A

aron is taught the method for kindling the Menorah. Moshe sanctifies the Levi'im to work in the Mishkan. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning with the golden calf. After five years of training, the Levi'im serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, Hashem commands Moshe concerning the Korban Pesach. Those ineligible for the Korban Pesach request a remedy, and thus is given the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, which allows a “second chance” to offer the Korban Pesach one month later. Miraculous clouds, that hover near the Mishkan, signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the Tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yisro, to join the Bnei Yisrael, but Yisro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the Eruv Rav (the mixed multitude of Egyptians who joined the Bnei Yisrael in the Exodus) some of the people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. Hashem tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become Prophets. Hashem sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague allows a “second chance” to offer the Korban Pesach.

Commentaries

TERMINAL ON

“And Aaron did thus.” (8:3)

What is a mitzvah?

A mitzvah is a container, a vessel that receives light from above. Our job in this world is only to create these containers, to prepare them and make them ready to receive the light. This light from above, this spiritual energy, is already being broadcast constantly from Hashem. We have no idea what this spiritual light is, or how it reaches this world. Indeed, it is not for us to know. Our only job is to make the vessel to contain it, to prepare and make ready the spiritual ‘terminal’ to receive the light. This we do by performing and fulfilling the mitzvos.

The Rambam writes that if a non-Kohen took the Menorah out of the Sanctuary and the lamps were lit there, the mitzvah is still valid even though the lamps were lit by a non-Kohen. However, the cleaning and the preparation of the lamps of the Menorah can only be done by a Kohen, and if anyone else performs this service, the mitzvah is void. Thus, it must be that the cleaning and the preparation of the lamps is the essential part of the mitzvah.

Ostensibly, this is hard to understand: How can it be that what seems like a glorified cleaning job is the essence of the mitzvah, and the actual lighting itself - secondary?

The essence of all mitzvos it to prepare and create the vessel to receive the celestial light from Hashem. To make sure that the ‘terminal’ is turned on and ready to receive. That’s our job in this world. We cannot create the light ourselves, but we can make ready the vessel that holds the light so that it will radiate to the world.

(Adapted from L’Torah U’lMoadim - Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin)


Shabbos.

able to eat in it the next world, in the world that is 'completely Olam honor in this world a person can arrive at the First National Bank of Thus, by deriving a surrogate benefit from the counterfeit currency of and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is the majesty of the Royal House of David has been uprooted of recompense, even though this honor is illusory, he has nevertheless received a kind mitzvah, being totally spiritual, can never be adequately reward a person can receive here is a physical reward. But a spiritual entity. This kugel, it's only for the next world — 'the day that is totally Shabbos.' The Chafetz Chaim replied "I have no doubt that you eat kugel on Shabbos. If, however, on Friday you suddenly had a strong desire for kugel, and you went into your kitchen, the rebbezitz would certainly suggest that you eat something else. Kugel is very delectable — but it's only for Shabbos. That's why I asked you to keep my arrival a secret — the honor that I would receive from all these people is like kugel, it's only for the next world — 'the day that is totally Shabbos.' Our Sages warn us in the strongest possible terms against status-seeking and honor. We are told to be extremely humble. Why should it be that this character trait is emphasized over all others? There can be no reward for a mitzvah in this world. A mitzvah is a spiritual entity. This world is a physical world. So, necessarily, the only reward a person can receive here is a physical reward. But a mitzvah, being totally spiritual, can never be adequately recompensed in this world. The currency just doesn't exist here. However, if a person derives status and honor from doing a mitzvah, even though this honor is illusory, he has nevertheless received a kind of recompense, because status and honor are felt as spiritual entities Thus, by deriving a surrogate benefit from the counterfeit currency of honor in this world a person can arrive at the First National Bank of Olam Haba, and find that he exchanged his priceless diamonds — the eternal reward for his mitzvos — for Monopoly money. Kugel may be sweeter than sweet, but if you eat it here, you won't be able to eat it in the next world, in the world that is 'completely Shabbos.'

The Hidden Light
"And Aaron did so" (8:3)

"This teaches the praise of Aaron — that he didn't change."
(Rashi)

Why was it so praiseworthy that Aaron didn't change? That he 'did so.' But surely everyone is supposed to the mitzvos just 'so.' What special quality did Aaron bring to his lighting of the Menorah that made it 'so?'

In Sefer Bereishis (Genesis), after each creation, the Torah records 'And it was so' — exactly as it should be — complete and perfect. However, when the Torah speaks of the creation of light — "Let there be light!" — it doesn't say afterwards "And it was so." And in reality, it wasn't 'so,' because that special light — the Ohr Haganuz — that shone in the six days of Creation had to be hidden away so evil-doers would have no benefit from it. Thus, its creation was not 'so' — it lacked a completeness. However, during the long darkness between the Creation and the final denouement of history, there was one moment when that Hidden Light shone in the world. When Aaron kindled the Menorah, he did it with certain kavanos (spiritual intentions) that drew down the Hidden Light into the Beis Hamikdash. The Ohr Haganuz — the hidden light shone for a brief moment in time in the Beis Hamikdash through Aaron lighting the lamps. When Aaron "did so" it means that he fulfilled the purpose of the creation of light itself. As Rashi says, 'he didn't change,' meaning the light was the unchanged light of the Creation, not the substitute we see today. When Aaron did 'so' he gave the light the quality of 'And it was so.' It was as complete and radiant as it was in the beginning. (Adapted from Chanukas Hatorah)

Haftorah: Zecharia 2:14- 4:7

Why is the Mashiach referred to as the "flourishing one"? Even though today it seems that all remnant of the majesty of the Royal House of David has been uprooted and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is still living, hidden and dormant. At the appropriate moment, the Mashiach will appear, like a majestic tree flourishing from barren ground, laden with fruit, revealed to all. (Malbim)

"It is the first of the holidays."

In Parshas Emor (Vayikra 23:2,3) the Torah records the command of Hashem to Moshe to teach the people about all the "mikraei kodesh" - the holidays - which He begins with the command to observe Shabbos.

What does Shabbos have to do with the holidays? What does Rashi quote from the Sages is that one who violates the holidays is considered as if he violated the Sabbaths as well, and one who observes the holidays is considered as if he had observed the Sabbaths.

This concept of the holidays as an extension of Shabbos sanctity is expressed in our musical tribute to Shabbos as the first of the holidays.