



## A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

### מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

#### פרשת תצוה - זכור

וְאַתָּה תְּצַוֶּה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ וכו'. יַעֲרֶךְ אֶתְּךָ אֶתְּךָ אֶתְּךָ וּבְנָיו מֵעֶרֶב עַד בֹּקֶר וכו'. (שמות כז, כ-כא)  
*And you shall command the Bnei Yisroel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil ... Aharon and his sons shall arrange it from evening until morning ...* (Shemos 27:20-21)

In this week's *Sidrah*, Hashem commands Klal Yisroel regarding the lighting of the Menorah. The purest oil should be taken, and the Menorah should be lit by Aharon and his descendants.

R' Moshe Feinstein *zatzal* in *Darash Moshe*, notes that the command to light the Menorah was given to Aharon and the Kohanim even before they were designated and anointed for *avodah* in the Mishkan. Only in the following *parshah* does Hashem instruct Moshe, וְאַתָּה הַקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ אֶת אַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ וְאֶת בְּנָיו אִתּוֹ, *And you, bring near to yourself Aharon your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Bnei Yisroel to minister to me.* This indicates that the selection of Aharon and his children for the service of the Menorah was separate from their designation for the rest of the *avodah* in the Mishkan. Even if the regular *avodah* had remained to be performed by the firstborn, the task of lighting the Menorah would still have been connected to Aharon and his descendants.

At the end of the *Sidrah*, the Torah orders the construction of the Golden Mizbeach, which was designated for bringing the *ketores*. Many Meforshim discuss the obvious difficulty of why this Mizbeach is not mentioned earlier, along with the other *keilim* of the Mishkan. R' Moshe answers that if the *avodah* had been conducted by the firstborns, there would not have been a requirement for the offering of *ketores*. It was only after Aharon and his descendants were chosen to serve in the Mishkan that Klal Yisroel were taught about the Inner Mizbeach and its purpose in facilitating the *ketores* service. The connection between the lighting of the Menorah and the *ketores* service being performed by Aharon and his descendants is also evident elsewhere. As the *posuk* states, וְהִקְטִיר עָלָיו אַהֲרֹן קֹטֶרֶת סַמִּים בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר, *Upon it shall Aharon burn the ketores, every morning, when he cleans the lamps he shall bring it up in smoke* (30:7).

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* expounds at length on the intrinsic differences between the general offering of *korbanos* and the lighting of the Menorah and the *ketores*. Drawing from various inferences in the Rambam (*Sefer Hamitzvos*) and Chinuch, which detail the different types of *korbanos*, the Brisker Rov (*Hil. Klei Hamikdash* 2:8) concludes that there is a significant distinction: while most *korbanos* serve the purpose of providing atonement and gaining favour with Hashem, the lighting of the Menorah and the *ketores* are considered an *avodah*, in their own right. This distinction leads to a profound difference in the role of the Kohanim during these services. In the case of the *korbanos*, the Kohanim act primarily on behalf of the nation (or on behalf of Hashem) to facilitate the desired atonement and goodwill. In contrast, the lighting of the Menorah and the *ketores* are services specifically designated for the Kohanim to perform themselves. (ליתר אריכות ע' בחי' הגרי"ז שם ובענפיה ארזי אל עמ' רנז - רסט)

Accordingly, we can begin to understand why these *keilim* – the Menorah and the Mizbeach HaKetores – as well as their services, were especially dependent on being performed by Aharon and his family. These weren't typical *avodas hakorbanos*, where the Kohanim acted merely as representatives of the nation; if

that were the case, the services could have been performed by the firstborns. Instead, these services were specifically designated for Aharon and his descendants.

Why were Aharon and his descendants chosen for the *avodah* of the Mishkan? What qualities did they possess that led to this great merit? The Midrash Rabbah (*Vayikra* 3:6) explains that it was their *גְבוּרָה*, *courage*, that set them apart. Their courage and strength were demonstrated by their rejection of a portion of the land, choosing instead to make Hashem and His service their lot. Meaning, that their *madregah* to turn away from materialism and financial success was a key factor in Hashem selecting them for His *avodah*. We have often cited the famous words of the Rambam (*Hil. Shemittah* 13:12-13), who elaborates on the unique role of Shevet Levi as teachers of Torah to the nation. This role requires complete dedication and separation from worldly matters; thus, they did not inherit land in Eretz Yisroel. The Rambam emphasises that this status is not exclusive to Shevet Levi. Rather, anyone who strives to detach from worldly concerns and dedicates themselves to serving Hashem can attain a unique *kedushah* and become a “portion of Hashem” and His heritage forever.

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The *leining* of Parshas Zochor recounts how Amalek attacked Klal Yisroel while they were travelling on their way from Mitzrayim. The Torah commands us to remember their wickedness, to obliterate them, and never to forget. The *pessukim* that precede this story discuss the prohibition against using dishonest weights and measures, and many Meforshim explore the connection between these two topics.

The Malbim explains that there is a common theme in this context. Amalek’s battle was centred around denying the existence of Hashem. After the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim and Krias Yam Suf, the entire world was in awe. Amalek aimed to counter this belief by demonstrating to humanity that Hashem was incapable of saving the Jewish people from harm. Their mission was to deny the existence and power of Hashem and to suggest that He does not consistently govern the world according to His will. Similarly, the root of dishonesty in business lies in denying the “watchful eye” of Hashem, Who is always observing everything. Deceitful practices, such as trickery, cheating, and the use of inaccurate weights and measures, stem from the denial that Hashem orchestrates all worldly affairs, ensuring each individual receives what they deserve. (*See Issue #27*)

The Malbim further explains that Amalek's denial of Hashem is rooted in his ancestor, Eisav. The Rambam (*Sefer Hamitzvos* #188) describes the *mitzvah* to eradicate Amalek as a directive against the descendants of Eisav. This implies that the essence of the battle against Amalek is, in fact, a battle against Eisav himself, fully manifested in his wicked descendant, Amalek. When did Eisav demonstrate his denial of Hashem and His *mitzvos*? It was when he chose Olam Hazeh – this world and its physical pleasures – over the *bechorah* and closeness to Hashem. Eisav rejected the beliefs of Olam Habah and Techiyas HaMeisim for the sake of trivial material benefits.

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We can learn valuable lessons from these two extremes in behaviour. The Kohanim and Levi'im understood the importance of serving Hashem, and by rejecting materialism, gained the tremendous merit of performing the *avodah*. In contrast, Eisav turned away from belief in Hashem and spirituality in exchange for fleeting physical pleasures, which led to his wicked descendants continuing on his destructive path. May we be *zoche* to eliminate the influences of Amalek by recognising our higher purpose in life and the immense potential we have to achieve incredible spiritual heights and closeness to Hashem!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to [parshasheet@gyalumni.org](mailto:parshasheet@gyalumni.org).