



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT TETZAVEH

Always

Our Parsha opens with G-d instructing Moshe (Exodus 27:20): "And you should command the Children of Israel to take to you pure, pressed olive oil for light, to raise an eternal flame [i.e. the Menorah]." Commentators note the interesting usage of the word "eternal/תמיד" in this context, since the Menorah was not in fact *always* lighting 24/7 but only at night. Rashi resolves the question, explaining that the word "always" can indeed have two indications. It can denote "at all times," as the Torah does in the context of the לחם הפנים (showbreads) [1]. This definition is akin to someone stating, "My heart is always beating." At the same time, the Torah's "always" can also just imply consistency, as it does when discussing the עולת תמיד (continual burnt offering) [2]. This is similar to one saying "I always drink coffee" – it merely expresses that he drinks it every day, not that he is consuming coffee at every given second.

It may seem technical, but this insight bears tremendous significance in each of our lives. "Always" doesn't have to necessarily mean occupying each and every moment. If one shows an unwavering commitment to something – despite the fact that it may be periodical – that consistency earns him the title of "always." His steadfast dedication is a testament to the fact that this is his default mode and an eternal aspect of his life.

David HaMelech declared (Psalms 16:8): "שׁוֹתִי ה' לנגדי תמיד" – I place Hashem before me, always." This is an extremely lofty level, but make no mistake: it is not out of reach! It may be physically impossible to be preoccupied with meditation and spirituality at every moment in time, but with consistency – when consciousness of one's relationship with G-d becomes the default mode – one truly taps into this amazing realm where Hashem is indeed always before him. On a superficial level, "tamid" merely involves time; in a more profound sense, it's a mindset of what's truly important in life.

Thus, it doesn't take much for someone who *happens* to study Torah and perform chesed to become someone who *always* makes Torah and chesed the center and priorities of life... [3]

[1] Special set of twelve loaves placed on the Shulchan (Table) in the Mishkan; replaced weekly with fresh loaves that would push/slide off the old ones so that there was bread on the Shulchan at all times

[2] Which was offered from day to day

[3] Based on a d'var Torah shared by R' Shlomo Farhi

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Avigail Bat Tehila	Frida Bat Yaffa	Miriam Bat Bakol	Chana Bat Malka
David Ben Rivka	Rena Bat Bakol	Yitzhak Ben Naama	Yehoshua Ben Miriam	Esther Bat Frida
Rachamim Ben Shifra	Svetlana Tziviva Bat Esther	Moshe Ben Moriah	David Ben Rivka	

"Trust in Hashem is greater than all the praises one can say to Hashem."
(Sefer Ha'dirim)

On Hold

Did you ever experience a time when you were going through a difficult phase or having a bad day, and suddenly started contemplating big decisions? Where you knew you weren't in the right state of mind at the moment, yet couldn't help being bombarded in your head with the pressure of solving certain problems or figuring everything out in life?

In recounting the Purim story, the megillah narrates how Esther hid her identity from Achashverosh, which ended up actually being a key component in how the miracle ended up playing out. "Esther did not reveal her nation or her origins, for Mordechai had commanded her that she not tell" (Esther 2:10).

R' Nachman of Breslov would expound this verse as an incredible piece of advice for those struggling with the query presented above. Although Mordechai, having raised Esther, had helped enhance her level of consciousness and develop her perception (as would a parent), when she was taken by Achashverosh, he commanded her not to try to expand her awareness. When Esther was dealing with such intense trials and tribulations, it wasn't the right time for her to "reveal her origins" within herself or reconcile the many controversies, doubts, and confusions inevitably running through her mind regarding the impact such circumstances would have on her identity or the like.

In a similar vein, when our thoughts are taken from us like Esther was taken away from Mordechai – when we struggle to think straight because we're tired, sick, or facing extenuating conditions – we shouldn't try to tackle difficult questions, make conclusions about our lives, or even try to force ourselves to have feeling and inspiration in our *avodat Hashem*. In such moments, we must realize that it's okay to put the matter on hold for when we are better equipped to deal with it and in the meantime be able to "go to sleep" and enter a mode of simplicity. When we recognize that clarity often comes with time and allow ourselves to pause during moments of struggle, we create the space for deeper understanding and wiser decisions when we are in a better state to face them.

(Based on ideas presented in "Open Gates to Purim and the Megillah")

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Rachel Leah Shoshana Bat Mirzagah