

February 23, 2013

D'RASH – TETZAVEH

In every generation, there are some people who are absolutely certain that their view is absolutely right. While Judaism has its share of people who insist that they know exactly how all Jews should observe Judaism, this *parashah* offers an interesting insight about the will of the Almighty.

In the time of the 1st Temple, *HaShem's* will was known exactly by the use of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. *HaShem* provided these devices so that His will might be known. If you weren't sure about something, all you had to do was hunt down the *Kohen HaGodol* and ask. The *Urim* and *Thummim* were Israel's guarantee that the people would always act in accord with *HaShem's* desires. Well. . . at least they would know what they were supposed to do.

That was then, but what are we supposed to do now that we no longer have the use of the *Urim* and *Thummim*? Well. . . we still have our inherited traditions, our sacred writings, the world around us, and the *ruach hakodesh* – that still, small voice that speaks within each one of us. Our traditions, which include the *mitzvot* and customs, often translate lofty thoughts and profound insight into concrete deeds. Our sacred writings record the encounters our ancestors had with *HaShem* and their insights of what He wanted from them – and from us. The world around us is also a source for understanding *HaShem*. After all, the same God who speaks to us through *Torah* fashioned creation as well. And finally, the God who created the world also made the human mind and heart, giving us the ability to distinguish between good and evil and a desire to act with compassion. No one path alone can convey the full majesty and depth of God's will, but all four together have at least provided us with a starting point.

Without having the pin-point accuracy of the *Urim* and *Thummim*, we must learn to consider with patience the viewpoint of others – they might be on to something we never would have thought of. We can encourage each other, even though we may follow different ways, and we can learn from each other, even in our disagreements.

Focus: What'll I do?

Hebrew reading Exodus 28:30

English reading Exodus 28:29-30

Haftarah reading 1 Samuel 15:22-26

B'rit Chadasha Hebrews 13:10-16