

Parshat Tetzaveh - The Clothes We Wear

Exodus 28:4-43

You shall make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for honor and glory. And you shall speak to all the wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, and they shall make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, [so] that he serve Me [as a kohen]. And these are the garments that they shall make: a choshen, an ephod, a robe, a tunic of checker work, a cap, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for your brother Aaron and for his sons to serve Me [as kohanim] ...They shall be worn by Aaron and by his sons when they enter the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to serve in the Holy, so they will not bear iniquity and die. It shall be a perpetual statute for him and for his descendants after him

שמות כח:ד-מג

ועשית בגדי־קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן אֶתִּיד לְכַבֹּד וּלְתִפְאָרֶת:
וְאַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב אֲשֶׁר מִלֵּאתִיו רוּחַ
חֵכְמָה וְעָשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי אֶהְרֹן לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ לְכַהֲנֹת־לִי וְאֵלֶּה
הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּדֶת וְיָמְעִיל וְכִתְנֹת
תְּשֻׁבֵץ מִצְנֻפֶת וְאַבְגָּט וְעָשׂוּ בְּגַדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן
אֶתִּיד וְלִבְנָיו לְכַהֲנֹת־לִי...וְהָיוּ עַל־אֶהְרֹן וְעַל־בְּנָיו
בְּבָאָם | אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אוֹ בְּגִשְׁתָּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא־יָשָׂאוּ עֲוֹן וּמָתוּ חֲקַת עוֹלָם לֹ
וְלִזְרָעוֹ אַתְּרִיו:

Benno Jacob Commentary on Genesis



Clothing is not merely a protection against cold or ornamentative. **It constitutes the primary and necessary distinguishing mark of human society. In the moral consciousness of man it serves to set him higher than the beast. The status and glory of man are reflected in the character of his attire. Just to be clothed already lends dignity to man. The priests were given special garments "for splendor and for beauty".** The highest status that a mortal can attain is that of high priest on his entry into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. He is then clothed in white as a symbol of purity and light that he may be compared with the man "clothed in linen" i.e. the angel of the Lord.

On this account he his bidden in Leviticus 16:4 to put on the holy linen tunic ... the linen trousers upon his flesh ... be girded with the linen girdle and bathe his flesh in water and be clothed with them (*ulevesham*). The grammatical form of the verb "clothe" used here is only to be found elsewhere with regard to God: "the Lord reigns, He is clothed (*lavesh*) in majesty." In other words, clothing is a symbol of human dignity, nakedness the essence of the beast. The nakedness of man symbolizes immorality ("the uncovering of nakedness).

The fact that the Lord Himself gave Adam and Eve garments and clothed them indicates that clothing is not just a social convention but an extension of the work of creation, a kind of second skin given to man, a nobler material encasement. Fittingly, Rabbi Meir wrote in his Torah (Bereshit Rabbah 20:29), when he wished to liken Man to his Makes "garments of light" (The Hebrew word for skin cab changed into "light" by altering the first letter from *ayin* to *alef*], since the Holy One Blessed be He is described as "girding Himself with light."

"You shall girdle them with a Sach - Aaron and his sons - and you shall wrap the Headdresses on them, The priesthood shall be an eternal duty for them" (Ex. 29:9) While in their vestments, their priesthood is vested in them; when not in their vestments, their priesthood is not vested in them.

והגרת אותם אבנט אהרן ובניו וחבשת להם מגבעות והיתה להם כהונה לחקת עולם בזמן שבגדיהם עליהם כהונתם עליהם אין בגדיהם עליהם אין כהונתם עליהם

Sandra Blakeslee, *Mind Games: Sometimes a White Coat Isn't Just a White Coat* in *The New York Times*, April 2 2012



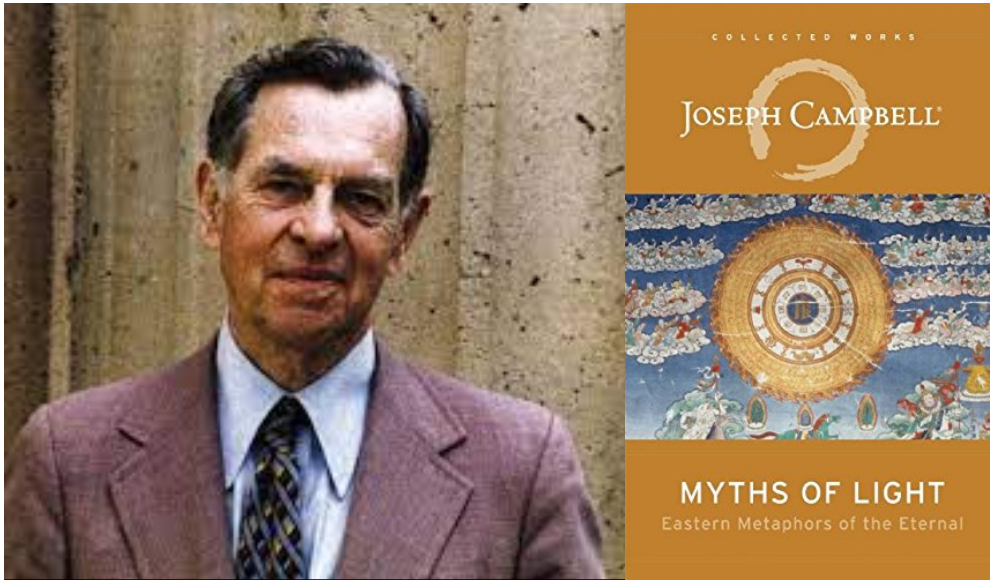
It has long been known that “clothing affects how other people perceive us as well as how we think about ourselves,” Dr. Galinsky said. Other experiments have shown that women who dress in a masculine fashion during a job interview are more likely to be hired, and a teaching assistant who wears formal clothes is perceived as more intelligent than one who dresses more casually.

But the deeper question, the researchers said, is whether the clothing you wear affects your psychological processes. Does your outfit alter how you approach and interact with the world? So Dr. Galinsky and his colleague Hajo Adam conducted three experiments in which the clothes did not vary but their symbolic meaning was manipulated.

In the first, 58 undergraduates were randomly assigned to wear a white lab coat or street clothes. Then they were given a test for selective attention based on their ability to notice incongruities, as when the word “red” appears in the color green. Those who wore the white lab coats made about half as many errors on incongruent trials as those who wore regular clothes. ...

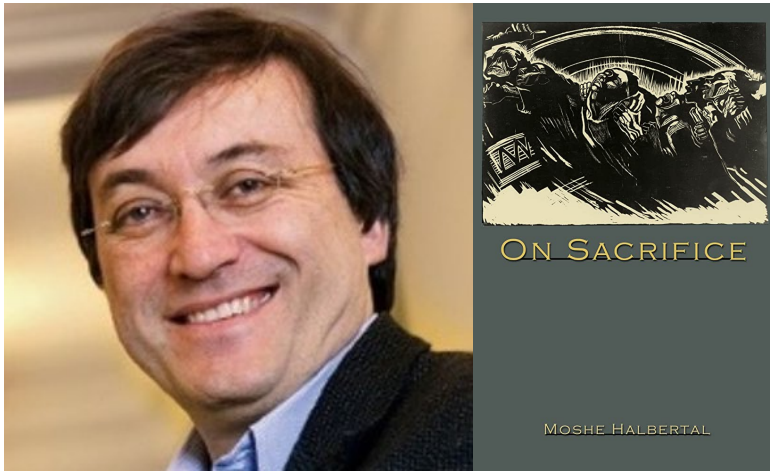
Clothes invade the body and brain, putting the wearer into a different psychological state, he said. He described his own experience from last Halloween (or maybe it should be called National Enclothed Cognition Day).

He had decided to dress as a pimp, with a fedora, long coat and cane. “When I entered the room, I glided in,” he said. “I felt a very different presence.”



In order to be, in order to be an individual, we must learn to distinguish between the self and the masks we wear. ... When you come home in the evening, are you still Mr President or do you leave that in the office? If you keep your mask on, we would call you a stuffed shirt. In such a person, the personality gradually disappears into the ideal image of the role.

Moshe Halbertal, *On Sacrifice* pp15-16



In its essence as an offering as opposed to a gift, the sacrifice defies the common ethics of giving since its acceptance is not secured. The fatal possibility of rejection gives rise to an important function of “ritual”: successful transfer. **Ritual is a prescribed procedure meant to guarantee the transfer’s success. Adherence to detailed routine makes the passage from laying down to acceptance less fraught. Ritual is thus a protocol that protects from the risk of rejection....The ritual’s intricate rules serve as a shield for the human approaching God.** Any change in the protocol might be lethal, like walking in a minefield. This shield comes at the expense of visibility.

...

Ritual as a protocol for an approach erases the individuation of the one who is approaching. Such a person is one among many who follow the routine, approaching under the canopy of the secure and recognizable. The acceptance of such a gift is not unique, but at least it is safe. It secures enough attention without drawing too much of it.

Vayikra 16

No person shall enter into the tent of meeting when he comes for atonement in the sanctuary until his departure and he shall atone on his own behalf, on his home’s behalf and on behalf of all of Israel.

ויקרא טז

יז) וְכֹל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּבֹאוֹ לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ עַד צֵאתוֹ וְכִפֹּר בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וּבְעֵד כָּל קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Vayikra Rabba, Acharei Mot, 21

R' Abahu said, And is not the Kohen Gadol himself a person? Rather, this is as R Pinchas said, that at the moment that the presence of God rested upon him, his face was ablaze like a torch

Baal Shem Tov Megilat Esther

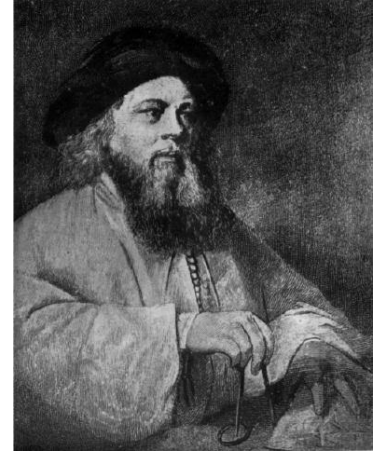
"To bring Vashit the queen before the king wearing the king's crown ..." In the gemara (Megillah 12:b) it interprets that she was to be naked. I heard from the Baal Shem Tov these holy words: The category of *klipot* (shells) don't have any reality in the world aside from being dressed in some other category. Since the king told them to bring Vashti (who herself represents *klipa* because she is counterposed to Esther who is holy) and he commanded them to bring *klipot* naked, without any covering, because of this she didn't come. Because how could she come? She had no reality aside from the intermediary of clothing. .

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת אחרי מות

פרשה כא

אמר ר' אבהו וכהן גדול לא אדם היה אלא כההוא דאמר ר' פנחס בשעה שהיה רוח הקודש שרוי עליו היו פניו בוערות כלפידים עליו

בעל שם טוב מגילות מגילת אסתר



א. להביא את ושתי המלכה לפני המלך בכתר מלכות וגו'. ובגמרא (מגילה י"ב ב) ובלבד שתהא ערומה, שמעתי בשם הבעל שם טוב זללה"ה, ותוכן הדברים דברי קודש, כי בחינות הקליפות אין להם בחינות המציאות בעולם, כי אם דרך הלבשה באיזה בחינה, וכיון שאמר המלך להביא את ושתי, המורה על קליפה, שכנגד אסתר שבקדושה, וצוה להביא את הקליפות ערום בלא לבוש, ולכן לא באה, כי מאין לה לבוא, שאין לה שום מציאות, בלתי אמצעיות ההלבשה, והענין עמוק, ולא כל מוחא סביל להבין את דבריו הקדושים: (אור המאיר)

And these are the garments you shall make: The Breastplate, the Ephod, and the Tunic. With these clothes, God shows Israel which person he chooses, for through the clothes is recognized and understood the value found within the person Aaron the Kohen. The Headband is always found on his far-head, and on the Headband is engraved "Holy to God" that is the depths of his mind are constantly "Knowing God your father." The breastplate hints that in his heart is found no hatred for any member of Israel for the tribes of Israel are engraved on the his heart. The Ephod, which was secured on him, hints to his security/faith that God is always supporting him. And the tunic teaches about the greatness of his awe since is made entirely our *Techelet* (turquoise) which suggests awe.



ואלה הבגדים אשר יעשו חשן ואפוד ומעיל. באלו הבגדים מראה הש"י לישראל באיזה נפש הוא בוחר, כי מהבגדים יוכר ומובן היקרות הנמצא בתוך נפש אהרן הכהן. הציץ מרמז עליו שיהיה תמיד על מצחו, ועל הציץ היה נחקק קודש לה' היינו בעומק מחשבתו היה תמיד דע את אלקי אביך. והחושן מרמז עליו כי לא נמצא בלבו שנאה לשום נפש מישראל, כי היו שבטי ישראל חקוקים על לבו. ואפוד שהיה חגור בו ומרמז על בטחונו בהש"י שהוא תומכו תמיד. ומעיל מורה על גודל יראתו כי היה כלו מתכלת שמרומו על יראה.

Ultra-Orthodox Men Ditch All-Black Attire as Fashion Trumps Tradition



Break With Tradition: Yosel Tiefenbrun, an ordained Chabad rabbi, has a fashion sense that is a bit un-Orthodox. *Image by jta*

By JTA

May 16, 2013

Yosel Tiefenbrun looked in the mirror and he liked what he saw.

The 23-year-old Chabad rabbi and apprentice at Maurice Sedwell, a bespoke tailor's shop on London's Savile Row, was wearing a vintage double-breasted jacket with gold buttons, tasseled Barker shoes, a claret bow tie and matching handmade hat and square handkerchief. Then he ran out the door to attend the "Oscars of tailoring" — the Golden Shears Award ceremony honoring the best in British fashion.

Several of his colleagues were in the running for a prize. They came back empty, but Tiefenbrun did not. Nick Carvell, the online fashion editor at British GQ, snapped his picture and posted it the following day on the magazine's website, naming Tiefenbrun "best in show." Within days, the photograph of the hasidic rabbi and his natty attire was picked up by Jewish publications around the world.

"This is a very important message," Tiefenbrun told JTA. "You can be a [religious] man and still be successful in whatever you do if you are constantly working on yourself and keeping your Jewish life alive."

Hasidic Jews are well known for flouting the conventions of contemporary fashion, adhering to a strict dress code that originated in Eastern Europe and emphasizes modesty and piety. For men, the uniform mandates a black hat, coat and pants with a white shirt.

But in recent years, some haredi Orthodox women have sought to push the limits of tznius, or modesty, wearing more elaborate and, in some cases, slightly more revealing clothes. Now a group of young men affiliated with the Chabad hasidic movement are doing the same, in some cases breaking dramatically with their community's sartorial codes.

Last year, Rabbi Dovi Scheiner and his wife, Esty, a Chabad couple who run the "boutique" SoHo Synagogue in Lower Manhattan, were named among the Big Apple's 50 best dressers by Stylecaster, a fashion news website. The 36-year-old rabbi posed for the online outlet sitting on a velvet chair wearing a smart gray suit and laceless Converse sneakers.

Meanwhile, Mendy Sacho, a South African designer based in New York, has gained mainstream media attention for his innovative take on kapotas, the long black frocks worn by hasidic men. Sacho invigorates the traditionally drab coats by adding colorful linings and a sharper cut.

Rather than seeing their sartorial sensibilities as a departure from traditional dress, this new crop of fashionable hasidim tend to see being stylish and religiously observant as complementary.

“Look at the rebbe,” said Sacho, referring to Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the late spiritual leader of Chabad. “When he was young, he was a very well-groomed man. The style he wore in the ’50s in France is the style many Chabadniks are now adopting.”

Photos of Schneerson from the period show him in dapper outfits that sharply contrast with the conservative look he adopted later as Chabad’s leader.

Samuel Heilman, a Queens College sociologist and co-author of a biography of Schneerson, said the rebbe’s followers have tended to overlook those years in Paris, partially because of the liberal taste in clothes he exhibited.

“[In his youth] he dressed in a much more cosmopolitan fashion, sometimes wearing a beret,” Heilman said. “In the absence of a living rebbe, there are capacities for all these hasidim to project on the rebbe all sorts of things that would not be possible if he were alive.”

Tiefenbrun, who served as a religious emissary in Singapore for two years before returning to London, wears suits that are much more ostentatious than the subtly augmented frocks sold by Sacho. On his Tumblr page, Tiefenbrun posts photos of himself in outfits not commonly seen on hasidic men. His style favors boldly colored shoes, trendy hats, bow ties, sharply cut jackets and pocket squares.

Tiefenbrun spends a day-and-a-half each week learning his craft at Maurice Sedwell’s tailoring academy. The rest of the week he works the front desk, where he has waited on sheiks, soccer players and TV personalities.

One non-Jewish client, noticing his yarmulke, asked him for a blessing for his shirts. Another discovered they had a mutual acquaintance, the Chabad emissary in San Diego. But Tiefenbrun is careful to note that his clothing choices are his alone and not emblematic of any Chabad-specific trend.

“It’s not like it’s a Chabad thing, it’s me,” Tiefenbrun insisted. “I love art. I love quality clothing.”

With its sprawling global network of emissaries working to inspire religious observance among secular Jews, it’s perhaps little surprise that Chabadniks are practically alone within the hasidic world in pushing the boundaries, if gently, of their community’s dress codes.

“One can make the case Chabad, more than any other hasidic group, is in direct contact with the non-hasidic world, so they have a real good feel for that world outside,” Heilman said. “They have learned how to recruit there.”

Sacho said there is little interest in his stylish kapotas from members of other hasidic communities. Chabad men are selling “a product called Judaism” to the wider world, he said, and that tradition impacts their choice of clothes.

“People will listen and appreciate you more if you dress well and look presentable,” he said.

Within the confines of the hasidic community, however, it’s often a different story. Young customers come in looking for one thing, but then their mother arrives and “chews my ear off,” Sacho said.

But still, Sacho insists the style-conscious community is growing in the Chabad world and someday kapotas like his will be the norm.

“There are quite a few of us,” Sacho said. “All my clients are younger. It’s the future.”

