

Tetzaveh 2015

1.

Torah and Menorah are constant

“Now you should command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure olive oil, pressed, for illumination, to kindle a lamp continually.” (27, 20)

"ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך כתית למאור להעלות נר תמיד."

Nachalas Tzvi page 224:

Since the Menorah was only lit from night to morning, why does the pasuk state that the Menorah should be constantly lit? The Kli Yakar answers and explains that the word “תמיד”/ “continually” refers to the western candle; this candle was always lit.

The Nachalas Tzvi answers, since **the Menorah corresponds to Torah** as the pasuk states “a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light.” "נר מצוה ותורה אור" (Mishlay 6, 23). The pasuk in safer Yehoshua (1, 8) states “you should contemplate it day and night” "והגית בו יומם וליילה." **Our pasuk, which refers to learning, teaches us that we need to be constantly learning.**

The Mishna in Avos (perek alef) says the world stands on three things; one of them is Torah. The world was only created for the Torah. The Bartenura explains if the Jews wouldn't have accepted the Torah the world wouldn't have been created. How is it possible to literally constantly learn? The Radak (Sefer Yehoshua (1, 8)) says whenever we have time, and we are not working, we need to be learning. Similarly, the Mishna Berurah (siman 155 sif katan four) writes, **whenever a person has time he is obligated to learn.** Essentially what the Mishna Berurah is saying is; whenever a person is not involved with other matters such as eating, sleeping, working and involved with family obligations, he needs to be learning!

Tosfos (Berachos (11b)) asks the following question; why is it that when someone leaves the Sukkah he needs to make a new beracha of לישב בסוכה the next time he eats in the sukkah, but when it comes to learning Torah, even if someone takes a long break, he doesn't have to make a new birchas hatorah when returning to learn? Since our minds are never diverted from learning, therefore we don't need a new beracha because the Torah is always on our mind, even while we are involved with other matters! Regarding the Sukkah, once we are done eating we leave. Since we don't think about eating or the Sukkah anymore, therefore a new beracha is required next time, because of the היסח הדעת (diversion of the mind).

2.

Jews and oil

Sfas Emes, os 635:

The Medrash compares the Jews to an olive. Olive oil doesn't mix with other liquids. Additionally, olive oil always rises to the top. So too, the Jews rise above all the other nations. We don't mix with them. The Sfas Emes explains that even if you were to mix olive oil with another liquid, it quickly separates.

To elaborate, the Shulchan Aruch (Yora Deah siman 178) says that it is prohibited to follow in the ways of the goyim (gentiles) and compare ourselves to them; we are forbidden to wear the same clothes that they wear, etc. The Rema (ibid) writes that we must separate ourselves from them by dressing and acting differently. The Mishna in Avoda Zara (29b) (see Tosfos there, also Shach and Taz siman 123) says that one of the reasons why its prohibited to have wine touched by a goy (gentile) is because we might come to marry their daughters. An extremely unfortunate reality is that we are losing many Jews due to intermarriage; even more than the Holocaust. The Kitzer Shulchan Aruch (3, 2) states ‘all of our actions, thoughts, and beliefs must be different than everyone else’s.’

In summary, we are the olive oil that always separates itself. Wherever we are, we need to realize that there is a line between us and them. It doesn’t just happen one day that someone decides to inter-marry. It builds up over time, and begins with a small action; a small spark starts it all. We have to make sure to put out those sparks before they turn into a fatal fire, a fire of spiritual death.

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