

Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason
Parshas Tzav - Purim March 14, 2014

Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates

This coming Saturday night/Sunday is the holiday of Purim. Purim is arguably the most joyous holiday on the Jewish calendar. If you would only have one day a year to attend synagogue, Purim might be that day. Purim is celebrated with the 'Four Ms' -- in the following 4 ways:

- 1) *Megilla*: On Purim we read the Book of Esther, which recalls the attempt of the evil Haman (boo!) to wipe out the Jews of Persia.
- 2) *Mishloach Manos*: We send gifts of food to friends and relatives ...at least two ready-to-eat food items in each package, delivered by a proxy. The joy of the day increases as we send and receive.
- 3) *Matanos L'Evyonim*: We don't forget those with less . . . at least 2 gifts of money and/or food to the poor on Purim day.
- 4) *Mishteh*: The merry, merry meal on Purim day . . . an easy mitzvah to fulfill.

Purim represents the height of joy -- so enjoy!

Parshas Tzav Leviticus 6:1 -- 8:36

The portion begins with G-d continuing to teach Moses many of the laws relating to the *Mishkan* service. However, while last week's portion described the *korbanos* (offerings) from the perspective of the giver, this week the Torah focuses more directly on the Kohanim, providing details about their service. After first describing the maintenance of the fire which burned on the altar, the Torah discusses the various kinds of *korbanos* which Aaron, his sons, and the succeeding generations of Kohanim would be offering. The offerings must be brought with the proper intention and eaten in a state of spiritual purity. Finally, Moses performs the lengthy consecration service of the *Mishkan*, and Moses anoints Aaron and his sons for their service in the *Mishkan*, in front of the entire congregation of Israel.

Rabbinic Ruminations

With the popularity of mobile phone cameras, snapping photos of special moments has never been easier. But with all the point-and-shooting going on, is something important getting lost in the shuffle? A recent study examined whether photographing objects impacts our ability to remember them.

Participants were led on a guided tour of an art museum and were directed to observe some objects and to photograph others. Results showed a *photo-impairment effect*. When participants took a photo of an object, they remembered fewer details about the object and the objects' location in the museum than if they instead only observed the object and did not photograph it.

Appreciating and interacting with our surroundings is conducive to our psychological and spiritual well-being. Ironically, taking photos removes us from the moment. As nice as it is to have trips to the museum, birthdays, holidays and vacations recorded, the above-mentioned study supports the idea that nothing compares to the experience of being present and the happiness we gain when we give special moments our full attention.

The Talmud (Avos 6:6) states that one of the 48 ways to wisdom is *b'Talmud* -- translated by Rabbi Noah Weinberg, z"l, as *Be Aware of Every Moment*. One of the biggest tests of life is to appreciate a situation while we're in the midst of experiencing it. Life is far too fleeting to allow ourselves to become overwhelmed by life's bumps in the road. Focus your attention to appreciate, be aware of, and savor the moment. And beware of what you might miss when you capture a moment with your camera.

Quote of the Week

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken -- *Oscar Wilde*

Joke of the Week

A man walks into a doctor's office and asks the doctor to inspect his leg. The man says, "Here, put your ear to my knee." The doctor puts his ear to the man's knee and hears very faintly, "Come on, can I have five bucks, just five bucks?"

The doctor steps back in horror, and the man says, "I know, but it gets worse. Put your ear to my shin." The doctor puts his ear to the man's shin and hears very faintly, "Come on, can I have ten bucks, just ten bucks?"

Once again, the doctor stands up, very perplexed. The man says, "If that surprises you, put your ear to my ankle." The doctor puts his ear to the man's ankle and hears oh so faintly, "Come on, can I have twenty bucks, just twenty bucks?"

The doctor then stands up and says, "I have a diagnosis. Your leg is broke in three places."