

Parshat HaShavuah

תצוה

TETZAVEH

ח' אדר תשע"ה

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חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

Candle Lighting

6:02

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:39

Sunset

6:21

Motzei

Shabbat

6:55

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BE LIKE OIL

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

What am I doing here? What is my purpose, my role? This question has been raised by many throughout the ages. In fact this question was raised by the greatest rabbi of them all, Moshe Rabbeinu.

“... have them bring you clear olive oil, [made from olives that were] crushed for lighting...” (Shmot 27:20).

God commands Moshe to issue the call for pure olive oil which would be used for the daily lighting of the menorah. However, it seems very odd to be talking about this now. Moshe had already asked the people (in last week's parsha) to contribute the various materials necessary for the construction, fabrication, and maintenance of the Mishkan. Why does Hashem command this now?

Rabbi Shmuel Silber shares a delicious insight from Rabbi Moshe Alshich. The Alshich explains that Moshe is distressed. Moshe asks the Jewish people to donate their precious fabric and jewels and they do so with a complete heart.

Moshe sees Betzalel and Ohaliav, the head craftsmen who, together with their volunteers, build and construct the various utensils and structure of the Mishkan. He sees Aharon who was chosen by God to be the Kohen Gadol, and he sees his nephews who have been chosen to serve alongside their illustrious father.

Continued page 4





A BORING PARSHA

BAILA EISEN ('15)

Call me a heretic, but this week's parsha is kind of boring. It's called Tetzaveh—"you shall command"—and it's not kidding. The entire thing is filled with nitpicky commandments about what exactly Aharon and the kohanim have to do, wear, make, burn, and wash; all the details are enough to make your head spin.

Sometimes, when I'm reading a parsha like this, I can't help but wonder why we can't be a little more like other religions. "Just *feel* God", they preach, "Pray when you're in the mood to, just *believe*, and you're good". Rather than this solely emotional approach, however, we are given 613 mitzvot.

Rashi tells us that in Megillat Rut, when Naomi is trying to dissuade Rut from converting, Naomi tells her, "We have 613 mitzvot that separate us from the other nations! No one else has that many. You'd be crazy to take all that on!" Of course, Rut's response is, "Your nation is my nation" (Rut 1:16). She goes on to convert, taking on every one of those 613 laws—just as we do every single day.

But why? Why so many? Why so specific? What kind of crazy religion is this?

Once upon a time, some rabbis were debating over what the most important aspect of Torah is. Rabbi Akiva famously said that to love your brother as yourself trumps all. Many other rabbis suggest their opinions, but the rabbi whose opinion we ultimately accept is Ben Pazi, who says that the mitzvah of bringing the Korban Tamid, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, is the most important part of Judaism.

Specific laws having to do with korbanot and the kohanim's service, like those mentioned in this parsha, are the most important component of Judaism. These are what set our religion apart. It seems obvious from this midrash that not only should we shoulder these detailed laws, but we should be *especially* proud of them.

The midrash is making a statement about the essence of Judaism. If Judaism has a serious set of laws, it's because it's a serious religion. The decision to follow Torah is not one to be taken lightly. It is something that plays a major role in our lives each and every day, from the moment we open our eyes in the morning, to deciding which shoe to put on first, to davening three times a day.





WHAT'S IN A GARMENT?

ELLA HERMAN ('16)

As the Torah continues to develop detailed imagery of the Mishkan and all the steps necessary to create it, it also gives a description of the kohanim's various garments for their service to Hashem. There is a certain emphasis on clothing, with certain garments exclusive to only the Kohen Gadol—these are much more glamorous, embellished, and complex than a regular kohen's garments.

We believe that there is a part of Hashem—our neshama—in each and every one of us. Yet the Torah gives an in-depth explanation over the very physical details of clothing.

What is the relevance of the Torah expounding upon this complicated and thorough uniform? Without the Beit Hamikdash, how does this kohen-couture relate to our lives other than as a thing of the past?

When discussing the making of the clothing, Hashem says he wants the clothing made by “...the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with...wisdom” (28:3). Hashem invests into every one of us specific, unique qualities and gifts. These qualities have the grand potential of either motivating us to fulfill our purpose or affect us negatively and inhibit our growth—it's all dependent upon what you do with your gift.

The thorough discussion about the clothing of the kohanim is not for the sake of the clothing, but is an expression of the divine holiness that the kohen possesses. Whether we like it or not, how we dress and how we conduct ourselves says a lot about who we are.

UNIQUE LIGHT

ARIELLA MAMANN ('16)

In the previous two parshiyot, the Torah listed many commandments that Hashem instructed the Jews to follow. However, in this week's parsha, Parshat Tetzaveh, it seems as if Moshe—and not Hashem—is commanded to tell the Jews to bring him the oil for the Ner Tamid. Shouldn't Hashem be commanding the Jews and not Moshe? Why does this seemingly change in this week's parsha?

The Ohr HaChaim explains that this is indeed a commandment from Moshe and not from God. As a sign of respect, love, and devotion, Hashem is telling Moshe to have the Jews give the oil for the candle to burn voluntarily.

Hashem is telling Moshe that after all of the rules have been commanded, it's up to us to find our own unique ways to show a commitment to demonstrating our love for God. Hashem constantly reminds us that we need to find our own “oil” in order to bring our own unique “light” to the world.



Moshe sees all of this and becomes despondent. Moshe feels that he is missing out on having an active role in the Mishkan. “Where is my share in this holy work?” Moshe feels left out and unimportant. In life, we assume that true success is measured by our personal accomplishments. That is not always the case. Obviously, we must grow, we must do, and we must accomplish. However, we must also strive to enable others to reach their potential, grow, and accomplish as well.

A kind word, holding the door open for someone, picking up a piece of trash, or a few words of inspiration can be what others need to see in order to move forward in their own journey. Our job is to become enablers of growth. We must each strive to be the spark that ignites others and enriches their “oils” to reach their potential.

Eisen continued

Judaism is an investment. It’s like the Ivy League of religions—sure, you have to work your butt off, but you know that you’re getting the best education out there. Nobody takes a school seriously if it’s easy; I certainly wouldn’t be able to take Judaism seriously if it were so easy to be a religious Jew that you barely even have to think about it; that you could do it without even trying.

So in spite of the occasional feeling of tediousness that can overcome someone reading a long, meticulous parsha all about very detailed laws, we have to remember that this is what makes our religion strong. This is what makes our religion great.

Herman continued

The kohanim's elaborate dress was not for physical show; rather, it was an expression of the sophistication and grace with which the kohanim would conduct themselves as a physical representation of their outstanding job and connection to Hashem. Not only should we be like the kohanim and dress our part of being Hashem's nation, but we should also fully envelop our physical selves in Hashem's vision, using His gifts to build ourselves and our relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

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