

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת בהעלתך

דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלתך את הנרת אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות

“Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light” (8:2)

Rashi gives two explanations for the word "בהעלתך," "when you go up." One explanation is that the kohen must light the lamp until the flame rises on its own. Another explanation is that it refers to the steps that the kohen would stand on when he lit the menorah. when you ascend the steps.

R' Moshe Feinstein asks: Why is a step even necessary in the first place? After all, the menorah only was five to six feet high. It was possible to light the menorah without climbing a few steps. The reason for the steps was so that the kohen could have a good view of the lamps from above in order to get into every crevice of the menorah to clean it thoroughly.

The menorah is a symbol of Torah study. The kohen, who lights the menora and causes the flame of Torah to rise, represents the teacher of Torah. The teacher has to have a clear perception of what he is teaching. He must plumb the depths of the material in order to impart a proper understanding of the materials. The steps of the menorah illustrate this essential part of teaching the Torah. The menorah cannot be approached without a good vantage point of all its details. The ability of a talmid to be able to learn and understand on his own depends heavily on the level of preparation by the teacher. This is the connection between the two explanations of Rashi. The first explanation, that the kohen must light the flame until it rises on its own, symbolizes the responsibility of the teacher to educate the student until he can learn on his own. If the teacher fully prepares every aspect of the material that he is teaching, he will be able to fulfill his responsibility in the teacher-student relationship.

The student must also look well into the Torah in order to understand it completely. Having a superficial understanding which appears to makes sense is not enough. One must fully grasp the material to the best of his abilities.

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Rashi writes that Aharon felt bad because he was left out of the sacrifices that the nesi'im brought to inaugurate the Mishkan. He was only consoled by the privilege to light the menorah because the korbanos were only brought while the Bais HaMikdash stood while the menorah lasts forever. What does it mean that he was comforted by the

privilege of lighting the menorah? Why not the ketores or the Yom Kippur service? The Ramban explains that Hashem promised to repay Aharon in kind. Aharon's descendants, the Chashmonaim, would inaugurate the Bais HaMikdash themselves one day. This inauguration would be greater than the first one because it would live on forever through the mitzva of lighting the menorah on Chanuka. This also shows us how the Torah hints to events that will take place in the future.

**וזה מעשה המנרה מקשה זהב עד ירכה עד פרוחה מקשה הוא כמראה אשר
הראה ה' את משה כן עשה את המנרה**

“And this is the workmanship of the menorah, beaten out gold, to its base, to its flower, it is beaten out; according to the image that Hashem showed Moshe, so did he make the menorah” (8:4)

Rashi writes that initially Moshe could not understand how to make the menorah so Hashem showed him an image of it. R' Nissan Alpert gives an example to illustrate this situation. Two men are commissioned to construct a building, but neither really knows how to do it. One consults an expert carpenter while the other attempts to do it on his own. The one with the expert assisting him will be able to complete the task but the one who is independent will run out of material because he will not be able to work efficiently. So it is with life. When one tries to find his path in life on his own, he may end up wasting his materials, his strength and his years of life by the time he finds his way. The menorah represents Torah. When it comes to Torah, one should seek the advice of those have experience and the knowledge necessary for success.

**והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה
“Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth” (12:3)**

R' Nissan Alpert writes that the Torah refers to Moshe as an "ish," a reference to an elevated level of man. He was even humbler than the "adam," the people on a lower level, despite his higher status as an "ish." Humility is one of the forty-eight prerequisites through which one can properly acquire Torah. Moshe, being the greatest man to ever live, truly mastered this level of humility. The Igeres HaRamban refers to humility as the "greatest of all good deeds" and that "humility brings a person to fear of Hashem. The Iyun Yaakov writes that the six branches of the menorah represent the six orders of the Mishna. The center branch represents fear of Hashem. Study of Torah must be directed toward the final goal of fear of Hashem. It must also be learned with fear of Hashem. As the posuk says, "The beginning of wisdom is fear of Hashem" (Tehillim 111). The Mesillas Yesharim writes that fear of Hashem is wisdom in itself. It is a skill that must be learned and which one can acquire over time with proper diligence.

ותסגר מרים מחוץ למחנה שבעת ימים והעם לא נסע עד האסף מרים

“So Miriam was closed away outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in” (12:15)

R' Moshe Feinstein points out that at the time when Miriam sinned, Hashem showed her honor. Hashem loved her so much that despite her sin, Hashem still wished to honor her. In Sefer Shmuel, a famine occurred because Shaul had not been eulogized properly and because he wrongly killed the Givonim. The Gemara comments that even when Shaul sinned, it did not detract from the honor that he deserved. Even during the time when punishment was meted out for his sin, the people were also punished for not according him the respect due. Similarly, Miriam was honored even while she was being punished.

R' Michel Berenbaum quotes the Gemara that R' Chiya's wife gave him a lot of trouble and he still constantly bought her gifts. When he was questioned about this, he said that it is more than enough that she raised the children and saved him from sin. Her negative traits did not take away from the positive side of her character. We should not only focus on the negative sides of others but be appreciative of the good things that they do. Similarly, one should not only concentrate on the bad aspects of his life but recall the good parts as well.

Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur
Shiur given by Rabbi Mayer Friedman
Written by Michael Gutmann