

# ENLIGHTENED ACTIONS

*by Rabbi Dovid Green*

Last weeks parsha and this weeks go hand in hand. Whereas last week the directives were given to collect the materials and construct the tabernacle, this week the directives are given for the priestly garments in which the service was performed. Upon examination, though, the Torah lists two materials which belong to the actual service which takes place after the completion of the tabernacle, among those which were used for building it, and making the priestly clothing.

In Parshas Terumah (25:6) G-d gives Moshe the list of things which were to be collected from the Jewish Nation. Among them are oil for lighting the Menorah, and several spices meant for making the anointing oil, and the mixture of spices which was burned in the Sanctuary. We can better understand the need to mention the anointing oil here, as the tabernacle could not be used without its vessels and various other things being anointed first. However, the spices and oil for the Menorah were used in the actual service. Why are they enumerated here?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th cent. Frankfurt) comments that the oil for lighting, and the spices represent something which is the true foundation of the Tabernacle. Without them its purpose cannot be realized, and for that reason they are included among the materials needed for the structure of the Tabernacle. First, we'll explain the Menorah. It represents Torah. Torah is the thoughts of the creator. When analyzing and internalizing His thoughts through Torah study, our minds are elevated to the highest level of enlightenment. Enlightenment is never in a vacuum. An enlightened person manifests his lofty thoughts in concrete action. Otherwise, his thoughts are worthless. This is represented by the burning of the spices. Just as the spices are consumed in G-d's service, we dedicate our actions entirely to the service of G-d. The goal of the Tabernacle is to act as a medium by which we dedicate our thoughts and actions to that which is pleasing to G-d.

Again in this weeks parsha the Torah repeats the need to collect olive oil to light the Menorah. This directive is still premature. The reasoning is similar. G-d gave the Kohanim, the Temple Priests, the lofty goal of spiritual leadership of the Jewish People. They were supported by the rest of the nation so they would be able to pursue spiritual lives. They were the standard bearers for the nation. For them Torah enlightenment was essential to be able to set the example for the people who came to seek their direction. Everyone would be able to see in them the paradigm of the servant of G-d. This is why the parsha begins with the directive of acquiring the oil for the Menorah even before the Priestly garment are made. The oil represents enlightenment. The Kohanim need to see this as a focus of their lives before wearing the clothing and looking the part they had to fill. They needed to

internalize and manifest the ideals before representing them.

This is a focus in life of any serious student of Torah. One must place one's intellect at the helm. What is truly good for us is often obscured by our desires. Often our hearts dictate what is right, and our intellect becomes a servant to those dictates. The truly great person submits his actions to the dictates of enlightened thoughts, just as a horse submits to its rider. May we all come to understand that which is pleasing to G-d, and act accordingly.

Good Shabbos!

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