

Tetzaveh - Rabbi Lerner - February 6, 2011

27:20-21: *Ve'atah Tetzaveh* - you should command Bnei Yisrael to take pure olive oil, pressed for lighting, to light the Menorah continually. In the Ohel outside the Paroches near the Luchos, Aharon and his sons should arrange it from evening to morning before Hashem; it is an eternal Chok for their generations from Bnei Yisrael.

There are obvious questions to be asked here: Why is this topic even found here in the middle of the description of the building of the mishkan? Furthermore, it is totally unnecessary at any rate, as it appears later in Emor 24:1-3 - with very similar wording; the gist is similar to what we have here; the only difference is that the formulation in Emor is the typical one beginning with *Vayedaber Hashem el Moshe*, as opposed to our parsha. **Abarbanel**: The Torah should say *Tzav* and not *Ve'Atah Tetzaveh*? And furthermore, as asked above, this whole topic is said in Emor, except for the fact that there is no preceding *Veyadaber* - Hashem just jumps right into it here with no introduction? Furthermore, there in Emor it is the right place for it; here we are discussing *Binyan Hamishkan*, not the day-to-day operation of the mishkan? It doesn't belong here - it is totally out of place.

Rabbeinu Bachya: the Torah says that the oil should be pressed, *Kasis Lama'or*, as opposed to oil dripping out naturally - you must take some action for this oil. Also, it cannot be from grinding and pounding the olives - it must be pressed; otherwise, there will particles of the olive - the oil must be pure, with none of the skin or other parts. If you have poor quality oil we would naturally be inclined to use it for lighting, with the best and purest oil for eating in *korbanos*; here we are doing the reverse - the finest goes towards lighting the menorah; the lower quality for the meal offering. The words *Kasis Lama'or* can also mean something else - the word *Kasis* in gematria is 420 and 410 - these words therefore span the duration of light that will be created by the oil in the two *Batei Hamikdash* - 410 and 420 years; the light of the final *bais hamikdash* will not be limited. The first two had set times; the final one is eternal, with no limits to its time.

Ramban: Why this unusual language to introduce this parsha? Why start with the word *Ve'atah*? It is a special obligation imposed upon Moshe that was not seen with other mitzvos. Moshe has to command them to prepare pure oil and then they have to bring it to him - *Veyikchu Eilechah* - for inspection to make sure it is pure. This word *Atah* comes up several more times in the next few Pasukim - You must bring near Aharon. This is because Moshe himself has to elevate Aharon and his sons to the position of *Kohanim* - Moshe has to be the one to make that proclamation. Finally, the third *Ve'atah* in 28:3 is for Moshe to discern who has the skills to make the special garments, and he will know who to assign to do these things. These were 3 special mitzvos that Moshe had to supervise personally.

Abarbanel: The words *Ve'atah Tetzaveh* are not synonymous with *Tzav*, the command the Jewish people are given in Emor. There it is counted as the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. Here, however, it is not a mitzvah - it is a prophecy - "You will charge them to prepare oil and light the menorah." Who will be lighting the menorah? In the future you will command Aharon and his sons to take on this job. Since you will be commanding Aharon to do this, then you must elevate them to *Kohanim*, and they have to wear the proper uniform. This is also prophecy of what will come. These are all things coming down the road, and he will have to create the proper *bigdei kehuna* for them to do these things. The Ramban does not explain why it is listed here.

Baal Haturim (and **Aznayim LaTorah** and others): this parsha is unique - since he is born in Shemos and all parshas until the end of the Torah, it is only in this parsha where Moshe's name is not mentioned. That would explain why it does not begin with *Vayedaber Hashem El Moshe*. This is the punishment of Moshe when he told Hashem in defending Bnei Yisrael after the sin of the Egel that if He destroys the nation, then Hashem should blot him out from His Torah; if a talmid

chacham makes a kelalah, it is carried out to some extent. Not only is his name blotted out from this parsha, Hashem also takes Moshe at his word to not make him the Kohen Gadol, as Moshe had requested at the burning bush; instead He gives the job and its kavod to Aharon. Where it says in Shemos *Aharon, Achichah Halevi* - originally Aharon was supposed to be the father of all of the leviyim, and Moshe the father of the Kohanim; it is flipped around because of Moshe's reluctance to take the job, and we are told about this now in Tetzaveh when we see that Aharon and his sons will be lighting the menorah; because Moshe gave Hashem so much trouble taking on the job, Hashem gave it to others who are Zerizim Lamitzvah; and this is the parsha where his name is omitted as well; Moshe has hurt himself and his descendants by his actions, and Aharon will take over these jobs.

Kli Yakar: the emphasis in this section of lighting is a singular light - Nair - while in Emor it also says Nair Tamid, but then it also says they should light Nairo before Hashem - you also get the plural there. What is Nair Tamid? **Rashi**: tamid means it burns every single night; it is constantly lit - from night until the morning; if you light it every night, on a daily basis, that is called constant; it doesn't have to be burning all 24 hours to be called constant; just like the Olas Tamid is every day, not around the clock. **Ramban**: the light burns all 24 hours, that is the meaning of Nair Tamid. The Western-most candle lasts 24 hours, it never burns out, even though it has the same amount of oil as the others. There is a machlokes which is the Nair Tamid, depending on how the menorah is positioned in the mishkan; it can be the second candle which is more western than the first candle; others say it is the central candle. Either way, it defies science every day; they would light all of the other candles each night from the one that continually burns. **Kli Yakar**: the mishkan has three different parts; and about all three parts it is said Hashem will dwell in the midst; in each section there should be something miraculous to prove that this is a house like no others, with the shechina residing. In the kodesh kedashim there were the miraculous luchos which bear testimony to Hashem, with engraving going through and through, with floating letters being able to be read from both sides. In the second section, the haichal, is the menorah where we see the eternally burning candle - this will bear testimony that there is a God in the world. The third section has the mizbeach whose fire comes down from the heavens, with the smoke ascending straight up to the heavens. Moshe is instructed that this Mishkan is a special construction that will be miraculous.

Netziv: there are two people and two vessels to consider: the Aron and the menorah. Our understanding of God comes from these two vessels. The Aron is about the Torah, with what is written and all that comes implied between the lines. But this does not include deeper conclusions. The menorah represents the light of the Torah, with all of the deeper meanings, just as the menorah has beautiful ornamentation - lighting the Menorah is like unlocking the beautiful secrets of the Torah. This is also the difference between Moshe and Aharon - they were colleagues in learning; they each show each other great kavod, but they are fundamentally different in how they approach learning and people. Moshe was incredibly deep and analytical, being able to come up with revelations far beyond what is written - that is the light of the Menorah. Aharon gets his direction from the Aron - his strength is to paskin; he takes the body of Torah law and adapts it to judge the nation; this is similar to the modern relationship between the Gedolai Hador 30 years ago - the Rav would not paskin - he was into plumbing the depths of Torah; Rav Moshe was the poseik. That is the Menorah vs the Aron - the Aron is using and adapting the knowledge of the Torah to judge the people; the Aron was about the secrets and depths of the Torah.