



# THE LIGHTING OF THE MENORAH

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**The sedra this week commences with a narrative detailing the lighting of the menorah which took place in the mishkan. The sedra last week closed with the description of the 12 tribes' consecration of the mishkan – what is the connection between these two sections?**

Rashi offers an explanation which helps us to understand the connection:

Why is the section detailing the offerings of the *nesi'im* juxtaposed with that of the details of the *menorah*? Because when Aharon observed the dedication of the *mishkan* by the *nesi'im*, he was disappointed that he was not given an opportunity to participate in the dedication of the *mishkan*. Seeing Aharon's disappointment, Hashem said to him, "By your life, your role is far greater than theirs – for you are to be responsible for kindling the lights of the *menorah* throughout the existence of the *mishkan* and *batei mikdash*."

The *Ramban* and the *Ohr Ha'Chaim* are puzzled by Rashi's comment. Though these words seem deep at first glance, it doesn't seem at all clear how they provide Aharon with any consolation. He understands that it will be *shevet levi* who will officiate in the *mishkan* – that wasn't the issue. His concern was not being able to

participate in the dedication of the *mishkan*.

Moreover, why should it be the service of the *menorah* in particular, that Hashem mentions in attempting to placate Aharon – why not the *ketores*, or the *korbanos*?

There is a profound message here, which provides meaning for our lives.

We have a tendency to be moved by high profile occasions, yet the excitement loses potency and within a short space of time we are left with the same low feelings.

The start of a new cycle of *daf yomi* is an exciting event. The shiur will be well attended for the start of *maseches brochos*, but have a look how many are left when it gets to the gruelling *agadeta of maseches chagiga*.

Consider one's devotion and level of intent at *Yom Kippur Ne'ila* – we have clarity unlike any other point in the year. And yet a few weeks later, when the excitement of *Chodesh Tishrei* passes, so too does the inspiration.

The same pattern applies in other areas of our lives. The start of a relationship brings with it a flurry of romantic feelings. It doesn't take long for those feelings to subside, and one wonders where those feelings went.

The same applies to a new job, a new hobby, a new gadget – *anything new*.

It is the pattern of our lives. A feeling of great inspiration followed by a feeling of emptiness. It is a pattern which can break people, unless one can find a way to recreate the inspiration for themselves.

The masters of *chassidus* call this *אתערותא דלעילא* and *דלתתא*, divine inspiration, and self-motivated inspiration. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage of Divine inspiration is that it comes regardless of whether one deserves it or not. Moreover, since it comes from a Divine source, it can carry a potency that might be unmatched by self-motivated inspiration. The disadvantage of this type of inspiration is that it never lasts. Conversely, the advantage of self-motivated inspiration is that it endures for much longer.

The key to vibrant and inspired living comes from mastery of these two aspects. Catching the wind of divine inspiration, and the willingness to row when the winds die down.

This, explains the *Ohr Ha'Chaim*, is the meaning behind Hashem's response to Aharon.

The daily kindling of the lights of the *menorah* represented nothing less than a daily dedication of the *mishkan* and *beis hamikdash*. Although the dedication of the *mishkan* was an incredible event, it was not as important as the ongoing and daily dedication.

It was the role of Aharon to instill an understanding that though the *nesi'im* were to have the privilege of being part of the inauguration of the *mishkan*, it would be much more of a challenge and therefore much more of an accolade, to be responsible for kindling those lights without the fanfare and without the audience.

This, truly, is a challenge for us to live up to.

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