

## D'var Torah for Parshat Tetzaveh

At the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh, we run into something unusual. G-d tells Moshe,

" וְאָתָּה תְצַוֶּה | אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת טָהוֹר כִּתִּית לְמָאוֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד: "

“And you shall command the children of Israel, and they shall take to you pure olive oil, crushed for lighting, to raise up the lamps continually.”

Rashi has a problem. The Torah uses the word לְהַעֲלֹת, which means to make the fire go up. In all of our candle lighting blessings we use the word לְהַדְלִיק, which means to light. Why now does the Torah use לְהַעֲלֹת?

Rashi quotes the Talmud that the reason for this unusual phrasing is to point out the special way the lamps of the Temple Menorah must be lit. When we light our Shabbat candles or our Chanukah candles, we hold the fire source to the wick of the candle only until the wick begins to burn. The word לְהַעֲלֹת (to raise up) tells us that when lighting the Menorah, one had to keep the flame source in contact with the wick until the flame was strong and “went up by itself”.

The great 19th century German rabbi, Samson Raphael Hirsch, explains that from this we learn that when teaching children, it is important to continue educating them until they are strong and independent, like the flames of the Menorah. We can't just give them the alef-bet or other basic information, and send them off to fend for themselves. Our children's Jewish flames must be fed by parents and teachers until their commitment to Jewish growth and life is self-sustaining.