

AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps
Torah Portion: *Ha-azinu*

JEWISH AESTHETICS

It has been taught:

Zeh eli v'anveihu

This is my God, and I will glorify Him. (Exodus 15:2)

[What does glorify mean?] Do the *mitzvot* in a way that honors God, by using beautiful mitzvah objects.

Make a beautiful *sukkah* in God's honor
and a beautiful *lulav*,
and a beautiful *shofar*,
and beautiful *tzitzit*,
and a beautiful Torah scroll,
and write it for its own sake, using fine ink,
with a fine pen, and engage an expert scribe
and wrap it up in beautiful silk.

Abba Shaul says: *V'anveihu* (glorify God) means be like Him.*
Just as God is kind and compassionate, you should be
kind and compassionate.

*reading *anveihu* as *ani v'hu* (I and He).

[Shabbat 113b]

Question: can these two interpretations of glorifying God connect? Is there something in the Jewish aesthetic that carries a moral force? Is there some way in which our moral and religious lives should be beautiful?