

THE WANDERER

by Shlomo Katz

Parshios Tetzaveh & Purim

The Wanderer

Sponsored by
the Anker and Gabel families
in memory of Bert and Judy's mother Ida Anker
(Chaya Feigel bat Yitzchak Nissan Halevi a"h)

Today's Learning:
Keilim 5:5-6
O.C. 290:2-291:2
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Bava Kamma 69
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Kiddushin 33

King Shlomo writes in Mishlei (27:9), "Oil and ketoret / incense gladden the heart; so does the sweetness of one's friend from sincere counsel." Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher z"l (Spain; 14th century) explains: King Shlomo is instructing man to have compassion on the traveler and to show him kindness in two ways: by supplying him with food and by being friendly to him. That this verse is referring to a traveler is evident from the context, as the immediately preceding verse states, "Like a bird wandering from its nest--so is a man who wanders from his place." "Oil and ketoret" refers to food, which is cooked in oil and gives off pleasing aromas. "The sweetness of one's friend" refers to friendship. Such friendship should originate "from sincere counsel," i.e., it should be a deep feeling and not superficial or intended to curry favor. This idea is similar to the teaching found in the Gemara (Ketubot 111b), "It is preferable to smile at another person than to give him milk to drink."

R' Bachya offers another interpretation: The oil of the menorah, which is discussed in our parashah, was lit at approximately the same time that the ketoret was offered, and together these gladden Hashem. Just as we are taught that Hashem rejoiced when the world was created, so He rejoiced when the Mishkan was completed. Just as G-d created one man to serve Him at the beginning of creation, so He appointed one man, the Kohen Gadol, to serve Him at the dedication of the Mishkan.

"Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually. In the Tent of Meeting, outside the Partition that is near the Luchot of Testimony, Aharon and his sons shall arrange it from evening until morning, before Hashem, an eternal decree for their generations, from Bnei Yisrael." (27:20-21)

The Gemara (Menachot 86b) comments: Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said, "'For you' and not for Me. I do not need the light." Rather, the menorah is a testimony that the Shechinah rests in the midst of Yisrael.

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; died 1951) explains: Our Sages have said that our service of G-d is a "Divine need." Of course this does not mean, G-d forbid, that G-d actually needs man's service. Rather, His Desire is that He become revealed as a result of man's deeds. [Since man's deeds determine whether G-d's Desire is fulfilled, we say that our service meets a Divine "need." However, even that so-called "need" exists only because G-d so desires.]

The continuous burning of the menorah is a testimonial that the Shechinah rests in the midst of Yisrael. Specifically in the context of that testimonial, G-d found it appropriate to say, "For you, and not for Me." I, in fact, do not need this service. (Mei Marom: Nimukei Ha'mikraot)

R' Meir ibn Gabbai z"l (late 15th century) elaborates on the idea that our service fulfills a Divine need:

We read (Mishlei 27:8), "Like a bird wandering from its nest--so is a man who wanders from his place." Kabbalists say that the "bird" is the Shechinah and the "nest" is Yerushalayim. Because of our ancestors' and our own sins, the Shechinah has been exiled from Yerushalayim. Just as a traveler yearns to return home, so does the Shechinah. But, just as a prisoner ordinarily cannot free himself from prison ("ain chavush matir atzmo m'bet ha'asurim"), so G-d conducts Himself as if He is dependent on our deeds. Only we have the key to "release" the Shechinah from its imprisonment. That key, writes R' ibn Gabbai, is teshuvah. (Avodat Ha'kodesh: Introduction)

"Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take for you pure, chopped oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually." (27:20)

The Gemara teaches: "Pure, pressed oil is required for the menorah, but it is not required for the menachot / meal offerings. Thus, the first oil that comes from the olives is set aside for the menorah, and the second oil is to be used for the menachot."

R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (1458-approx. 1520) observes: Usually, one uses his best oil for cooking, and his inferior oil for lighting. Here, we give the best entirely to G-d (in the menorah), and use the second-best for ourselves (in the menachot, which are partially consumed by man).

R' Karo also notes: The word "chopped" ("katit" - "kaf-tav-yud-tav") alludes to the first two Temples, the first of which stood for 410 years ("tav-yud"), and the second for 420 years ("kaf-tav"). Both of these Temples were "chopped," i.e., destroyed. The third Temple, however, will stand forever - "to kindle the lamp continually." (Toldot Yitzchak)

"And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the vestments of Aharon, to sanctify him to minister to Me They shall take the gold, the turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and the linen." (28:3, 5)

R' Moshe Cheifetz z"l (Italy; 1664-1711) asks: Why does the Torah have to tell us that the craftsmen would take the materials? Would we have expected them to make the priestly garments without raw materials?

He explains: We read in Parashat Pekudei that Moshe Rabbeinu gave an accounting of how the silver and copper donated for the Mishkan were used. In contrast, Moshe did not provide an accounting for the other materials that had been donated. In our verse, G-d tells Moshe: Do not worry! You will not be called upon to account for the gold, the turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and the linen. Rather, they, the artisans, shall take those materials and be responsible for them. And, because there are two of them (Bezalel and Ohaliav) and they will watch each other, no accounting will be necessary. (Melech Machshevet)

"A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe all around. It must be on Aharon in order to minister. Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary and when he leaves, so that he not die." (28:34-35)

The Talmud Yerushalmi relates: "The sage Shmuel used to count little chickens during prayer / davening. The sage Rabbi Bun ben Chiya used to count the beams of the house during davening." Why did they do that? Certainly they were not so distracted as to be looking at chickens or beams!

R' Yissachar Dov Rokeach z"l (the Belzer Rebbe; died 1927) explained: It is related that the Rebbe R' Elimelech (great chassidic leader; died 1787) used to hold a watch in his hand during the Shabbat mussaf (known as "Kedushat Ketter" in the Sephardic liturgy which chassidim follow). R' Elimelech said that he felt so uplifted during that particular prayer that he was afraid his soul would leave him. Therefore, he held a reminder of this temporal world in his hand in order to bring him back to earth.

If a relatively contemporary sage (R' Elimelech) prayed thus, certainly the sages of old did, explained the Belzer Rebbe. That is why Shmuel counted chickens in the middle of davening and Rabbi Bun counted the beams of the house. They needed to do so in order to remain attached to this world.

In this light we can understand the purpose of the bells attached to the Kohen Gadol's robe. If the

sages of the Talmud could lose their connections to this world during moments of spiritual ascent, certainly Aharon was at such risk also when he entered the Holy of Holies. Therefore, "Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary and when he leaves, so that he not die." The sound of the bells brought him back to earth. (Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim)

This Week in History, Halachah, and Minhag

8 Adar 5585 (February 26, 1825): On this date, the Maryland House of Delegates passed an act "for the relief of the Jews in Maryland." The bill provided that "every citizen of this state professing the Jewish religion" who is appointed to any office of profit or trust shall make a declaration of his belief in future rewards and punishments. This declaration was meant to replace the existing oath, which required the officeholder to profess belief in Christianity. (JewishEncyclopedia.com)

10 Adar: A fast day was observed in Worms (Vermiza), Germany on this date because of the suffering associated with the Black Plague in 1349. (Luach Davar B'ito p.608)

Purim night: It is customary to recite "Attah Kadosh" after the reading of Megilat Esther. [Therefore, one should not leave immediately after megillah reading, and those who are leaving should do so quietly.] The reason we omit the introductory verses of "Attah Kadosh," i.e., we do not begin with "U'va le'Tzion go'el" / "The redeemer will come to Zion," is that mashiach will not come at night. Just as Bnei Yisrael refused to leave Egypt at night so as not to appear to be fleeing, so we will not leave our current exile at night. (Sefer Ha'manhig)

14 Adar: In the time of the Bet Hamikdash, the bet din would appoint agents on this day to repair roads in preparation for the aliyah la'regel / pilgrimage that would occur before Pesach. In addition, agents were sent to mark graves so that the pilgrims did not inadvertently become tamei / impure. (Mishnah, Shekalim 1:1)

16 Adar 3390 (371 B.C.E.): King Cyrus of Persia granted the Jews permission to build the Second Temple. Construction of the walls of Yerushalayim also began on this day.

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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