
פרשת בהעלותך

פרק ח פסוק ב

דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת אֶל־מוֹלֵי פְנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה יֵאָדְרוּ שְׂבַעַת הַנֵּרוֹת:

רש"י

בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ. לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פְּרִשְׁת הַמְּנוֹרָה לְפָרֶשֶׁת הַנְּשִׂאִים, לְפִי שֶׁשָּׂרָאָה אַהֲרֹן חֲנֻכַּת הַנְּשִׂאִים חֲלָשָׁה אֲזַ נְעִמּוֹ, שְׁלֹא הִיָּה עִמָּהֶם בְּחֻנְכָּה לֹא הוּא וְלֹא שְׂבָטוֹ, אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, חֲנִיָּה, שְׁלֹךְ גְּדוּלָּה מִשְׁלָהֶם, שְׂאֵתָה מְדַלִּיק וּמִיֵּטִיב אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת.

מושג

אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, חֲנִיָּה, שְׁלֹךְ גְּדוּלָּה מִשְׁלָהֶם, שְׂאֵתָה מְדַלִּיק וּמִיֵּטִיב אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת.

Translation:

Hashem said to him (Aharon), by your life, yours is greater than theirs, because you light and prepare the candles.

Explanation:

Aharon was bothered by the fact that neither he nor his tribe (Levi) was included in the dedication sacrifices of the Mishkan. Even though Aharon and his tribe had exclusive rights to the service in the Beis Hamikdash, the dedication of the Mishkan was unique in that it would set the foundation for all future service¹.

Hashem answered Aharon that his service was greater than theirs in that he and his descendants would prepare and light the candles, which symbolized learning and teaching Torah to Bnei Yisroel. This would impact the Jewish people even after the destruction of the המקדש².

Looking in the Pasuk:

The Midrash that Rashi quotes comes to explain why the subject of the Menorah directly follows the dedication sacrifices of the Mishkan brought by the Nesiim. This type of textual inference is called סמוכים.

Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: The preparing and lighting of the Menorah is seen as a greater service than the dedication sacrifices. The symbolism behind the Menorah, the dedications sacrifices and the Shulchan.

Understand: Why Aharon does not participate in the dedication sacrifices with the other Nesiim. Why the Menorah service is considered to be everlasting.

Think: Understanding Pesukim frequently requires looking at surrounding text as well.

1 See note #1

2 See note #2

NOTES

1. The Ramban wonders why Aharon would be bothered by the fact that he did not participate in the dedication sacrifices since there were so many seemingly more significant services that were only permitted to be done by the Kohanim and Aharon. Additionally, during the seven days of initiation, Aharon brought multiple sacrifices; why would the sacrifices of the Nesiim bother him? The Ramban answers that Aharon was not really bothered, the Midrash simply wanted to highlight the value of the Menorah. We are proposing that what bothered Aharon was the fact that all other services had an impact that was limited to a daily service, whereas the dedication sacrifices would set the very foundation of all future sacrifices, gaining significance beyond the here and now.

2. Rashi does not bring the part of the Midrash which explains why the lighting of the Menorah was greater than the service of the Nesiim. The Midrash (found both in the Rabbah and Tanchuma) concludes:

לכך נאמר דבר דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלתך את הנרות, הקרבנות כל זמן שבית המקדש קיים הם נוהגים, אבל הנרות לעולם אל מול פני המנורה יאירו, וכל הברכות שנתתי לך לברך את בני אינן בטלין לעולם

According to the Midrash, Hashem comforted Aharon with the fact that his service would remain even after the Beis Hamikdash would no longer be standing. The Midrash gives two examples, both of which are problematic. Before dealing with the first example, we will look at the second example: ברכת כהנים is in fact not dependent on the בית המקדש, however it is not mentioned in this Parsha, making it difficult to connect to Aharon's complaint. The Ramban deflects this criticism by claiming that since the Mitzvah of ברכת כהנים is mentioned immediately preceding the Nesiim (at the end of פרק ו) it may be connected to Hashem's answer to Aharon.

The first example, הדלקת המנורה, is puzzling. How can the Midrash consider the lighting of the Menorah to be a Mitzvah that applies even when the בית המקדש is no longer standing? The lighting of the Menorah was most certainly dependent on the Beis Hamikdash! The Ramban replies by explaining that the Midrash is referring to the future Mitzvah of Chanukah, which was a direct result of the victory of the Chashmonaim who were descendants of Aharon³. Other commentators challenge this explanation of our Midrash in that it is not hinted to at all in the wording of the Midrash.

Perhaps we might answer by asking, why is it that Aharon was not included in the sacrifices of the Nesiim? Why was every single Nasi included except for Aharon, causing Aharon to question if Hashem was displeased with him? Rav R.S. Hirsh explains that the Nesiim had brought their animals, their gold and their silver as sacrifices. In this, they were acting as the representatives of their tribes, dedicating their wealth to Hashem. This was meant to symbolize the mission of every Jew in which he is charged with using his material possessions towards the service of הקב"ה.

This, however, was not to be the mission of שבט לוי. They were to be the scholars and teachers, dedicating their minds and intellectual strengths towards the service of Hashem and the education of His people. Rav Hirsh concludes that for this reason they were not included in the material sacrifices of the Nesiim. Their service was to be represented not by physical objects, but by the light of the Menorah.

The Pasuk tells us (משלי ו) כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, that the light of the Menorah represents Torah. Learning and teaching Torah⁴ was the mission entrusted to Aharon and his descendants, a mission symbolized by the Menorah, but in no way limited by the existence of the Beis Hamikdash. This was Hashem's message to Aharon: Do not be concerned about being excluded from the sacrifices of the Nesiim, which laid the very foundation for the Mishkan, for the affects will only last as long as the Mishkan stands. But שלך גדולה משלהם, your mission is greater than theirs, symbolized by the

3 The Ramban writes that he found a text attributed to Rav Nesiim which states the following:

אמר לו הקב"ה למשה דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו, יש חנוכה אחרת שיש בה הדלקה הנרות ואני עושה בה לישראל על ידי בניך נסים ותשועה וחנוכה שקרויה על שמם, והיא חנוכה בני חשמונאי.

4 Perhaps the double task of מטיב ומדליק serves to symbolize learning (the preparation) and teaching (the lighting) of Torah.

fact that you light the Menorah. Your service will not be restricted to any physical edifice, for yours is the service of the mind and of the heart.

One final thought. The Midrash, proves that the service of the Menorah will apply even after the destruction of the *במה"ק* by quoting the end of the Pasuk: "אל מול פני המנורה יאירו". How do the words *אל מול פני המנורה יאירו* convey this message?

Perhaps we might answer that the simplest way to understand the words *אל מול פני המנורה יאירו* is that the candles were meant to illuminate that which was across from the Menorah⁵. We know that the Shulchan was placed directly across from the Menorah; thus the candles of the Menorah were meant to illuminate the Shulchan⁶. The Menorah symbolized the intellect while the Shulchan symbolized the material⁷. The message thus becomes clear: The light of Torah was to be used to illuminate the lives of those whose focus was on the material. The *גשמי* is important for *אם אין קמה* (אבות פ"ג מ"יז) *אין תורה*, but it is the job of the *מהנך* to shed the light of Torah on the materialistic world and uplift (*בהעלותך*) each and every aspect of our lives towards *עבודת ה'*.

3. Questions for further thought:

- a. Where else do we find that the mission of *שבט לוי* was to be the teachers of *כלל ישראל*?
- b. According to our understanding of the meaning of the Menorah, do you see a reason why the miracle of our victory over the Greeks was brought about by the Menorah?

5 Many understand it to mean that the candles all come to illuminate the middle stem, which is difficult to fit into the text.

6 The Rashban says this explicitly: *היה מטה ראשי הפתילות של כל שבעת הנרות להאיר אל השולחן*.

7 This idea is echoed in the words of the Gemoroh (*בבא בתרא כה*): *One who wishes to become wise will turn towards the south, and one who wishes to become wealthy will turn to the north, and the sign is: the Shulchan was in the north and the Menorah was in the south*. The Menorah thus stood for *הכמה*, the intellect, while the Shulchan stood for *עושר*, material wealth.