

## Climate Action Tip for Adar

How long have you had that shirt/skirt/dress? For most of history, garments were expensive and precious items, sometimes even passed down as inheritance. In today's world of fast fashion, clothes are often considered practically disposable. But this has huge environmental costs, both because producing more clothes leads to more carbon emissions, and because of increased textile waste. Clothes are hard to recycle, often ending up in landfills.

According to a [McKinsey report](#), in 2018 the fashion industry was responsible for 2.1 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions - equivalent to the emissions of the economies of France, Germany, and the UK combined. They estimate that changes in consumer behavior could account for up to 20% of the necessary reduction in emissions to meet Paris Agreement goals. Americans generated 11.3 million tons of textile waste in 2018, up from 1.7 million tons in 1960, according to the EPA. In 2018, we threw out 13 million tons of clothing – 80 lbs per person.

Clothing plays an important role in Jewish tradition, from Joseph's coat of many colors to the elaborate garments donned by the Cohanim (priests). In the Purim story, clothes reflect the mission and the values of the central characters in Megilat Esther. Mordechai and the rest of the Jews put on sackcloth upon learning of Haman's decree to destroy the Jews. Esther puts on regal clothing to go win the king's favor and save her people. Haman is thrilled with the idea of getting to dress up in the king's royal garb to show how valued he is, and is infuriated when Mordechai gets this honor. In the triumphant end to the story, we read (Megilat Esther 8:15):

וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָצָא מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת תְּכֵלֶת וְחוּר וְעֹטָרַת זָהָב גְּדוּלָּה וְתַכְרִיךְ בּוֹץ וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשֶׁן  
צָהָלָה וְשִׂמְחָה:

Mordecai left the king's presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool. And the city of Shushan rang with joyous cries.

Whatever you're doing, it's important to dress the part.

So how can we balance needing to dress for success and limiting fashion waste? Obviously, the other place fashion comes into play in Purim is in costumes. To help out the environment, our tip for the month is to give others the opportunity to dress up in your clothes! The best way to get rid of unwanted clothes is to donate them and give them a new life. Donating to small local organizations makes it more likely your clothes will get put to good use. Some good local options are [Bottomless Closet](#), [NY Cares](#), and [Dress for Success](#). Or resell them on [thredUP](#) or similar places. Or, dress up as someone else – rent clothes (via [Rent the Runway](#)) to vary your wardrobe while allowing clothes to get more use. If you do recycle clothing, bring it to a [GrowNYC](#) drop off (they have one at the Greenmarket at the Museum of Natural History on Sundays), as they are committed to making sure textiles get reused in some way (e.g. as insulation) rather than going to a landfill. Alternatively, buy higher quality clothes that last longer, made of natural materials – and dress like royalty!