

PARSHAS TETZAVEH

by Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari

In parshat Trumah we read, and they will take unto Me whereas in this parshah it is written, and they shall take unto you. It seems that this mitzvah required more of Moshes strength than any other commandment regarding the Mishkan. If we can understand the nature of the Menorah and its oil, we will see the difference between it and the other vessels. We would think that Menachot would require fine olive oil, as did the Menorah, since they were eaten whereas in the latter case the oil is not used for eating. Yet we learn that this is not so (Menachot 86a).

There are 3 crowns mentioned in the Mishnah (Avot chapter 4, mishnah 17), the crown of Kingship, the crown of Priesthood, the crown of Torah, but the crown of the good name [ie of good deeds (Rashi)] is superior to them all. The Maharal queries why the Tanna does not use the term 4 crowns. Furthermore, the Midrash sees the crowns as referring to the Shulchan, the Mizbeach, the Aron and the Menorah. They all had a zer, a fence around them, while the crown of the good name did not. Obviously, these 3 crowns are the symbols of sovereignty and dominion, but we must not see them as referring to those roles in relation to others. Who is dominated when one sits in a room and studies Torah? So they must refer to the self-rule and power to control ones self, as it is written, One who controls himself, is more powerful than he who captures a city (Mishleh, 16: 32). The zer is a symbol of such control, as Ibn Ezra tells us regarding the Nazir, of whom the Torah speaks as the Zer. The crown of a good name does not merely mean that one should do good deeds. It means that this doing shall only have one purpose, namely, doing them only for the sake of Heaven. In the case of Moshe it is written, and she saw that the child was good- perfect. The Admor Menachem Mendel of Kotsk said that this is what we mean when we say a Rebbe is a good Jew; somebody without pesolet. Even so, how can we conceive of the crown of a good name as being superior to the crown of Torah study, when we know that such study is above everything else (Yerushalmi, Peah, chapter 1, halakhah 1)? Shall we say then as the Sifri (Eikev) does: One should not say, I will study Torah in order that I should become rich from it, or that people will call me rabbi, or so that I shall be rewarded in the World to Come, but only for the love of G-d? Yet one should study Torah even so, even if not for the sake of Heaven. Where Torah is studied for its own sake, without any other consideration then indeed it stands above all else. However where such Torah, as all the other crowns, is mixed with other considerations, then the crown of a good name stands above all.

How can human beings do good deeds without personal considerations or self- interest being involved? After all, each one is primarily concerned with them-selves, and just as with the other crowns, there is the danger of impure motivation. The secret lies in the relationship of the crown of a

good name and the Menorah and the oil required for it. This olive oil had to be refined and without impurities. In order to obtain such oil, one has to beat the olives, pulverize and crush them and then separate out the impurities. So one has to do with one's deeds, until they are clear of impurities and solely for the sake of Heaven. That is the Crown of a Good Name.

This purity of a good name is closely linked to the Menorah in the Mishkan. The Menorah unlike all the other vessels that denote lordship and rule is completely devoted only to the negation of self, serving only to bring light. Therefore, it has no need for a cover that is only a vessel on the particular vessel, whereas the Menorah is a complete whole fashioned from a single slab of gold. It requires shemen zach, just like the Crown of a Good Name.

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