

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Bahaloscha 5784

D. Mordechai Schlachter

Aharon is commanded to light the Menorah.

וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוֹרָה מְקֻשָּׁה זָהָב עַד-יְרֵכָה עַד-פְּרֻחָהּ מְקֻשָּׁה הִוא כְּמַרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר הִרְאָה ה'  
אֶת-מֹשֶׁה כִּן עָשָׂה אֶת-הַמְּנוֹרָה: {פ}

“And this is the work of the Menorah, hammered of gold, until its base and its petals it was hammered; it appeared just like Hashem showed it to Moshe, so was the Menorah made.” (Bamidbar 8:4).

The Torah already described how the Menorah was formed so why repeat the instructions here? If it was hammered out of a solid piece of gold, why did the Torah specify it was done so from its base to its petal? Is there significance to that it looked exactly how Hashem showed Moshe? Didn't all the vessels look as instructed?

Lighting the Menorah was a special avodah in the Mishkan reserved for kohanim. Even Moshe as the practicing kohen for the first seven days of its inauguration did not light the Menorah. Yet, when the Torah describes the lighting of the Menorah it does not go outright and write that the Menorah was lit and by whom.

When first teaching about lighting the Menorah the Torah is unclear who really lights it. “וַיַּעַל הַנֵּרוֹת לִפְנֵי ה' כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:” “And he made the lights go up before Hashem, just as Hashem commanded Moshe.” (Shmos 40:24). Who is the one that made the lights go up? And why didn't the Torah just say “light the candles?” Pronouns are often ambiguous in the Torah and it is left up to interpretation. The Torah said that Moshe erected the Mishkan. (Ibid 40:17). “And Moshe did [he set up the Mishkan] just as Hashem commanded, so he did.” (Ibid 40:16). Then, a few pesukim later, the Torah says that “he” made the lights go up. Each of these pesukim end in “just as Hashem commanded Moshe.” One would think that it was someone else who did that, *as Hashem commanded Moshe*. However, since it was Moshe putting it all together, the Torah is just giving him the respect. Moshe did it as Hashem commanded him—using his name instead of “him” to connote the leader that was taught these instructions on Har Sinai.

After setting up the kiur (laver) it says “that Moshe, and Aharon and his sons, would wash their hands and feet.” (Ibid 40:31). This references Aharon taking over the avodah. The Torah later also writes it was only Aharon and his sons who lit the Menorah. “Aharon shall set up the lamps from evening to morning.” (Ibid 24:3). The Torah says in our parsha, too—and this is during the inauguration of the Mishkan—that it is Aharon that lights the Menorah.

The pesukim in Shmos, therefore, are read as follows: Moshe placed the Menorah in the Ohel Moed, in the kodesh. (Shmos 40:24). Aharon would light it. (Ibid 40:25). The

Torah uses the phrase “puts up the lamps” instead of “lights the lamps” because Moshe may have prepared the lamps but it was Aharon the lit them. The Torah also says, “Aharon and his sons shall arrange the lamps, from evening until morning, before Hashem.” (Ibid 27:21). This is in contrast to what Moshe would be doing for the seven days of inauguration and training Aharon and his sons. The torah teaches that Moshe will train the kohanim. (Shmos 29). However, it does not state that he will light the menorah. That avodah was reserved for kohanim.

One way the Menorah is special is that only kohanim, preferably the Kohen Gadol, lit it. The Torah also does not use the term “light it.” Instead, it says, make the lights go up. (Ibid 40:25). He shall arrange the lamps, continually. (Ibid 4). Even during the inauguration, it does not say “light.” דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת אֶל־מִוֶּלֶךְ פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה “Speak to Aharon and say to him, ‘You shall go up to the lights, opposite the face of the Menorah, and you shall illuminate the seven lamps.’” (Bamidbar 8:2). It says “go up to them” and it says “illuminate them,” but it does not use the word for “light” or “kindle.”

Another way the Menorah was special is that the lighting of the candelabra was only its secondary purpose. Clearly, the Menorah was for light. וְאַתָּה תַּצְנֶנָּה | אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “And you shall command Bnei Yisroel, and they shall take for you pure pressed olive oil, fit for lighting, to make the flame go up continually.” (Shmos 27:20). However, it does not say it was lit by Aharon and his sons, but the oil was merely meant to be lit. Further, Aharon is meant to “bring up the light” from the lamps. Why does the Torah not say “kindle” explicitly?

The Menorah is special. It was a vessel but its use was not limited nor reduced to just being a glorified lampstand. When Hashem tells Moshe to make it, וַעֲשֵׂיתָ מְנֹרֶת זָהָב טָהוֹר “And you shall make a menorah (lampstand) of pure gold, make it by hammering the menorah (lampstand) out – its base and its shaft, its cups, knobs, petals, from it.” (Shmos 25:31). The Menorah was to be made from a single block of gold and it is to be formed from one block, all its designs and parts. When making the Menorah, the Torah says, “And he made the Menorah out of pure gold, made it by hammering...” (Ibid 37:17). Notice how every time the Menorah is made it uses the word מַקְשֵׁה hammer-work and not פְּתוּחֵי הַוַּתֵּם with seal engravings. Yet, of all the vessels, Moshe was shown, and not just told, what it was to look like. (Ibid 25:40). Its appearance mattered.

The Menorah wasn’t chiseled like the names on the stones were. It was hammered down. Taking a block of gold and banging it into the shapes needed. It was done this way from its base to the petals that adored the cups, at its top. Its main service was the arranging of the lamps. Light, though, comes from Hashem. Aharon, or the kohen, is to go up to the Menorah, even if he is tall. He must ascend and face the Menorah and appreciate the divinely inspired artwork. It is the kohen’s reminder – as he prepares the lamps in the morning and lights them at night – that his service is divinely inspired. The look and form of the Menorah is just as important as the lights themselves. From top to bottom it was formed as Hashem showed Moshe, just as a person can be also formed – top to bottom – through Torah and Avodah.