



## Parshat Tetzaveh: Pressed to Perfection

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Parshat Tetzaveh discusses the oil that was used to kindle the *menorah*. First the Torah refers to it as *shemen zayit zach*, pure olive oil, and then *katit lama'or*, pressed for lighting. Rashi explains that the oil had to be pressed rather than crushed. It had to be pure with no particles or sediment even if it could be filtered out later on. The *menorah* represents the wisdom of Torah. The pure olive oil symbolizes our Torah leaders who are meant to be above reproach. They cannot act in ways that arouse suspicion and then justify their actions, just as filtered oil was unfit for the *menorah*.

Torah learning must be like *shemen zayit zach*. Our motives should be pure, solely to achieve *deveikut baHashem*. In also must be *katit*, pressed. Succeeding in Torah requires hard work and exertion. Even if a person isn't blessed with extraordinary abilities, if he invests effort, Hashem will help him as it says, "*Yagati u'mazati ta'amin*." Rav Dessler teaches that if a person doesn't give his all to learn Torah, he will not grow. The spiritual path a person will acquire in life isn't handed to him. He must acquire it through effort and prayer.

The Netivot Shalom writes that Klal Yisrael

are compared to an olive tree. The olive is a unique fruit. The process of pressing it transforms it into a new greater product. The process brings out its inherent potential so that it can enlighten and illuminate. Similarly, there is a divine spark in every Jew's heart. Often, only suffering and tough challenges bring out the brilliance hidden within us. The light of the *menorah* contained sparks of the ohr *haganuz*. When a Jew would see its flames he would be inspired to tap into his inherent spiritual energy. The Torah and *Shabbat* also contain rays of this special light. A person's face looks different on *Shabbat*. It is a day when we can contemplate our mission, realizing that life is about growth and coming closer to Hashem.

In order to keep the balance of free choice there must be a powerful darkness opposite this light. This is Amalek. Rav Zilberberg explains that Amalek signifies anger. Bilam said, "*Reisheet goyim Amalek*." The first letters of this verse form the word *rega* (a second). Amalek symbolizes immediate uncontrollable anger as it says "*Ki rega b'apo chayim birtzono*." Anger only comes when a person fails to step back to look at the whole picture. He does not look to see the hand of Hashem. The light of a Jew lies hidden within the outer bitter olive in the inner purity of its oil. Erasing Amalek pushes aside the extraneous things in

life. We can do this by asking ourselves, "How can I be a better person? What can I learn? How can I extract the light from the darkness?"

Moshe's essence was daat, knowledge, which led him to clarity and *dveikut baHashem*. He in turn invested within us this ability to have a close relationship with the One above. When we study Torah and do *mitzvot* with passion we create a *nachat ruach* (divine pleasure) for Hashem. The illumination of the *menorah* is about our ability to give and Hashem's ability to respond.

Rav Roberts notes that if any oil oozes out of the olive on its own, it's unfit for the *menorah*. We have to work to ignite the spark of holiness inside of us. Rav Twersky writes that when a lobster grows, its shell becomes restrictive and so it sheds it and forms a new one. He does this until it reaches its potential. The key to growth is discomfort. Although in early adulthood our body stops growing, our spirit must continue to grow and that requires continuous inner work.

May we be merit to break out of the coldness of Amalek, to embrace the truth, and to celebrate the eternal holiday of Purim with true joy.

## The Month of Adar

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb

It says, "*Mishnichnas Adar marbim b'simcha*." It doesn't say be joyful, but rather increase your joy, which means a Jew's general state of being should be joyous and in this month one should add to it. There is no explicit *mitzvah* to be happy in the *Torah* and the Arizal asks why. Rav Chaim Vital explains in *Shaar Hakedusha* that *simcha* is a *middah* and it is an expression of *bitachon*. Hashem controls all the possibilities, nothing is stronger than Him and nothing escape His scrutiny. If you have *bitachon* you can say, "The way everything is this minute is exactly what is best for me and is where I'm supposed to be. In *Modim*, Hashem is described as *tzur chayeinu* -the rock of our

lives. The Gemara says, don't read it rock but *tzayar*- artist. Hashem is the artist who draws our lives and gives it form and color. *Simcha* means having no regrets. It's realizing that wherever you are and whatever situation you're in, whatever guilt you feel, that's the point where you can build from, and that's the source of all *simcha*.

Adar is the last month of the year if you count from Nissan. Why do we begin from Nissan if the world was created in *Tishrei*? The world was created for humans and although it was physically created in *Tishrei*, *Nissan* which was the beginning of the world's fruition. *Adar* is as far from *Nissan* as you can go, it's imperfection month. Imperfection is what we are here for.

Angels are *omdim*, at the permanent place of perfection. We are called *holchim*, constantly ascending to a higher state by contending with temptation, difficulty and concealment. Purim is in *Adar* and *megilah* comes from the word *megalah*, that which reveals concealment. *Adar* is the month of concealment, it was the last month the Jews were in *Mitzrayim* and it was the beginning of the redemption. It's a month of *simcha*, when things are the worst because it's taking us to salvation.

The Gra asks, what are you supposed to do when you hear stories of horrific occurrences. He answers, you're supposed to let yourself think that we don't live forever and no one has

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a guarantee that they will get up tomorrow. And that should inspire you with *simcha* and with a drive to maximize every moment of your life. That's the *simcha* of *Adar* – taking the present and turning it around to make it the best it can be.

The *mazal* of *Adar* is fish. The sea is a world of blessing where there's enormous multiplicity hidden from our eyes. There's great blessing happening every minute although it may be concealed temporarily. When Haman drew lots and it came out to *Adar* he decided it was a great month as Moshe died then. But in fact,

according to tradition a *yartzeit* is a greater celebration than a birthday. Anyone can be born but a *yartzeit* commemorates what you've become and that's where true *simcha* stems from.

## Chassidut: Parshat Tetzaveh-Spiritual Clothing

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

Parshat Tetzaveh describes the special clothing worn by the *kohanim* during their service in the *Beit Hamikdash*. The "white clothing" consisted of a shirt, pants, turban, and belt. The *kohen gadol* wore an additional set, the "gold clothing." This included a breastplate, a gold plate worn around the forehead, an apron, and a long coat.

The Zohar writes that the white clothing relate to the "*Shem Havaya*" and the gold clothing relate to the "*Shem Adnut*." The "*Shem Havaya*" signifies Hashem's expression of *chesed*, His expansion and desire to give. The *Shem Adnut* symbolizes *din*, justice and constriction. Hashem uses *chesed* – He is limitless, kind, and gives of Himself constantly. However, He also uses *din* – He established limitations and constrictions in the form of the laws of nature, moral laws, and the *halachot* of the Torah.

Hashem created us in His divine image. We are like clay designed to be molded in His form. The more we imitate the *middot* of Hashem, the more we fulfill the purpose of creation. White represents *chesed*. It supports all colors. You can take any color and place it on a white background and it will keep its original color. Gold (including yellow and red)

signifies *din*. Blood symbolizes justice. Therefore, the Zohar concludes, the white clothing corresponds to *chesed* and the gold clothing represents *din*.

Just as *chesed* and *din* can be used for good, they can be perverted for evil. Hashem created equal powers of good and evil, so we would have free choice. The three cardinal sins stem from distorted *chesed* and *din*. The Shem MiShmuel notes that there is a fourth sin that contains the seeds of all the three sins. The prime expression of a criminal personality is the act of speaking *lashon hara*. One who involves himself in character assassination will ultimately come to idol worship, murder, and adultery. This is a result of a breakdown of *din* and *chesed*.

The Gemara in Zevachim explains that the eight priestly garments atoned for eight sins committed by the Jewish people. The white clothing atoned for sins related to perversion of *chesed*. The gold clothing atoned for sins related to *din*. The shirt atoned for murder. The pants corresponded to adultery. The turban related to the sins of egoism and self centeredness which are the foundation of idolatry. The belt atoned for evil thoughts of the heart. The breastplate corresponded to miscarriages of justice. The apron related to idol worship, as the

priests of idolatry would wear an outer robe resembling an apron. The gold plate corresponded to the sin of brazenness related to crimes of immorality. The coat atoned for *lashon hara*, which includes all sins.

*Din* relates to the intellectual mind, which institutes laws and creates rules and regulations. Therefore, the gold clothing represents *sechel*. The white clothing corresponds to the heart and emotions, which are related to *chesed*.

The four levels of sin and atonement correspond to the four evil kingdoms. Bavel personified idol worship, Persia adultery, Greece was about murder, and Edom contained all sins. We have survived through the ages in the merit of our three forefathers and Moshe. Avraham stood against idolatry, Yitzchak against adultery, and Yaakov against murder. Moshe, who gave us the Torah, encompassed everything. He taught us how to balance *chesed* and *din* by following the path of the Torah.

The Kohanim properly balanced *chesed* and *din*. May their lesson become a reality for all of us.