

INTERESTED ACTIONS

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

"Command Aharon and his children..." [6:2]

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki explains that the word "Tzav," meaning command, also means to excite the other person and generate enthusiasm. Rabbi Shimon says in the Talmud that it is especially necessary to push someone to do something when financial loss is involved, as there is for the Kohanim in this situation. It's easy to do things which don't involve a loss, but where opening the wallet is involved, it's much harder.

There is also another reason noted: Rashi says that "Tzav" is intended to generate enthusiasm not only now, but for all future generations. The Mayana Shel Torah says that for any Mitzvah, we need an infusion of energy to prevent it from becoming old and stale in our eyes. We should always do the Commandments because we *want* to do them, looking forward to any new aspect.

This is crucial, because - as we all know - it is all too easy to fall into "Judaism by habit." Whatever those habits may be, they are guaranteed to become old and stale - and that's not Judaism. Do we go to synagogue because we want to go, or because we feel it's something we have to do? What we have to do, is want to go! Once we are interested, we'll obviously get there.

Is it possible? Yes. A person who really thinks about prayer can realize something new every day, just as his or her needs change daily. And the Mayana Shel Torah explains that this is so fundamentally a Jewish attitude - and attribute - that we say in the introductory morning prayers, "Happy are we, and how good is our portion... [that] we say every day, twice, with love, Shema Yisrael..." Happy are we, and happy is our lot, that even though we have a Mitzvah to say the Shema twice every day, nonetheless, it is possible for every person to say it "with love," with desire, joy and interest at every new aspect which we recognize!

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