

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT TETZAVEH

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The Ner Tamid



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Every Shul is different.

Some have pewed seating, others have collapsible chairs.

Some are mighty cathedral-like structures, others are smaller and intimate.

But what do all Shuls have in common?

To answer this, look around the Shul from your seat. Check out its designs and features.

What familiar aspects do you observe?

Your Shul, along with many others, is bound to boast a *Bima*, an *Aron HaKodesh* (Ark) housing the

Torah scrolls...

Yet, have you considered that light? The one above the *Aron HaKodesh*. Yours may be dangling from the ceiling, or perhaps attached delicately to the wall ahead. In any case, this light is what we call the *Ner Tamid*.

So what is the *Ner Tamid* exactly? And what is its function?

To aid us in answering this question, our Torah portion for this week, Tetzaveh, gives us an insight. The opening verse of Tetzaveh sees God tell Moshe (Moses) to instruct the Israelites to bring "clear oil of beaten olives" to help ignite an eternal flame that was to burn in the golden Menorah in the *Mishkan* (Temple) at all times.

Nowadays, whilst we do pray in Shuls, which are also called *'Mikdash Me'at'*, a mini Temple of sorts, we no longer have the golden Menorah. Yet, we do still maintain

the act of leaving a light eternally lit!

So, the following question remains: why? What is the purpose of keeping the light on? Does it not seem a little excessive - both considering the cost-of-living crisis and the very fact we do not even host the golden Menorah in our Shuls?!

Perhaps the answer is found with less of a focus on the Menorah and more of a focus on the concept of an eternal light.

Judaism sees a direct relationship between light and Godliness. The festival of Chanukah and the weekly lighting of Shabbat candles are clear examples. To bring light into the world is to bring God into the world.

The *Ner Tamid* is the ongoing investment into the reminder that God is forever present; both inside and outside our Shul walls.

Parasha Pair Up!

Can you pair up the High Priest's special garments with the translations? *Tip: Look them up in Shemot (Exodus) chapter 28.*

1 Mitznefet

2 Michnasayim

3 Ephod

4 Tzitz

5 Avnet

6 Choshen

7 Me'il

8 Ketonet

Tunic

Apron

Belt

Trousers

Headplate

Turban

Breastplate

Robe

1.Mitznefet-Turban 2.Michnasayim-Trousers 3.Ephod-Apron 4.Tzitz-Headplate 5.Avnet-Belt 6.Choshen-Breastplate 7.Me'il-Robe 8.Ketonet-Tunic

ANSWERS