



Parshas Tetzaveh

For the week ending 11 Adar 5759
26 - 27 February 1999

Overview

Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the menorah in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the bigdei kehuna (priestly garments): A breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate, and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. Hashem commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the Mishkan. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering, and libations of wine and oil. Hashem commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

Insights

SILENT BROADCAST

“Upon it shall Aharon bring the spice incense...” (30:7)

Advertising is the touchstone of contemporary society. The art of advertising is not to sell a product, it is to sell to people a perception of themselves which will result from buying the product. Maybe the little blue stripes will keep your teeth looking brighter. Maybe they won't. What sells the product however, is not the promise of brighter teeth, it is the lifestyle of people who have brighter teeth. As we all know, people with brighter teeth are never unhappy. They never feel tired. They flit effortlessly from one party to another. They jetset across the world without a bank manager or a mortgage in sight. And all for the price of a tube of toothpaste. Now that's what I call value for money!

In an age where illusion has become reality, where people send wreaths to TV stations when soap-operas stars “die” and are written out of the script, selling the Brooklyn Bridge has never been easier. All you need is a lot of money. And airtime.

The truth, however, sells itself. It doesn't need to be trumpeted to the skies. Nothing is more infectious than the truth.

There is a Jew who sits in a most frugal apartment in Yerushalyim. He has never made any television appearances. He has never been interviewed on any chat show. No-one has ever advertised him. And yet the Jewish world beats a path to his door when it needs a halachic decision. His status and fame come entirely from his piety, plus the fact that, in most areas of Judaism, he knows the law better than anyone else. And everyone else knows it.

In the Beis Hamikdash, the *ketores* — the service of burning the incense — was performed away from public eyes, in private. Yet its scent could be detected as far away as Jericho, over twenty miles away.

When a person puts all his effort into living correctly, in accordance with the truth of the Torah, then, even though he may not broadcast his virtues, the nation will seek him out. His life may be a quiet understatement, but all his actions will radiate inner purity and holiness like a beacon.

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Parshas **Tetzaveh** - 11 Adar 5759, 26 - 27 February 1999

OLIVES AND OIL

“And you shall take pure pressed olive oil for illumination” (27:20)

The Jewish People are like the olive: Just as the olive only yields its oil after it has been crushed and squeezed, so the Jewish People reveal their true stature only after suffering oppression.

And just as oil cannot mix with any other liquid, but rather floats above it, so too the Jewish People never vanish into the melting pot. And most remarkably, despite being persecuted and subjected to the most severe ordeals, the Jewish People always rise above their oppressors and remain distinct from them.

WHERE'S MOSHE?

“And now, you shall command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)

From the description of his birth in the beginning of *Sefer Shemos* (Exodus) until *Sefer Devarim* (Deuteronomy), Moshe's name appears in every parsha. Every *Parsha* — except one. This week's *Parsha*. The Vilna Gaon explains that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar and this date usually falls in the week of Parshas Tetzave. Just as Moshe was removed from the world during this week, so his name was “removed” from the parsha of this week.

WHERE'S MOSHE? PART 2

The words of a *tzaddik* reverberate. They are like the ripples of a pond which travel outward and are felt even on a distant shore.

After the Jewish People had been unfaithful to G-d in the incident of the golden calf, Moshe pleaded with Hashem. He said, “Erase me from Your Book that You have written.” Moshe asked that he, rather than the Jewish people, should be eradicated. Even though Moshe spoke out of total self-sacrifice, nevertheless, his words made an impression, and it is for this reason that his name was “erased” from the *Parsha*.

Sources:

Silent Broadcast - Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

Of Olives And Oil - Tzror Hamor

Where's Moshe - Vilna Gaon, Baal HaTurim, Nachal Kadmonim in Iturei Torah

Maftir for Parshas Zachor

Devarim 25:17-19

CHOLENT VERSUS AMALEK

“Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way when you were leaving Egypt, that he happened upon you on the way...” (Devarim 25:17-18)

The Torah mitzvah to remember what Amalek did to us when we came out of Egypt is fulfilled by reading the *maftir* on this Shabbos. Why is it that we specifically perform this mitzvah on Shabbos? What is the connection between the eradication of Amalek and Shabbos?

The Torah teaches us that Amalek attacked us *asher karcha baderech*. The word *karcha* has three connotations: It can mean “chance.” It can mean “spiritual impurity.” And it can mean “cold.”

Shabbos stands in eternal opposition to these three things.

The poison that Amalek tries to put into the mind of man is that the world is *mikreh*, nothing more than mere coincidence. Shabbos is our testimony that Hashem created the world and everything in it in six days; that nothing is by chance.

Amalek represents a kind of spiritual impurity — *keri*. Shabbos is like a *mikveh* for the Jewish soul. On Shabbos we pray: “Purify our hearts to serve You in truth.”

The third connotation of the word *karcha* is “cold.” The natural desire of the Jewish People is to serve G-d with a burning passion. Amalek wants to cool us off. Throughout the working week, we can become enmeshed in a world-view that owes more to Amalek than to Judaism. On Shabbos we return to those feelings of closeness to G-d. Shabbos represents the warmth of the Jewish soul's desire to unite with the Creator.

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Haftorah: Zachor Shmuel I 15:1-34

THE LAST OF THE AMALEKI

Parshas Zachor is always read the week before Purim, because on Purim we celebrate our deliverance from Amalek's most notorious descendent — Haman.

The Haftorah of Parshas Zachor depicts another encounter with the descendants of

Amalek: King Shaul was commanded to annihilate Amalek, but he failed to kill their king Agag. While in captivity, the last of the Amaleki, Agag, managed to sire a child, and it was from this child that Haman was descended.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

THE WALLED CITIES OF ERETZ ISRAEL

The Megillah is read on the 14th of Adar in cities which were *not* walled at the time when Joshua led the Jewish nation in conquest of *Eretz Yisrael*. In cities which *were* surrounded by walls at that time, the Megillah is read a day later, on the 15th of Adar.

In a city about which there is uncertainty as to whether it was walled at that time or not, its inhabitants must read the Megillah on both the 14th and 15th. This includes the ancient cities of Jaffa, Lod, Akko, Tsefas, Haifa, Beersheva, Hebron, Shechem and Gaza, according to the "*Luach Eretz Yisrael*" of Rabbi M. Tuchichinski. Feasting and gift giving are also done on both days. The blessing on the Megillah reading is said only on the 14th when most of the world reads the Megillah.

In Tiberias, too, the Megillah must be read on both days. But this is not because there is any doubt that the city had walls in the time of Joshua. A passage in Joshua 19 describes Rekes as a walled city, and we know that Rekes is another name for Tiberias. What then is the question that arises in regard to Tiberias?

Tiberias is located on the Sea of Galilee, also called the Kinneret. Thus, it was protected from invaders by a combination of walls and the sea. If we define a "walled city" literally, as one completely surrounded by walls, then Tiberias does not qualify. But if we view "walled city" as one protected from invasion, then Tiberias' combination of walls and sea qualifies it as such.

This is why the Sage Chezkiyahu instituted in Tiberias the Megillah reading on both days, a ruling cited in the Shulchan Aruch as a precedent for all cities whose status is uncertain.

(Orach Chaim 68 8:4, Mishneh Berurah 9)

