

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

RUNNING ON EMPTY

“They shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually.” (27:20)

When we look at the world around us it's easy to become despondent. For the most part the world seems to be a very unspiritual place. Rampant materialism and physical pleasures seem to be the dominant messages of our society. The Jewish People, who brought the idea of love and the rights of man to the world, are relegated to the backwaters of spirituality. A Jewish spiritual seeker nowadays is more likely to travel to Katmandu than to Bnei Brak. And Jerusalem is seen as a subject for dissection on the operating table of nationalism rather than the world capital of spirituality.

For all the material benefits that our modern society affords, we grow spiritually more bereft from year to year. Our hope that G-d will send us very soon the redeemer that He has promised us seems so far removed from our lives as to be almost like a dream.

And yet, against all the neon noise of anti-spirituality, a little glimmer of hope has never been extinguished from our hearts.

In the days of the Holy Temple, every evening the *kohanim* would refill the lamps of the Menorah. Even though the summer nights were much shorter than the long nights of winter, the *kohanim* always poured the same amount of oil into the lamps. Thus, during the summer months they would return in the morning to find oil still left in the Menorah.

One of the Menorah's lamps was quite unusual. Its name was the *Ner Ma'aravi* - the Western Light. The *Ner Ma'aravi* received no more oil than its fellows, and yet,

even after the longest nights of winter, the *kohen* would return in the morning to find it still burning. That evening he would rekindle the other lamps from the *Ner Ma'aravi*. In fact, there is an opinion that the *Ner Ma'aravi* was lit but once a year.

The miracle of the *Ner Ma'aravi* was a sign that the Divine Presence dwelled amongst the Jewish People. It continued to burn until the *Kohen Hagadol*, Shimon HaTzaddik, passed from this world.

One year, the olive harvest in Eretz Yisrael was extremely meager and there was but a tiny fraction of the oil needed to kindle the lights of the Menorah. The *kohanim* wept, taking this deficiency to be sign of Divine displeasure. However, instead of the lamps spluttering into darkness in the middle of the winter nights, G-d made an even bigger miracle. Not only did the *Ner Ma'aravi* burn throughout the night, but it was joined by the other six lamps as well, and they all burned brightly throughout the night with a totally insufficient amount of oil.

The Jewish People are like the lamps of the Menorah - running on empty but still burning with a quiet powerful flame.

G-d sent us into exile some two thousand years ago. His displeasure was well-deserved, as a reading of prophets like Yirmiyahu so clearly portrays. Even though we have eaten the bitter harvest of exile these two thousand years, G-d has performed a miracle unparalleled in the history of Mankind, for the light of the Jewish survival still burns miraculously in a world which gets darker daily.

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Love of the Land, written by Rav Mendel Weinbach, zt"l • *Parsha Insights* written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair
 General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

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G-d 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. G-d 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. G-d 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.

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT TETZAVE

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

This Parsha deals primarily with the special garments worn by the High Priest and the regular priests during their service in the Tabernacle. Abarbanel offers several interpretations of the symbolism of these garments. One of those interpretations is as follows:

Four of the garments were worn only by the High Priest and were considered to have greater importance: the breastplate, the apron, the robe and the headplate. The other less important garments were the turban, the sash, the trousers and the tunic. The four special garments worn by the High Priest were worn opposite the four main components of the body: the head, the heart, the digestive area and the reproductive area. The headplate signifies that all of his thoughts should be directed to G-d. The breastplate over his heart indicates that all of his prayers should be for the benefit of the entire nation, which is why twelve precious stones corresponding to the nation's twelve tribes were set in it. The apron encircled his abdomen, indicating that he should eat and digest only those foods that G-d permits. Finally, the robe covering the reproductive organs indicates that our desires must be constrained by the dictates of the Torah, both publicly and privately. The golden bells attached to the bottom of the robe remind us that we cannot hide our private behaviors. Everything eventually becomes known within the community of Israel.

These four garments also correspond to the four types of service that the High Priest performed. The garments of the head correspond to the inner sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, which the High Priest entered only on Yom Kippur. Here the intellect is represented by the Ark and the Tablets of the

Law. The second service was the lighting of the Menorah, or candelabra, which was in the inner courtyard just outside the Holy of Holies. The breastplate with its twelve precious stones corresponded to the Menorah since the letters engraved on the stones would prophetically light up in response to questions that the High Priest would ask of G-d. The third service was the arranging of the loaves of bread on the table, which naturally corresponds to the apron covering the digestive tract. The fourth service was the lighting of the incense on the golden altar. Just as the smoke from the altar announced the presence of the incense, likewise the bells on the hem of the robe announced the presence of the High Priest.

The four garments of the regular priests were much simpler. Rather than employing the gold, silver, precious stones and expensive colorful fabrics of the High Priest's garments, these garments were made of simple linen and were much easier to make. They also corresponded to less religiously significant parts of the body: the skin, the bones, the flesh and the sinews. Finally, although the four specialized garments worn by the High Priest were indicative of his pre-eminence among the people, the fact that he also wore the four simple garments indicated that he still retained his humility and remained connected to the other priests as one of them. Furthermore, in times of need he was expected to perform all of the duties of the regular priests and on Yom Kippur, when he was serving on behalf of the entire nation. He further demonstrated his humility and connection to all the people by wearing only the four simple white linen garments.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the *Menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *Menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *Menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *Menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

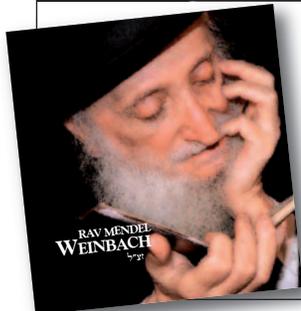
PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen*, *ephod*, *me'il*, *ketonet*, *mitznefet*, *avnet*, *tzitz*, and *michnasayim*.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants, 2) The court's ruling, 3) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* — the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn. 2) The *Kohen Gadol* must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet*, *avnet*, *migba'at*, and *michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of *kehuna*.

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SUCCAH 6 - 12

“Act beautifully before G-d in fulfilling mitzvot.”

This statement is how the Rabbis explain the verse from *“Shirat Hayam”* (the song the Jewish People sang after crossing the Sea at the time of the Exodus from Egypt): “This is my G-d and I will glorify (beautify) Him” (Ex. 15:2). We are commanded by this verse to fulfill *mitzvot* in a beautiful manner. Some examples are to have a beautiful *succah*, a beautiful *lulav* and beautiful *tzitzit* (Rashi).

• *Succah 11b*

“Dwell in succot for seven days... in order that your generations will know that I placed the Jewish People in succot when I took them out from Egypt.... ” (Lev. 23:43-44)

On our *daf* we learn in a *beraita* what these “*succot*” actually were. Rabbi Eliezer says they were the “*ananei kavod*” – “the clouds of glory”. Rabbi Akiva, however, states that they were actual *succah* booths to live in whenever they made camp in the desert.

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch explains that the verses instruct us to dwell in *succot* nowadays (as throughout history) to remind us how G-d “placed us in *succot*” and protected us in the desert with clouds of glory or in *succah* dwellings. The Shulchan Aruch rules like Rabbi Eliezer, and the Mishna Berura adds that while dwelling in the *succah* we should have in mind that G-d took us out from Egypt and protected us from the desert sun and heat with the miracle of the *ananei kavod* that surrounded the Jewish People in the desert (*Orach Chaim* 625:1:1).

• *Succah 11b*

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

ONE KIBBUTZ – THREE SPRINGS

In the Beit Shean Valley there is a kibbutz called “Ein Hanatziv”, which has three springs in it. The name of the kibbutz and the names of these springs can be traced to the renowned head of the Volozhin Yeshiva in pre-war



Lithuania, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin. His initials (NaTzYV) form the main part of the kibbutz’s name while the “Ein” preceding it alludes to the springs in it, which have been named Naftali, Tzvi and Yehuda.

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SNOOPY SNOOZE

From: Name Withheld

Dear Rabbi,
We are a Jewish couple with a two-and-a-half year old "chewish" dog that is our only "child." She is very clean, very lovable and pretty well-behaved. My wife wants her to sleep in our room every night with us. I don't think it's appropriate. I think the bedroom should be private. What do you think?

Dear Name Withheld,

It's difficult to give a definitive answer to a question about someone else's private affairs, especially since it doesn't only

concern you, but it concerns a very important and significant other (No, I don't mean your dog!). But I can offer my opinion.

I agree with you very strongly that your room should be a private place for husband and wife, and your "child" shouldn't be there (especially if above the age of *bark-mitzvah*).

I suggest that, without causing any marital strife, you try to get your wife to agree to other arrangements for your "child." Perhaps you could make some kind of trade-off, like agreeing to spend some extra special time each day with the dog, e.g., reading to it, or helping it with its homework.

In dog terms, your "child" is over 17 years old and that's old enough to sleep alone. Make her a really comfortable little spot she can call her own, and she'll be happy as a hound.

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Talmud Navigator – "Excel" in Talmud

The Talmud, often referred to as "The Sea of the Talmud", is vast both in breadth and depth. The *gemara* (Megillah 18b) describes the difficulty of maintaining a hold on all the Torah you learn, quoting Proverbs (23:5): "When you lift (or close) your eyes from it – and it disappears".

Chazal (Eruvin 54b) prescribe a method for gaining a true understanding and making a lasting acquisition of all the material you learn. Rav Chisda is quoted as saying, "The Torah can only be acquired with signs."

Talmud Navigator is an attempt to organize the Talmud in database form, mapping and charting the Talmud by tagging the various components and building blocks of the according to type and hierarchy. It is based

on the system outlined by the Ramchal in *Derech Tvunos*.

This system of textual organization serves as a self-help way to outline the *sugya* in a clearer fashion. It assists in promoting a better understanding of the flow of the *Gemara* and in facilitating summary and review. It is also an excellent tool for a less advanced *Gemara* learner to identify and grasp the logical flow and interconnections of its various components.

Each Thursday we will post a PDF file which maps the *gemara* studied in that week's *Daf Yomi* cycle. G-d willing, we plan in the future to make available the Excel file which enables the user to make his own condensed selections of the *Gemara*. For example: Highlighting the main statements, arguments, questions, conclusions or personalized anchor points of the *sugya* determined by the learner to facilitate his own review.

Talmud Navigator is prepared by Rabbi Hanoach Zweig and is available at www.ohr.edu

PRAYER FUNDAMENTALS - PART II

I believe with complete faith that there exists a first Being, without beginning or end, who created and sustains all things, and that this Being alone is our G-d. (Thirteen Principles of Faith)

It is impossible to pray to G-d unless one first accepts that He in fact exists — otherwise one would be merely talking to himself. Now, since only an insane person talks to himself, it is clear that one's prayers are directed to G-d.

A Story

Harold, a middle aged man, originally from a Jewish *shtetel* (town), had drifted far from the path of Judaism. He had no regrets. To him religion was never about G-d; it was nothing more than a social club bringing people together for meals and a boring stage performance called prayer.

Although as a child Harold knew most of the prayers by heart, he had never uttered one word to G-d. They were just empty words he was obligated to say each day. He, along with the other boys, would race through the prayers and then run out to play. Their motto was: "The faster the prayers, the more time to play!"

Harold had by now become agnostic and was considering for

financial and social reasons to change his name, severing all ties to his Jewish past. However, being a man of principle, he felt uncomfortable abandoning Judaism forever. He reasoned that since he was just a teenager when he originally strayed from the path, he never really gave G-d a fair chance. "Maybe there was some truth behind all of the odd rituals," he thought to himself.

Although Harold's memories of synagogue were gloomy, to say the least, he decided to visit one this last time. He resolved in his heart that if G-d would send a sign that He really existed, he would commit the rest of his days to serving Him.

Without realizing it, he chose to visit a Chassidic shul. It was Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. As he entered the sanctuary he saw all of the men engrossed in their prayers. All in white, they seemed as angels. Overcome with a feeling of awe he took a prayer book and began to recite the prayers he remembered from his childhood, but this time it was different. For the first time he was saying them to G-d. A feeling of security suddenly came over him as he began to cry.

Years later, when relating the story of how he returned to the faith, he described those precious moments in that heavenly shul. With his body trembling, as if standing again amidst all those Chassidim, he said: "In that shul you didn't have to believe that G-d exists — you felt it".

@ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students*

**Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett, Director,
Executive Learning Program of Ohr Somayach
Washington D.C., Jerusalem, Givat Ada,
Zichron Ya'akov, New York**

Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett, based in New York, is currently involved with Ohr Somayach's Executive Learning Program which combines outreach and fund-raising in the homes and offices of businessmen and women and professionals looking to enhance their Jewish knowledge. Rabbi Kasnett was one of the first ten Ohr Somayach students, arriving in the summer of 1972. On his way to Harvard Graduate School to study Developmental Psychology, he took what he thought would be a brief detour to explore his Jewish roots. What started out as a detour became the main highway as he progressed from a beginning student to a senior Ohr Somayach staff member in Israel. One of the many signposts on his road to Judaism was an unusual experience while he was an undergraduate at Pomona College in California.

In the turbulent 1960's the study of Eastern Religions was very much in vogue. Pomona College invited Alan Watts, a well-known American Buddhist and author of 'The Way of Zen' to speak on campus. Rabbi Kasnett describes what transpired that evening:

"Mr. Watts stepped up to the podium and without any words of greeting asked, "Are there any Catholics in the audience?" There was a confused murmur of uncertainty, but eventually some hands were raised. He proceeded to ask them a few questions about Catholic dogma and when it was apparent that no one could answer satisfactorily, he told them to sit down. He then asked all the Protestants to stand and regroup themselves according to denomination. He then asked each group how it was distinguished from the others. The result was similar. At this point I knew what was coming next. We Jews stood up, revealed our ignorance of basic Judaism observance and belief and sheepishly sat down. His point was obvious. We were looking for spiritual enlightenment elsewhere, ignoring our own "backyards". Raised a Catholic in San Francisco, Mr. Watts told us that he had traveled to Japan to study Zen Buddhism. He was told to go back home and enroll for a minimum of one year in the most intensive Catholic seminary available. Only then, if he was still interested, would the Buddhist monastery accept him. I don't remember a word about the lecture on Buddhism which he then reluctantly delivered, but I focused instead on his advice which was clearly the main point of the lecture. No, the story does not have a fairy tale ending. I did not pick up immediately and fly to Israel. But the seeds had been planted, and two years later I found myself at Ohr Somayach."