

10 Adar I 5765
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Tetzaveh

The Menora and the Dove: Samples of Quality

We get an uneasy feeling from people who aren't confident in their own work. If a manufacturer doesn't use his own products, we might hardly feel inclined to use them. If a kashrus supervisor won't eat at the restaurant he oversees, we might also be hesitant about eating there. And the same is true in spiritual endeavors. If one does not express confidence in his spiritual projects, it might be reflective of an inherent shortcoming.

The opening lines of this week's parsha present an enigma that many of the Commentators grapple with. Moshe is directed to procure oil for the Menorah with the charge, "And **you, you** shall command the Jewish People, and they shall take for **you** pure olive oil..." The emphasis on Moshe's role in this matter, and the fact that he, rather than Hashem, is deemed the "commander" of this undertaking, are elements that are not immediately understandable.

I would like to suggest the following explanation:

The Yalkut Shimoni introduces Parshas Tetzaveh with a citation from the Midrash Tanchuma. The Tanchuma draws a very deep parallel between the account of Moshe's directing the lighting of the Menora and that of Noach sending the dove from the Ark.

A person who wants to buy wheat from his fellow says 'let me see a sample.' So too, you [Jewish People] are samples -- like the Dove. How? When Noach was in the Ark what does the Torah say? 'And the Dove came to him in the evening time, and behold an olive branch was in its mouth' – Hashem said to him [to Moshe] Just as the Dove brought light to the World, so you [the Jews], who are compared to the Dove, shall bring oil, and light it before me...

The Kli Yakar in Parshas Noach (8:11) explains that the Torah's highlighting of the fact that the Dove returned "in the evening" means to tell us that the severed olive branch was not merely a sign that the tree branches were again accessible after the Flood, but it was meant to provide olive oil for Noach to kindle during the darkness of the night. Indeed, it was a sign, that after the darkness of the Flood, there would once again be light.

Herein lies the parallel to the Mishkan. Hashem had commanded Noach to create a haven apart from the corrupt people of his generation. Noach's efforts in the Ark were intended to recreate a World worthy of Hashem's approval. When the flood was over, therefore, it was Noach who had to ascertain that there would once again be dry land – that the earth had not been washed away entirely. Since it had been his mission to bring about this result, it was he who had to see to it that the mission was accomplished.

The same is true of Moshe and the Mishkan. The Mishkan's construction, ordered in Parshas Terumah, was the Jewish People's mandate to bring the Divine Presence into the World. Moshe, as the supervisor of this task, was responsible to see its fruition. Just as Noach had to send the Dove to sample the New World he had brought about after the Flood, Moshe had to facilitate the lighting of the Menorah to test the New World he had "created" – a World imbued with a G-dly Sanctuary. Hashem tells Moshe: you assembled the vehicle, you administer the test drive.

Just as Hashem (*kivayachol*) stepped back after creating the World and tested it to see that it was satisfactory -- *And Elo-him saw everything He had made, and it was very good, (Bereshis 1:31)* so, we are taught, upon the completion of our own “creations,” must we sample their quality, to see that we have achieved what we set out to do.

The great Chassidic Rebbe, Reb Tzadok of Lublin explains (See *Tzidkas HaTzaddik* 154) that the pasuk we say every day *And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant (Beshalach 14:31)* at a deeper level means to tell us that just as one must believe in Hashem, one must also believe in himself as an agent of Hashem. We must believe in our ability to achieve our mission in this world. Just as Noach, after the terrible corruption of his generation, was confident that he could recreate a World worthy of Hashem’s protection, and just as Moshe was confident that he could imbue the Mishkan with the proper sanctity to draw Hashem’s Presence into the world, so too, must each of us believe in our own ability to achieve what our souls were meant to achieve and thereby kindle our own flame to illuminate the World.