

EASY COME, EASY GO

by Rabbi Dovid Green

In last week's parsha a list of all the materials needed for the building of the Tabernacle is given. At the end of the list comes the precious stones which were placed in the clothing of the Kohein Gadol - The High Priest, which are discussed in this week's parsha. Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz asks why these stones which are highest in value are enumerated last. They should be first.

Rabbi Shmuelevitz answers that they come last because a basic, important ingredient was missing. That is that since these stones came to the donors easily, without toil, there was no great act of good will in giving them. That is why they are enumerated last.

Rabbi Shmuelevitz bases this on the premise that it seems that human nature is that things which we toil over are the things most dear to us. Things which come easily don't require much of our effort, and since we put so little into them they don't take up a big place in our hearts. Hence the saying, "easy come, easy go."

The central institution of "avodah," service of G-d, must be founded on the highest level of good will - giving that which was toiled over, and is very dear to the donors.

This is an important point in many areas of life. What we invest time and effort into will turn out to be the things we hold dearest. The Sages (Tractate Derech Eretz Zuta) say as follows. One who wishes to love another person should get involved in doing good for them.

Conversely, there are so many things in life which we invest effort into, and in the last analysis really didn't deserve the place of prominence in our lives which we ascribed to it. A wise person tries to discern which things in life deserve his most strenuous efforts.

Haman, the "bad guy" in the Book of Esther, required everyone to bow to him when he passed by. Mordechai refused to bow. Haman, a rich and extremely powerful person could not appreciate any of his "blessings" so long as Mordechai refused to bow. This attitude ultimately led to Haman's downfall.

Haman's efforts were only directed to self-aggrandizement. He invested every fiber of his being to going up the ladder toward further honor and recognition. His mistake is a lesson to all generations.

In our generation, which provides us with so many things to get involved in, we constantly must ask ourselves as follows. "Are we really dedicating our lives to things of substance?" Or, like Haman, are we chasing after empty dreams which vanish as soon as our eyes are opened? Let's learn from

Haman. Let's consider what is truly important and deserving of our precious time. Let's make our toils and efforts something fit to give to the King of Kings.

Good Shabbos.

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