

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

by Rabbi Dovid Green

This week's parsha steps into the middle of a conversation, as it were. The Torah states "And it was on the eighth day..." Rashi, the great commentator, quotes the Talmud that it was the day following seven days of erecting, initiating with sacrifices, and dismantling the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary, which "housed" G-d's presence in this world. In other places in the Torah though, it is clear that this day is also the first day of the month of Nissan. Rashi quotes the Talmud which states that there are ten great things which happened on this day for which it was crowned for. One of the ten things is that it was the first day of the creation. Rashi, in his commentary on the Talmud writes that the first day of creation was a Sunday, and so was this day in this particular year. The obvious question is, what does that have to do with the day that G-d's presence came to dwell in the Tabernacle so many years later? It seems like an awfully tenuous connection.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab addresses this question. He answers as follows. When G-d created the world, He intended that it should be a figuratively dark place where His luminous presence would dwell. G-d wanted to create a world where mankind's deeds would be so elevated that G-d could put His stamp of approval on them. G-d wants mankind to exercise free choice and follow His commandments in a world which hides G-d's hand, where one can reasonably choose to deny His existence. In such an environment G-d shows His favor and causes His manifest presence to dwell there.

The goal of building the Tabernacle was just that - to bring G-d's manifest presence in to the world - that it would rest on the work of our hands. Consequently this day that the Tabernacle was erected receives a crown as first for the creation of the world as well - being that it was the day that G-d's goal was realized.

Just as the artist puts in great effort to perfect his art and his presentation, we should view our deeds as our presentation to G-d. If we put our best foot forward, our deeds have the potential to bring G-dliness into the world. It's an amazing and unique opportunity! We have power beyond our wildest imagination!

In Chapters of The Fathers (chap. 2:1) Rabbi Yehudah The Prince enjoins us to measure the loss incurred in observing a commandment of the Torah as opposed to what we gain for fulfilling it. Imagine the great affirmation the Children of Israel received when G-d brought His manifest presence to dwell in the Tabernacle which they fashioned. Imagine if we could live our lives such that G-d would bring His presence into our own individual Tabernacles which we build with our

deeds!

Good Shabbos!

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