai and died; **2** Adonai said to Moshe, "Tell your brother Aharon not to come at just any time into the Holy Place beyond the curtain, in front of the ark-cover which is on the ark, so that he will not die; because I appear in the cloud over the ark-cover.

3 "Here is how Aharon is to enter the Holy Place: with a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering. **4 He is to put on the holy linen tunic, have the linen shorts next to his bare flesh, have the linen sash wrapped around him, and be wearing the linen turban** — they are the holy garments. He is to bathe his body in water and put them on.

The emphasis in the second paragraph of the text focuses upon the garments that Aaron must wear. The garments of the priests are covered extensively Exodus 28. CJB



The Priestly Garments

28 “Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests. **2** Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor. **3** Tell all the skilled workers to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. **4** These are the garments they are to make: a breast-piece, an ephod, a robe, a

woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. **5** Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, ***and fine linen.***

In this new series of parshas, I hope to draw our attention to the pearls we find within and trust that the reader will continue in their study of the rest of the readings throughout the week. Our study this week begins in the first pasha after Pesach. It is interesting to note that this week’s Parsha called ‘After the death,’ somehow fits in context to the time we have just witnessed — the death and resurrection of our Christ.

The scriptures inform us that the body of Messiah was laid in the tomb covered in linen.

Luke 23. The Burial of Jesus

50 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, **51** who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. **52** Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. **53** Then he took it down, **wrapped it in linen cloth** and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

Luke 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. **2** They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, **3** but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** While they were wondering about this, suddenly ***two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning*** stood beside them.

So what’s so special about linen? Before we move on we must first pay attention to a prohibition. The Torah teaches that certain things must not be mixed. The laws of ‘Shatnez,’ prohibits the mixing of materials.

We find the command in Deut 22:**11** ‘Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together.’

This command is still observed today. However, though the fabrics are both kosher they cannot be woven together. The prohibition does not however, forbid different fabrics being worn together. We see this in the priestly garments. It is important to take note that the under garments are worn close to the skin and the woollen garments are worn over. We will visit this in a moment.

We are given insight into the property of linen, in that it keeps one cool whilst in the heat and thus prevents sweating to a large degree as it is breathable and does not cling to the body.



Linen comes from the flax plant. Egypt, during the biblical period, was considered a centre for flax growing and linen production. Moses refers to the flax and barley that was destroyed during the judgement of hail.

Exodus 9:13-31. The hail was devastating to everything in the field.

28 Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let

you go; you don't have to stay any longer." **29** Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's." **30** But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God." **31** (The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom.)

The task of preparing the flax through soaking or 'retting,' to release the fibres, and the process of separating the strands for weaving, was considered a preoccupation within the house. This process of retting produced a pungent smell, so you can imagine that this smell would have pervaded naturally during the harvesting period. Now imagine the stench that filled the air during the judgement of hail as whole crops were flooded and damaged by the downpour.

We see in the account of Joshua 2:6 that Rahab hid the spies among the bushel of flax stalks upon her rooftop.

Proverbs 31:13 speaks of the virtuous wife:
She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight.

Matthew 12

God's Chosen Servant

15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. **16** He warned them not to tell others about him. **17** This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
19 He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
20 A **bruised reed** he will not break,
and a **smouldering wick** he will not snuff out,
till he has brought justice through to victory.
21 In his name the nations will put their hope."

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

These passages refer to Messiah Yeshua, the servant of God, who is the one who has come to relieve us from our burdens and to ignite the smouldering wick (because it is low in oil), into a burning flame. Both the reeds and the wick refer to the flax and the linen.

As you can imagine, modern materials didn't exist and linen and wool would have been standard clothing material. It is considered that the Egyptians weaved the finest linen and thus such a commodity was considered a luxury. Possessing such fabric was a symbol of one's wealth. The processes involved in the production allowed for various grades, from fine to coarse. The coarser grades were to be used for lamp wicks, rope and twine and other household items.

It is noted in Ezekiel 27, that even ships sails were made from the fabric.

A Lament for Tyre

1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, **2** "Now you, son of man, take up a lament for Tyre. **3** Tell Tyre, who dwells at the gateway to the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coasts, that this is what the Lord GOD says:

You have said, O Tyre,
 'I am perfect in beauty.'
 4Your borders are in the heart of the seas;
 Your builders perfected your beauty.
 5They constructed all your planking
 with cypressa from Senir. They took a cedar from Lebanon
 to make a mast for you.
 6 Of oaks from Bashan
 they made your oars;
 of wood from the coasts of Cyprus
 they made your deck, inlaid with ivory.
**7 Of embroidered fine linen from Egypt
 they made your sail,
 which served as your banner.**
 Of blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah
 they made your awning.



Concerning the measurement of the temple and the man with measuring rod; Ezekiel 40:30 says, 'And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, *with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed*; and he stood in the gate'.

In YHVH's condemnation of Israel's idolatry, Hosea 2 writes;

3: Say to your brothers,
 "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah,"

4 "Contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; And let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts, 5 **Or I will strip her naked** and expose her as on the day when she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, make her like desert land and slay her with thirst."

6"Also, I will have no compassion on her children, because they are children of harlotry. 7 "For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, **my wool and my flax**, my oil and my drink.'" CJB

The scriptures are full of references to this wonderful plant and its uses. You might want to search them out.

There is a type of linen that was produced in Egypt that was as fine as silk, and dazzling bright. Such was its fine quality that it has never been reproduced.

It is also likely that the Israelite women learned their skill of linen weaving whilst in Egypt too.

Exodus 35:25 Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun: blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen. 26 And all the skilled women whose hearts were stirred spun the goat hair.

We agree that in everything there is a reason and YHVH did not choose to give this plant prominence because of its wealth of natural uses.

Scripture tells us that fine linen is the garment of the righteous and has divine attributes. It is also what the wedding garment of the bride is made of. The book of Revelation is packed with references to the white garments.

Revelation 3:4

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

Revelation 15: 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.

Revelation 19:6

6 And I heard a sound like the roar of a great multitude, like the rushing of many waters, and like a mighty rumbling of thunder, crying out:

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and be glad

and give Him the glory.

For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.

8 She was given clothing of fine linen, bright and pure.” ...Berean Study Bible

In this passage in Ephesians we see the symbology within the language that encapsulates the removal of soiled and filthy robes and the exchange of them for new ones befitting the new nature that seeks holiness. Thus fine linen is also a mark of holiness.

Ephesian 4

*17 Therefore I say this — indeed, in union with the Lord I insist on it: do not live any longer as the pagans live, with their sterile ways of thinking. 18 Their intelligence has been shrouded in darkness, and they are estranged from the life of God, because of the ignorance in them, which in turn comes from resisting God’s will. 19 They have lost all feeling, so they have abandoned themselves to sensuality, practicing any kind of impurity and always greedy for more. 20 But this is not the lesson you learned from the Messiah! 21 If you really listened to him and were instructed about him, then you learned that since what is in Yeshua is truth, 22 then, so far as your former way of life is concerned, **you must strip off your old nature, because your old nature is thoroughly rotted by its deceptive desires; 23 and you must let your spirits and minds keep being renewed, 24 and clothe yourselves with the new nature created to be godly, which expresses itself in the righteousness and holiness that flow from the truth.***

This passage uses language that encapsulates the removal of soiled and filthy robes and exchanges them for new ones befitting the new nature that seeks purity.

Finally I want to propose a reason why linen is special and has profound significance through scripture. I believe that the dazzling bright fine linen, the type that must be worn against the skin, and is of highest quality, represents the earthly equivalent of the spiritual covering of light the first man and woman possessed in the garden.

We read that Cain and Abel presented offerings to YHVH.

Genesis 4.3 In the course of time Kayin brought an offering to Adonai from the produce of the soil; 4 and Hevel too brought from the firstborn of his sheep, including their fat. Adonai accepted Hevel and his offering 5 but did not accept Kayin and his offering. Kayin was very angry, and his face fell. 6 Adonai said to Kayin, “Why are you angry? Why so downcast? 7 If you are doing what is good, shouldn’t you hold your head high? And if you don’t do what is good, sin is crouching at the door — it wants you, but you can rule over it.” 8 Kayin had words with Hevel his brother; then one time, when they were in the field, Kayin turned on Hevel his brother and killed him. CJB

In the text, we are not told why the men brought the offering or how frequently they did it, however, we do learn that Cain's offering was rejected by the Lord. Obviously the two offerings were or may have been specified by YHVH, but why the rejection of Cain's?

We were introduced at the beginning of the study to the Hebrew word 'Shatnez'. Simplified the shatnez, is the model or paradigm of what is called a 'hok' law; something that does not make sense or has no logical explanation. It's a 'why' question.

Generally anything given as a law by God is accepted and not questioned. Though a law may be observed the fact that the 'why' question is asked, suggests a difficulty in understanding. In a rabbinic suggestion, it may refer to someone who disregards the prohibition of mixing certain things.

In this respect, we may have a clue as to why Cain's offering was rejected. It is suggested that Cain did not give due reverence to the value of his offering. He was disregarding the importance of the offering and His heart was simply not right in bringing the acceptable sacrifice to YHVH. He is identified in the midrash as representing Egypt and the wickedness that enters a man's soul. Able is the opposite, representing the righteous soul.

On a side note we see that the sons of Adam and Eve brought the offering and not their parents.

Scripture tells us that though God forgives sin the negative effects of the parents' offences are transferred to their offspring. Numbers 14:18, Exodus 34:6

I believe that the offering of the *lamb* from Abel, a shepherd, was given because of the sin of his parents. Hebrew sages suggest that Cain, the man of the field brought the offering of the flax plant.

Together, we see the two fabrics of the linen and the wool made into the garments of the High Priest. The combination therefore represents the restoration and fulness of the royal priesthood and the holy nation — the bride who receives her pure white garments and is restored to her original status with her husband Yeshua as High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

My thought is that in its refined form, fine linen represents the covering of the original garments of light or glory which was the righteousness or holiness of Cain and Able's parents. It is these garments that fell from the divine beings.

In either case, we see how YHVH provided atonement for sin and unholiness from the very beginning.

I would add, that though the angels are described as being in bright raiment, their clothing is not from this magnificent, yet earthly plant. Linen is symbolic of those garments which will replace our present outer covering.

I trust this pearl will have given you something to think about. YHVH places everything in plain sight. I hope you will be encouraged to dig a little deeper.

Be blessed and walk in the Light of His love and may this shabbat bring harmony and peace to your week.



Numbers 6:

24 'Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha.

[May Adonai bless you and keep you.]

25 Ya'er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka.

[May Adonai make his face shine on you and show you his favour.]

26 Yissa Adonai panav eleikha v'yasem l'kha shalom

[May Adonai lift up his face toward you and give you peace.]

Shabbat Shalom

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Additional reading: 1 Samuel 18:20-42, Mt 15:10-20

Glossary

Midrash: In Judaism, the **Midrash** is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (*Aggadah*) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (*halakha*), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (*Tanakh*)

Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**), otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian

The Talmud has two components:

1. The Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law;
2. The Gemara (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.

Rashi, whose real name is Shlomo Yitzchaki was born in France in the 11th century. Rashi wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Hebrew Bible.

Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides became better known by the acronym Rambam. He was born in 1138 in Cordoba, Spain. He was a Sephardic Jew and influential philosopher. He is considered to be among the greatest of Torah Scholars.

Nachmanides- 13th century French Jewish Philosopher, commonly known by the acronym; Rambam.