



Parshas Tetzaveh

For the week ending 15 Adar I 5757
21 & 22 February 1997

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 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.

Insights

AVOIDING MID-LIFE CRISIS

“And you shall speak to all the wise of heart...” (28:3)

The Burnham Society of Jewish Psychiatrists always had a lunch once a month. The members took turns hosting it at their homes. They always invited stimulating and thought provoking speakers. Doctors, scientists, economists and media personalities had all graced the tables of this exclusive gathering of intellectuals.

It occurred to them one day that they had never been addressed by an Orthodox Rabbi, so a phone call was dutifully made to the local Yeshiva, and a distinguished Rabbi was invited to speak at their next luncheon.

The polite applause died down as the Rabbi started to speak. He spoke in terms suited to his secular audience, but his material was authentic Torah philosophy 3000 years old, and honed by a life of study.

About ten minutes into the talk a man in the audience suddenly jumped to his feet, screaming and yelling hysterically “Stop that man from speaking! Stop that man from speaking!” His face was a livid purple and his eyeballs protruded dangerously from their sockets. “Stop that man from speaking! Stop him immediately ...or I will have to change my whole life!”

With this, the man bolted from the room. Despite the Rabbi's attempts to find out who the man was, no one would tell him the man's name or address.

In this week's *Parsha*, the expression ‘wise of heart’ appears many times. Seemingly, this expression is an oxymoron. It's self-contradictory. The heart and the mind usually pull in different directions. The heart seeks to fulfill desire. The head analyses and calculates.

Who is ‘wise of heart’? The person who takes his emotions and puts them in the harness of the intellect; the person who is prepared to listen to his intellect even when his emotions tell him that he may have to change his whole life.

SAVED BY THE BELL

“Its sound shall be heard in the Sanctuary before Hashem... so that he will not die.” (28:35)

Do you remember the term ‘expletive deleted’?

Back in the old days, there used to be a ‘beep’ on the TV to cover up an offensive word or sentence.

The days of ‘expletive deleted’ seem rather quaint to contemporary perception. Nowadays, public speech has descended to a level where gross indecency hardly causes the raising of an eyebrow. Almost nothing is considered offensive anymore; except, maybe, those who are offended.

The standards of speech that the Torah requires of the Jew are of a different galaxy compared to today's ‘standards.’ A Jew is forbidden to speak badly of someone *even if what he is saying is true*, unless he has a permitted purpose in conveying such information.

The *Me'il*, the robe that the *Kohen Gadol* wore, atoned for the sin of evil speech: Slander, gossip, lewdness.

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Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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The color of the robe was blue.

Just like the blue sea which knows its bounds and keeps within them, just like the blue vault of the sky wherein the planets move only within their predefined orbits, so too Man must not diverge from his Divinely ordained purpose as a being who guards his tongue.

Bells were attached to the hem of the robe.

They rang whenever the *Kohen Gadol* walked. The sound of the bells was a reminder that there are some words that should never be heard, there are some words that need to be 'deleted.'

THE PERFECT GIFT

"...for the light to burn always" (27:20)

When is taking, giving?

One night, a blind man was stumbling on the way. A sighted person saw him and went to help him. He took the blind person by the arm and, with his lantern, led him back to the blind man's house. When they arrived, the blind man invited the sighted man

into his house. They both went into the house, the sighted man still holding his lantern.

"You have been so kind to me. Please let me do something for you in return," said the blind man.

"You could make a light for me." said the other.

To which the blind man happily carried out his request. Even though the sighted man still carried a lantern and had no need for the light, he wanted the blind man to feel less indebted to him, so he gave him a chance to repay him, even though the blind man wasn't really giving him anything that he needed.

Hashem gave us a mitzvah in the Torah to light the Menorah. Even though He has no need for this light, He gives us the opportunity to 'give' Him something so that we will feel more comfortable with the gifts that He constantly gives us, gifts that we can never repay.

We can learn from here how to give to others: When we allow others to reciprocate, we give them the perfect gift. For even though what they may give is not of use to us, we nevertheless have given them the perfect gift, the gift they feel good about taking.

That's when taking is really giving.

Haftorah: Yechezkel 43:10-27

EAT, DRINK, AND BE HOLY!

"Tell the House of Yisrael of the Beis Hamikdash and they will be ashamed of their sins." (43:10)

As this year is a leap year, and we add the extra month of *Adar* to the calendar, *Shabbos Tetzaveh* occurs on *Purim Katan* (lit. Little Purim), the day that would have been *Purim* in a regular year. To mark this, we subtract certain penitential prayers from the prayer service, and we add a little to the *Shabbos* meals.

The table at which a Jew eats is compared to the Holy Altar in the Temple. This is never more true than on *Shabbos*, when our eating takes on a greater spiritual dimension.

Part of the significance of the *Purim seudah* (meal) is that it atones for another meal some 2,353 years ago.

Achashverosh, the King of Persia, invited the Jews to an extravagant banquet to celebrate his coronation. In spite of *Mordechai's* protests, the Jews attended this banquet. At the banquet, Achashverosh brought out and used the vessels from the Holy Temple which was destroyed by *Nevuchadnetzar*, a previous king of Babylon.

Achashverosh knew of the prophecy that the Holy Temple would be rebuilt, but he miscalculated the date of its rebuilding. When that date passed, he mistakenly thought the prophecy was not true. However, after his death, the Second *Beis Hamikdash* was rebuilt by his son *Darius*, whose mother was *Queen Esther*.

Yechezkel's vision of the Third *Beis Hamikdash*, the ultimate incarnation of the *Mishkan*, is the subject of this week's *Haftorah*.

Hashem says to *Yechezkel*: "Tell the House of Yisrael of the *Beis Hamikdash*." Tell them that you have already seen the Third *Beis Hamikdash* ready and finished down to its finest detail. Tell them that only their sins are preventing the revelation of Hashem's House. Tell Yisrael what you have seen "and they will be ashamed of their sins" and return to Me.

Sources
Avoiding Mid-Life Crisis: Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, Moshe Averick
Saved By The Bell: Kli Yakar
The Perfect Gift: Midrash, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz
Eat, Drink, and Be Holy!: Malbim



INSIGHTS INTO THE ZEMIROS
SUNG AT THE SHABBOS TABLE
THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS.

EISHES CHAYIL khj `at
"A WOMAN OF VALOR..."

She tastes her wares and finds them good
Her candle will not be extinguished in the night.

טעמה כי טוב סחרה
לא יכבה בלילה נרה

Ta'ama ki tov sachra
lo yichbe b'layla nayra

In this song of praise to Torah as reflected in the virtues of the "Woman of Valor" we describe the excitement that comes with the discovery of the depth and beauty of Torah study. Once a Jew has tasted Torah he finds it so good that he is motivated to spend every possible moment involved in its study. His candle will not be extinguished because his passion for learning will keep him busy till late in the night.

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