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# א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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תצוה

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## The Men Behind the Scenes

By Michael Khanukaev

In this week's פרשה, תצוה, אהרן and his sons are given the מצוה of setting up the מנורה so that it could be lit. The רמב"ן, in פרשת בהעלותך, records a מדרש which states that אהרן was greatly saddened as all the tribes brought animals for קרבנות while he and his sons did not, so ה' then comforted him by giving the מצוה of מנורה to the כהנים. But why was אהרן saddened? While all the tribes brought animals, he and his sons actually did the sacrificial services and offered them! Additionally, the רמב"ם says in the משנה תורה (הלכות הלקוחות) that anyone, including a non-כהן, can light the מנורה, so how could he have been comforted by receiving this מצוה?

To answer, why אהרן was disheartened by the fact that he and his family had not been able to bring קרבנות, we look to מסכת בבא בתרא on דף ט. In the גמרא, רבי אלעזר said: "גדול המעשה יותר מן העושה", greater is the one who enables a deed to be done than the one who does it. אהרן understood that the tribes enabled the מצוה to take place because they actually brought the animal and was saddened because he could never be the enabler.

To answer the second question, as to how being given the מצוה of the מנורה would help comfort אהרן, we can look to the structure of the מצוה of the מנורה. The מצוה of the מנורה seems to contain two parts, the preparatory work, and the lighting of the מנורה itself. The actual lighting could, be performed by anyone, and according to the גמרא in (כ"ד ב) מסכת יומא says "הדלקה לאו עבודה היא", lighting the מנורה is not actually part of the temple service. However only אהרן and his sons could prepare new wicks and oil, as well as do the other preparatory work, as the משנה in (ג:א) teaches us that removing the ashes from the מנורה was raffled off as a bonafide עבודה along with all of the other עבודות, as well as the פסוק in this week's פרשה saying that it was a commandment for אהרן and his sons. Therefore, ה' wasn't giving אהרן only part of a מצוה to console him but rather the entire מצוה. By giving אהרן the מצוה of preparing the מנורה, ה' comforted אהרן as only אהרן and his sons would be able to prepare it for lighting, making them the enablers of the מצוה. Before, they were unable to be the people who enabled the מצוה with the קרבנות. Now, they were the only ones who could prepare the מנורה, making them the enablers of the מצוה, the men behind the scenes.

We tend to strive to put ourselves in the limelight and our actions on center stage. But really, it is the one behind the scenes who is really the performer. In this week's פרשה, אהרן isn't given the מצוה of lighting the מנורה, rather just preparing it for lighting. The תורה is teaching us a profound insight regarding not only our approach to מצוות, but our attitude in general. We should not act with the goal of attention or credit, but rather with the goal of integrity. In other words we shouldn't act with גאווה, excessive pride, rather with the ענוה, humility.

# מנורה The Symbolisms Behind the Placement of the

By Ephraim Fischer

In the beginning of this week's פרשה, 'ה' gives משה the commandments for where to place the מנורה. The פסוק says that the מנורה will be "בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד מִחוּץ לַפְּרֶכֶת", in the משכן, but outside of the פרכת. This may seem like an ordinary way to give a commandment, but the fact that the מנורה was put outside of the פרכת symbolizes something very important.

The מדרש תנחומא (תצוה ז:א') states that the מנורה was fit to be behind the פרכת, in the presence of the ארון קודש, but the reason why it was put outside was to show that 'ה' didn't need the light of the מנורה. The מדרש further says that normally, when a human king prepares a bed and table, he puts his lamp on the table to his left side. However, in the משכן, the מנורה was placed to the right of the שולחן to show that this light wasn't for 'ה'. Rather this light was for us. This light was meant to illuminate our lives in the future. When all of the other nations would be left in metaphorical darkness, without the תורה, we would need the light of the מנורה to guide us through our lives. This further explains why the פסוק says that the lighting of the מנורה would be a "חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֶם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", A law for many generations to come, for all of בני ישראל. Even during the times of the המקדש, ביאת המקדש, all of the Jews would need this light to illuminate our lives in the face of darkness. Every Jew would need to contribute in order to keep the מנורה lit, so that the Jews would be illuminated for generations.

This concept of the מנורה being a light that we need to keep for generations even applies today. In all of our Shuls, we have a נר תמיד at the front. This is a light which is never turned off, and originally, they were oil lamps, just like the מנורה. The (עשרת הדברות, מסכת תמיד, נר מצוה, קל"א) של"ה says that the reason why we have a נר תמיד in our Shuls is because 'ה' told בני ישראל, "If you light a light for me, I will light a light for you". This sounds very much like what the תנחומא said earlier regarding the מנורה. If we light the נר תמיד, 'ה' will provide a light for us to guide us through the darkness of the world. This symbolism of the נר תמיד shows us that the מצוה of the מנורה is really one of "חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֶם", a law for many generations to come.

The placement of the מנורה also symbolizes our role as an "אור לגוים", a light unto the nations. The תנחומא has already established that the מנורה was not a light for 'ה', rather it was a light for us. However, the מנורה might not just be a light for בני ישראל. It is also meant to provide light for gentiles who are in the dark, without the תורה. In (לויב) שמות רבה we learn that the מנורה was meant to elevate בני ישראל in the eyes of the gentiles, so that the gentiles will say "The Jews are a light to those who want to be enlightened". This concept of the מנורה providing light for all nations is also seen in the המקדש. By the ביאת המקדש, it says that the windows were made "שֶׁקֶפִּים אֲטוּמִים", wide on the outside and narrow on the inside (מלכים א' ו:ד), translated with (מלבי"ם). This style of window is not very efficient for letting light in, but it is efficient for shining light out. This means that the light of the מנורה was not only for the Jewish people, but for everyone who could see it. The מנורה was meant to shine light onto anyone who wants to see it. From here we see that we too need to shine light onto the non-Jews today. We should try to make a קידוש 'ה' whenever possible and to elevate כלל ישראל as a whole so that we can each be a מנורה, and fulfill our role of an אור לגוים, a light unto the nations.

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