

# PORTION OF *TETZAVEH*

## Deeper than Prophecy

Now you shall command (*Sh'mos 27:20*)

After the Golden Calf, G-d tells Moshe he will wipe out all the *Yidden*, so Moshe Rabbeinu said to G-d, "If you want to wipe out the *Yidden* from the world, wipe me out from your book as well." Therefore, everybody knows that Moshe Rabbeinu's name is not mentioned in the portion of this week.

We usually read the portion of *Tetzaveh* before Purim, and in the reading of the Megillah of Esther – G-d's name is not mentioned, but *gevult* is G-d's name in felt in every word of the Megillah. Here, too, in *Tetzaveh*, Moshe Rabbeinu's name is not mentioned, but *gevult* is Moshe Rabbeinu part of this portion.

And here I want you to open your hearts.

Someone once asked me if he should go to a certain function or not. I said to him, "You should only go to a place where if you don't go, they will feel the absence of your presence every second you are not there. But if it really wouldn't make a difference if you are there or not – don't go." Moshe's absence is felt in every passage of the portion.

When G-d says to Moshe, "I'm going to wipe out the Jews, and you will be the only one left," would you have the *chutzpah* to contradict G-d? How could have Moshe said what he said?

Moshe Rabbeinu did everything on the level of prophecy; he was always in tune. But here Moshe Rabbeinu was connecting with the inside of the inside. His inside of all insides said, "I can't be without *Yidden*. *Ribbono shel Olam*, I'm sorry to tell you, if you wipe out the *Yidden*, you have to wipe me out, too." What level did Moshe Rabbeinu reach at that moment? Moshe Rabbeinu reached a level that is even deeper than prophecy.

So here G-d says to Moshe, "I'm not putting your name in this *parashah*, not because I am angry with you, but because you have tuned into the deepest secrets of the world. And since this is where you are – "*Ve'ata tetzaveh es b'nei Yisrael*," I want you to tell your brother Aharon to kindle the light in the Holy Temple."

What kind of light was it?

Let me ask you, what kind of a light do we have to shine into the world? I have to shine a light of "*mecheni na*," a light that is deeper than whatever the world is accustomed to.

This is the light of the Holy Temple. This is the light of Purim. This is the light of love between all *Yidden*.

# Oil

“They shall take for you pure olive oil” (*Sh'mos* 27:20)

Oil is a symbol of joy, a deep kind of pleasure.

One of the things we must refrain from during mourning is called “*sichah*,” which is the use of oil for physical needs, which can bring one to *simcha*, to happiness.

Impure pleasure means that after I am finished doing something, I don't want to do it again. By the next day, I forget about it. I am consumed by that little flame of pleasure while I am doing it, but I don't want to do it again. G-d gave us a very strong nose. Our soul is a strong nose. We know exactly what is right and what is wrong. After we do something wrong, deep down we don't want to do it again. It's only that the next day we forget that we promised not to do it again.

Holy oil means that while I am doing it, I am already kindling another light. I already want to do it again.

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Our Sages teach us that oil is good for memory. What kind of memory are we talking about? Does it matter if I remember that George Washington was the first president of the United States? We are obviously talking about something else. When the Torah says, “Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy,” (*Sh'mos* 20:8) this is a different kind of remembering.

What does it mean to remember someone I love? At the moment when I remember them, everything else is forgotten. To remember somebody you love means that everything in the world reminds you of them. How does a Jew remember Shabbos? Everything reminds him of Shabbos. I can stand in California, looking at the sky, and it reminds me of the holy city, *Yerushalayim*.

Whenever G-d blesses us with children, memory is mentioned. It says, “And G-d remembered Sarah.” “And G-d remembered Rachel.” Children come from that high place which is called G-d's memory. To love children means that everything reminds you of them. What does it mean when children remember you? It means that everything reminds them of you.

# Wisdom of the Heart

“And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people” (*Sh'mos* 28:3)

When G-d speaks to Moshe and asks for the garments of the priests to be prepared, he calls for those who have “*chochmas halev*” 'wisdom of the heart.' What is this wisdom that is in the heart? What's the difference between that and the wisdom of the mind?

There is a fire burning in the heart of each and every one of us. This fire is so infinitely passionate; it wants to know G-d in an infinite way. If you come to somebody and say “Would you like to know G-d in an infinite way?” they are ready. If you ask them, “Would you like to know G-d in a finite way and start by putting on *tefillin* every morning?” they are not ready because our hearts yearn for the infinite.

There is wisdom of the mind and there is wisdom of the heart. As important as the wisdom of the mind is, you cannot know G-d with the wisdom of the mind alone. You have to know G-d with the wisdom of your heart. It is through all the emotions that G-d created in my heart that I should know that there is One G-d. But what is the wisdom of the heart?

As much as I'd like to know G-d in an infinite way, you have to realize one thing. You are living in this world and you will not know G-d unless you do the finite things as well. G-d promises you, in this finite thing I'll pour in the infinite. This is the vessel.

Here I want you to know the deepest depths.

Before G-d created the world, everything was infinite. In order for G-d to reveal his kingdom, G-d had, so to speak, to contract the infinity. When He created the world, He put aside all the great lights and left an empty space, and in this empty space He created the world. What is this 'empty space' all about?

There is a very strong passage in the psalms. King David says, “*v'libi chalal b'kirbi*” 'I made a little hole in my heart.' (*Tehillim* 109:22) What does this mean? The same way G-d made an empty space in His heart for me, I have to make an empty space for G-d, to understand Him in my heart. When I make a little empty space, G-d can shine my emotions into me, and then I begin to know how to serve Him. When I think evil thoughts, my heart closes up and I cannot use the same heart to understand G-d. Therefore, Reb Nachman says something very deep. The moment you think you want to serve G-d, make a little empty space in your heart, and G-d can reveal Himself to you there.

So Reb Nachman says that the empty space I create in my heart means that for one minute I, so to speak, stop being infinite. Just like G-d did with the creation of the world. You see, everybody wants to know G-d in an infinite way alone, but you can't. You have to make yourself

finite by creating a little empty space inside of your heart. In that empty place is where G-d is really living. And this is the secret of creating the world. And this is the secret of serving G-d more and more and more. This is the wisdom of the heart.

You see what it is, when you love somebody very much, you are ready to do the smallest finite favors for them with all your heart and soul. How come? Because if you are really with it, you understand that the finite is also infinite. The same goes for prayer. When I pray it has to be in a completely infinite way, and yet it has to be finite. What's the holiness of a siddur? It's the most finite thing in the world. The words we pray were composed two thousand years ago. But the way I'm praying has to be in an infinite way. You see what it is? As much as I'd like to know G-d in an infinite way, you have to realize you will not know G-d unless you do the finite things as well. And then G-d promises you; I will pour the infinite into the finite vessel you just created.

So Reb Nachman says this is what the wisdom of the heart is all about. Since my heart is the place where I fathom G-d the most, it must be infinite. If it wasn't infinite, how could G-d be there? But since I'm living in the world, G-d gave me finite vessels to understand His infinity. I connect my finite vessels with my infinite emotions through the wisdom of my heart.