

The Secret of the Lamp

The Menorah reflected the lights of the upper worlds

This week's *parasha* starts with the laws about the seven-branched candlestick (*Menorah*) that Aaron lit in the Tabernacle in the desert. The description of the Menorah is repeated, as well as the manner of lighting it. These things have already been dealt with in the weekly Torah readings of Teruma and Tetzaveh. This repetition leads to the following discourse by the son of Rebbe Shimon, Rabbi Elazar.

Rabbi Elazar asked regarding the repetition in this *parasha* describing the workmanship and the fashioning of the Menorah and everything connected with it. Why is it repeated another time?

The arrangement of the 12 tribes...in the desert represented the 12 different combinations of the four-letter name of G-d...

The reason is because the princes of the tribes had brought their sacrifices at the inauguration of the altar [as described in the previous week's *parasha*, Bamidbar] **as well as all of their other offerings, and now the text comes to tell us** [again] **about the work of the Menorah, which was the work done by Aaron** [thus showing that it was more important than all of the other sacrifices].

This is because above [in the world of *Atzilut*] **the Menorah** [which represents wisdom illuminating the *sefira* of *malchut*] **and all the lights on its branches** [that represent the *sefirot*], **lit everything up through the work of Aaron.**

Aaron lit the Menorah at the break of dawn. This is the time of *chesed*, since kindness is associated with daytime. The light of the sun is a kindness from G-d

to mankind, enabling us to see the world and our surroundings, allowing plants to grow and the world to function. Aaron represented the *sefira* of *chesed*. His lighting of the Menorah was a physical meditative act to cause the abundance from the world of *Atzilut* to flow down and emanate from the upper *sefirot* to those of this world, represented by the individual oil wicks in each branch of the Menorah.

Come and see. The [external] altar was dedicated and properly prepared by the twelve princes, and we have explained this. These 12 tribes were arranged in four directions and under four [main] flags. All of this was in the manner [of the spiritual world] above.

The arrangement of the 12 tribes under their flags in the desert represented the 12 different combinations of the four-letter name of *G-d*. These four letters and four main flags represent the four directions of North, South, East, and West. Now the Zohar states "Come and see" because visualizing the *sefirot* tree helps one understand that these four directions in the physical world in turn reflect the four principal *sefirot* of *chesed*, *gevura*, *tiferet* and *malchut*.

The oil in the Menorah represents the *sefira* of *chochma*...

Each of these four principal *sefirot* are connected to each other in the *sefirot* tree, consisting of three lines. These three lines represent the three different directions that their influence flows and shows how they join and inter-react with the other *sefirot*. Once the 12 princes of the tribes dedicated the external altar it was fitting as a representation of the *sefira* of *malchut*. Each prince brought from his "direction" to dedicate the altar, representing the kingdom of the King of Kings.

Aaron the Cohen was appointed to light the seven wicks of the Menorah, all in the manner of [the spiritual world] above.

The oil in the Menorah represents the *sefira* of *chochma*. As you can see from a diagram of the *sefirot*, the first of the seven "emotional" *sefirot* to receive the light of wisdom is *chesed*. Aaron represents *chesed*, the *sefira* immediately

below chochma. He loved peace and *chesed*, and pursued them, making sure disputes were settled amicably. It was therefore proper to appoint him to light the oil/wisdom and meditate on it, imbuing all of the seven "lights" of human emotion, represented by the seven *sefirot* of *chesed*, gevura, tiferet, *netzach*, *hod*, *yesod* and *malchut*. In the world "above" these *sefirot* are called *Zeir Anpin*. The holy Ari explains that the incense connected all the ten *sefirot* of Zeir Anpin through the consciousness of *bina/Imma*. The oil in the Menorah represented the consciousness of *chochma/Abba*. This was the reason for lighting the incense at the same time as the Menorah, since together they represent the drawing down of the higher levels of consciousness in unity.

The existence of the Menorah was itself a miracle, and it was formed miraculously, as has been explained [in *parashat* Terumah].

The Menorah was made miraculously when Moses threw a *kikar* (measure) of gold into the furnace and prayed to G-d to fashion it.

Oil and incense rejoice the heart...

It immediately emerged fully formed. This further connects the Menorah to the *sefira* of *chochma*, which is like a gift bestowed upon a person worthy to receive it. A secular example is the Greek story of Archimedes who suddenly got the answer to a mathematical problem while in the bath. This flash of wisdom emerges from the super-conscious into the conscious, where it lights up the mind of the recipient. In comics this is always represented by a light bulb!

And the inner altar and the Menorah stood together to give joy to all, as is written: "Oil and incense rejoice the heart." (Proverbs 27:9)

The Tabernacle and, later, the Temples, had an inner courtyard where the Menorah and Incense Altar stood and an external courtyard where the Outer Altar was placed. Oil represents wisdom that is always understood when words are spoken quietly and in a calm manner. This is reflected in physical reality, where oil soothes and smoothes and stops noise. Incense represents bina, as is hinted at by its Hebrew and Aramaic name, "*ketoret*". In Aramaic, the letter "t"

often stands for the letter "s" in Hebrew; thus "*ketoret*" can be read as "*keshoret*", meaning to "combine".

Bina combines all the lower *sefirot* to perform the chosen function in reality. These two "hidden" *sefirot* of *chochma* and *bina* were therefore represented in the inner courtyard, or "brain" of the Temple, while the outer courtyard was where the *sefira* of *malchut* was represented. The *sefira* of *malchut* is called "the heart" because it receives all the sustenance from the other *sefirot*/organs. A person is truly happy when he sees reality suffused with the understanding of the wisdom and glory of the Divine.

And we have already explained that there were two altars. One altar inside that stood to cause rejoicing and one outside on which to bring sacrifices. The inside [altar] issued forth [its influence] to the outside [altar].

From the inner altar (*bina*) that is represented by the name *Havayah*, issued forth divine blessing and abundance to the outer altar (*malchut*) represented by the name *Ado-nai*.

And one who looks and meditates [on this] will realize the higher wisdom that is the secret of the name *Ado-nai Elokim*.

Evil...has no way to receive the wisdom required to vanquish its opponents...

Throughout the whole of the Tanach, wherever these two names appear, they are pronounced, as written above. The name *Elokim* is associated with the *sefira* of *bina*, and the punctuation appropriate to that name is used to show how the four-letter name of G-d is to be spoken. It thereby associates *bina* with *malchut*.

And because of this, the incense sacrifice was only offered at the time when the oil of the Menorah was lit.

This ensures that there is unity between the intellectual spheres of *chochma*, *bina* and *malchut*.

Now we can understand the inner reason for saying the "*korbanot*" as part of the morning service. The incense and Menorah are mentioned first and then the individual types of sacrifices. This connects *chochma* and *bina* to *malchut*, as we have explained, and rectifies the world of *Asiya*.

A final note of interest is that *chochma* is above the *sefira* of *chesed* in the diagram of the *sefirot*. This implies that wisdom (*chochma*) is only associated with acts of kindness and compassion, as symbolized by Aaron. This explains why evil never triumphs - it simply has no way to receive the wisdom required to vanquish its opponents.