

The Squeeze

By: Yosef Vogel

One of the most powerful metaphors in Jewish literature is that of light. The mystics choose this symbol as the most appropriate for describing spiritual energy in all its forms.

The spreading of light as captured by the lighting of the Menorah is also the ultimate purpose - of the great imperative to the Jewish people throughout the ages - of building a home for G-d in our midst and the way in which we disseminate that light throughout the world.

Light also symbolizes clarity and warmth in our lives, which are commodities we are constantly in search of and always remain somewhat illusive. Life's great challenge is how to achieve that clarity of perspective in our personal lives.

One of Jewish life's great truisms is that every result must necessarily have a corresponding effort. In the words of our sages, "according to the pain is the gain". So too is this the case with achieving clarity in our lives. Somewhere along the path there has to be the effort in order to create for ourselves the clarity we seek.

In the first verse of this week's Torah portion G-d tells Moses the secret to creating light in our own lives and in the world around us. In order to create the light, one needs clear olive oil and in order for the oil to come forth, the olive has to be squeezed.

And here we have one of the fundamental and relevant teachings in life. Light and clarity are not conditions upon which we accidentally arrive. It is not a state of mind which just happens to us. It is a place we arrive at after a long and challenging path upon which are forced to move beyond our comfort zones both physically, emotional and intellectually. At which point the pure juices latent within our system burst forth to give us a fresh and clearer perspective, than we have ever known in the past.

So next time we face those gruelling experiences that sometimes come our way, let us remember that the resulting clarity that comes from the "squeeze" can lift us up to see and experience broader horizons, greater depth of feeling and a stronger conviction in the purpose of life.

2 March

Tetzaveh & Zochor

Shabbat Begins: 5:28 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:31 pm