

א ב י ס כ ל ת ו ר א !

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The Deeper Significance of the מנורה

By Ariel Jesselsohn '26

In the first רשי" of this weeks פרשה, he asks why the תורה portion that details the נשיאים's offerings, which is at the very end of פרשת נשא, is juxtaposed with the תורה portion that deals with the lighting of the מנורה. רשי" answers that when אהרן saw all the offerings that the נשיאים brought, he became sad that he, nor the rest of family, did not have a part in the dedication of the משכן. Therefore, ה' immediately afterwards comforted אהרן by telling him that he gets the honor of lighting the מנורה everyday, which is greater in ה' eyes than the offerings that the נשיאים brought. The רמב"ן, however, has a problem with רשי" answer, because why did ה' decide to comfort אהרן specifically with the מנורה, and not any of the other services that אהרן was going to perform in the משכן, such as bringing all the קרבנות, offering the קטרת, and doing the עבודה on יום כיפור. ה' could have used any of these other עבודות to comfort אהרן, but He specifically chose the lighting of the מנורה, so there must be some deeper meaning behind the מנורה which singles it out from the other services that אהרן had the privilege of performing.

The רמב"ן therefore explains that by comforting אהרן with the fact that he will light the מנורה everyday, ה' is hinting to the lighting of the מנורה during the חנוכה story. With this, ה' was telling אהרן that in the future there will be another חנוכה, dedication, where ה' will perform miracles and save the Jewish nation at the hands of the כהנים of the time. Furthermore, this lighting of the מנורה which will be to commemorate the miracles of חנוכה will be forever, unlike the קרבנות that

the נשיאים brought which were only brought once during the dedication of the משכן. For this reason ה' singled out the lighting of the מנורה when trying to comfort אהרן.

However, the רמב"ן's explanation requires further clarification, of how the חנוכה candles, which are only a rabbinic מצוה and is only performed for 8 days per year, any greater than the קטרת, or קרבנות, or הכיפורים, which are all מצוות דאורייתא, and apply all year round (except עבודת יום הכיפורים)? The רמב"ן explanation answers what is special about the lighting of the מנורה, but does not explain why it is greater than the other services אהרן performed in the משכן.

There is a nice explanation that answers this question. The merit of the נרות חנוכה are only not limited to the מצוה of lighting חנוכה candles. During the story of חנוכה, the Jewish nation as a whole was at risk of being completely wiped off from the face of the earth. If the Greeks had succeeded, our connection to the תורה would have been severed, and we would have completely assimilated. If not for the חשמונאים, who were כהנים, there might have not been a Jewish future. The זכות of the כהנים of the time made sure that this did not happen. They ensured that the תורה would always be with us, and they made sure that there would be Jews living in the world, serving ה' and performing מצוות. Therefore, it turns out that in some way, all the מצוות and all the תורה learned since the חנוכה story was all possible due to the heroism of the כהנים. This is what Hashem was referring to when he comforted אהרן with the lighting of מנורה according to the רמב"ן. Although the נרות חנוכה are great in it of themselves, they are not any greater than any of the other services that אהרן had the

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privilege of doing. However, the fact that the future of the Jewish people, and the זכות of every word of תורה, and every single מצוה, is partly thanks to the כהנים during the חנוכה story, what can be more comforting than that.

The Shortest Prayer in the תורה

By Eitan Orkaby '27

One of the most famous prayers in תנ"ך is a mere five words long. After לשון הרע about מרים and אהרן talk, מרים is afflicted by צרעת. Upon hearing this from אהרן, he calls out to Hashem saying, "א-ל נא, (במדבר י"ב:י"ג) "G-d, please, heal her, please". When praying for one's own sister, one would expect to have a relatively long prayer, yet this five word prayer is the entirety of משה's prayer.

The shortness of this prayer can be explained in a few ways. According to רש"י, if משה would have had a lengthy prayer, which he might have wanted to have, then the Jewish people will think that משה is not taking care of his sister properly. The Jewish people thought that משה should be trying his best to help מרים in her situation, not stepping aside to go and pray. Thus, משה has a short prayer, to show that he will immediately go to help his sister.

This would explain the shortness of the prayer. Yet, even though the prayer is only five words long, there is a repetition of the word "נא" "please." It cannot be that משה could not think of any other words and merely repeated the word please. Therefore, the חזקוני offers a different reading of these two "נא"s. The first one is a word as a request from Hashem to answer him, taking on the meaning of please. The second one, however, is a request that מרים be healed now. While this turns משה's

humble request into a seemingly audacious prayer, it also is fairly logical. In the laws of a מצרע, when someone gets צרעת they must leave the camp for seven days. However, when משה got צרעת he was healed immediately (שמות ד:ז). It is only logical, therefore, that if caught quickly enough the צרעת should go away immediately, making משה ask for it to go away now and not in another seven days.

In the prayer for the sick that is said every שבת, this prayer is always said. What is strange about this custom is that משה's prayer was not answered; Hashem told משה that מרים would have to leave the camp for seven days. Perhaps, one can explain this prayer as being the base to our prayers to heal the sick, that one accepts the outcome no matter what. When משה asked Hashem to heal מרים, whether or not Hashem answered him, משה would have had absolutely no change to his faith in Hashem. משה does this another time, when he asks for Hashem to take him into the land of Israel and Hashem denies his request many times, even so משה never loses faith in Hashem. Therefore, maybe this prayer is here to remind us that prayer is not for an outcome, it is for the person themselves who is praying. When one prays to Hashem to help them in their dire need, one recognizes how reliant one is on Hashem, how nothing one does is without Hashem's assistance. Therefore, this prayer is inserted into the prayer for the sick, as a reminder of the true purpose of prayer.



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