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 Aaron and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aaron and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aaron 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 should be built from acacia wood, and covered with gold. Aaron and his descendants should burn incense on this Altar every day.

Where's Moshe? — 1

“And now, you Moshe shall command the Children of Israel...” (27:20)
From his birth until Sefer Devarim (Deuteronomy), Moshe's name appears in every Parsha — except one — this week’s Parsha. The Vilna Gaon explains that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar. As this date usually falls in the week of Parsha Tetzaveh, so 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? — 2

The words of the tzaddik can have a power beyond their immediate context. When Hashem wanted to destroy the Jewish People after their infidelity with the golden calf, Moshe pleaded with Hashem, saying “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.

• Ba’al HaTurim, Nachal Kadmonim in Iturei Torah

...when the message is the Truth, it doesn’t have to be trumpeted to the skies.

The light of the Menorah represents the light of Torah. The oil for the Menorah had to be pressed gently, one olive at a time, until it yielded its oil. It could not be crushed, because this would leave in it particles of olive and sediment. And even though these could be filtered out afterwards, the oil for the Menorah had to be pure from the start, not ‘fixed up’ later.

Let us understand this as a paradigm for teaching the Torah: We must transmit the Torah in a pure and unadulterated way. Let us be vigilant not to ‘dress the Torah up’ by pandering to what is ‘politically correct’. The Torah needs no re-vamping or re-decorating to make it more palatable. The sediment of hype must not be mixed with Torah. For, even though one might think that it can be filtered out afterwards, like the oil of the Menorah the teaching of Torah must be pure from the start.

• Based on Rashi
In the Torah’s description (Bereishis 2:3) of the Shabbos of Creation we read that “G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” Rashi explains that the blessing was in regard to Manna as well by withholding the descent of Manna on that day.” He sanctified the Shabbos in regard to Manna as well as the Children of Israel during their forty years in the wilderness: “Each day of the week an omer of Manna descended from heaven for each person and on the sixth day there was a double portion. He sanctified the Shabbos in regard to Manna as well by withholding the descent of Manna on that day.”

If they only received on the sixth day what was required for the sixth and seventh wherein lies the blessing? We present two of the many resolutions offered by the commentators:

For each day the amount of Manna was only sufficient for two meals. The Shabbos portion which came on the sixth day was enough to prepare for three meals on the holy day.

The Manna which descended on the sixth day was double that of the other days both in quantity and in quality. It smelled and tasted different — a portent, perhaps, of the meals which Jews would eat on Shabbos throughout the generations.

The custom to remove the knife was patterned after this incident. Since it occurred during the week, the custom applies only during the week, but not on Shabbat. In the same vein (no pun intended), the custom didn’t apply to plastic knives, since the incident didn’t involve a plastic knife, and since plastic knives aren’t ‘lethal’ in the classical sense.

Another reason for removing the knife: A table is compared to the Altar in the Holy Temple. Just as it is forbidden to use any iron utensil when hewing the stones for the Altar, so too, we remove any metal knives prior to Birkat Hamazon.

I asked Rabbi Moshe Shiternbch, shlita, who concurred that you need not remove plastic knives before Birkat Hamazon.

Sources:
• Shulchan Aruch 180:5
• Aruch Hashulchan 180:5
• Rokeach 332

I heard not long ago a different reason from my father in Boca Raton, Florida. He told me that the siddurim used to abbreviate Hashem’s Name by putting two yuds together, with a small letter ‘vav’ lying horizontally on top. The reason was that the numerical value of two yuds plus one vav equals 26, which is the same as the numerical value of the Name of Hashem.

Sources:
See Melamed Hatalmidim L’Rabeinu Yakov Antoly, p.118
The Mishnah: The olah (the burnt offering) is a sacrifice of the kodshei kodashim (the most sanctified category). Its blood is sprinkled upon the altar in two applications which are like four.

The Method: One opinion of the Sages is that the blood was sprinkled from the vessel receiving it from the slaughtered sacrifice against the northeast and southwest corners of the altar so that it would spread to a portion of all four sides. Rabbi Yishmael, however, derives from the similarity of the term used by the Torah regarding both the olah and the chatass (sin offering) that the former must have four applications made just as is explicitly required in the case of the latter. These four applications of the olah differ from those of the chatass in that they are applied only to the two aforementioned corners rather than to all four as is the blood of the chatass.

The Reason: Why don’t we make the comparison a complete one and require application of the olah blood to all four corners?

An earlier Gemara (Zevachim 51a) of this week’s section establishes that the olah’s blood can only be applied to a corner of the altar which has a base extending beneath it. Since there was no base at the southeast corner of the altar we must conclude that the Torah’s requirement for sprinkling the blood “around the altar” refers to the four walls covered by applying the blood to diagonally opposite corners rather than to all four corners.

The Explanation: Why was there no base at the southeast corner?

Yaakov Avinu blessed his son Binyamin that the altar would be located in his inheritance. The entire altar, except for the southeast corner, was indeed in the Tribe of Binyamin’s territory and therefore had a base. The southeast corner was missing this dimension because it was in the territory of the Tribe of Yehuda.

The saintly Binyamin, note our Sages, so longed for the entire altar to be in his domain that he was rewarded with Heaven situating all of the Sanctuaries preceding and including the Beis Hamikdash in the territory of the Tribe of Binyamin.

• Zevachim 53b

The Mishnah: The olah (the burnt offering) is a sacrifice of the kodshei kodashim (the most sanctified category). Its blood is sprinkled upon the altar in two applications which are like four.

The Method: The korban pesach (paschal lamb sacrifice eaten on the eve of Pesach in the time of the Beis Hamikdash) may be eaten only at night (not on the day it is slaughtered as is the case in regard to all other sacrifices) and only until midnight.

The Reason: Why don’t we make the comparison a complete one and require application of the olah blood to all four corners?

An earlier Gemara (Zevachim 51a) of this week’s section establishes that the olah’s blood can only be applied to a corner of the altar which has a base extending beneath it. Since there was no base at the southeast corner of the altar we must conclude that the Torah’s requirement for sprinkling the blood “around the altar” refers to the four walls covered by applying the blood to diagonally opposite corners rather than to all four corners.

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• Zevachim 53b
The second of the Four Parshios that we read in the months of Adar and Nissan is Parshas Zachor. Zachor means “Remember.” The Torah tells us “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, when you came out of Egypt.” On Shabbos Zachor we fulfill the mitzvah to “destroy the remembrance of Amalek from under the heaven” by reading this section from the Torah before Purim, because on Purim we celebrate our deliverance from Amalek’s most notorious descendant — Haman.

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