

הדלקת מנורה של אהרן הכהן הרב אליהו חקקיאן

The Mishna in *Maseches Megilah* mentions that on Chanuka, we read the *Parshas Hanesi'im*. Rashi and the Ran explain that Chanuka is a *chanukas hamizbe'ach* like when the *Nesi'im* brought their *korbanos* to dedicate the *mizbe'ach* in the *Mishkon*. Tur gives a different reason, that the building of the *Mishkon* was actually completed on כ"ה כסלו and Klal Yisroel wanted to inaugurate the *Mishkon* at that time. HaKadosh Boruch Hu told them to wait until ראש חדש ניסן, but did give another *chanukas hamizbe'ach* to the date of כ"ה כסלו, that of Chanuka.

There is a well-known Rashi at the beginning of *Parshas Beha'alos'cha* that explains why the lighting of the Menorah follows the *parsha* of the *Nesi'im*. He says that Aharon Hakohen felt bad when he saw all the *Nesi'im* bring *korbanos* for twelve straight days to dedicate the *mizbe'ach*, whereas he brought nothing. HaKadosh Boruch Hu told Aharon, "חייך שלך גדולה משלהם שאתה מדליק ומטיב את הנרות" - yours is greater than theirs, because you shall light and administer the Menorah.

The *kashya* of the Ramban on this Rashi is also well-known – why is Aharon's job any greater? Why is the *avoda* of the Menorah any bigger than the *korbanos* of the *Nesi'im*? And anyways, what was bothering Aharon? He was the Kohen Gadol, in charge of all the *avodos* and *korbanos* brought in the *Mishkon*? Continues the Ramban, if you say that Aharon's duties were an obligation but the *Nesi'im korbanos* were a *nedivus*, how then will the duty of administering the Menorah be a comfort to him? That, too, is an obligation, not a *nedivus*.

The Ramban cites Megilas Setarim of R. Nissim Gaon that the *hadlokas neiros* of Aharon Hakohen is a *remez* to the *hadlokas neiros* of the *Bnei Chashmona'i*, of Chanukah. They, too, inaugurated the Beis Hamikdosh through lighting the menorah. This is why Aharon's Menorah duty is greater than the *korbanos* of the *Nesi'im*. The Ramban continues with a Midrash which says the Chanukah of Chashmona'im still takes place even after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh. The *korbanos* of the *Nesi'im* only lasts so long as the Beis Hamikdosh is standing and functioning. Not only that, but the *Birchas Kohanim* of Aharon Hakohen is another item which continues even after the Beis Hamikdosh is destroyed.

Maybe this is another *peshat* for the Tur who brings a *minhag* to continue into *Parshas Beha'alos'cha* after completing the *Parshas Nesi'im* on Chanukah. He calls this a "*minhag tov*" because we are lighting on own menorahs at this time. With this Ramban, it becomes a stronger *minhag* because this is exactly what Aharon was yearning for. The *semichus haparshiyos* of *Nesi'im* to Menorah alludes to Chanukah we celebrate nowadays.

Although the Ramban mentions that the *korbanos* of the *Nesi'im* were donations, the lashon of the Midrash (in Midrash Rabba, Tanchuma, and Yalkut Shimoni) quoted by Rashi is *meshma* that it was not merely a donation Aharon sort of envied. If that were so, then Aharon could make a donation himself. The Midrash compares the situation of Aharon to a king who made a different *seudah* every day for each guild of craftsmen. One group never received an invitation and became worried that maybe they had done something wrong to lose the king's favor. Finally, after every other guild had their own *seudah*, the king made a special *seudah* for this guild. He called them his beloved and said that day he was making a *seudah* only for them. This King, says the Midrash, refers to HaKadosh Boruch Hu. After all the *Nesi'im* brought their *korbanos* and the *chanukas hamizbe'ach* was completed, HaKadosh Boruch Hu called Aharon Hakohen and told him to make his own *Chanukah*. (Just like the Ramban says.)

A *seudah* is not what the *Nesi'im* donated, it is made by the *Melech*. The King making a *seudah* means that he wants to create a connection to the invitees. When someone is left out he feels that perhaps the King does not want a connection with him. The *Nesi'im* brought all types *korbanos*, even *ketores*, and all the types of animals used for *korbanos*, for their dedications. *Lichora*, they did this to make a *Chanukah*, a *chinuch*, for the *mizbe'ach*. They created the channel for all subsequent *korbanos* brought by each of their respective *shevatim*, in that all future

korbanos should have *kabolas korbanos b'ratzon* and the *kavonos, kedusha v'tahara*, which they infused in their dedication. That was the path blazed by the *Nesi'im* in their *chanukas hamizbe'ach*.

Aharon Hakohen is worried, where is his opportunity to make in-roads in his own *shevet's avoda* to HaKadosh Boruch Hu? HaKadosh Boruch Hu reassures him, "שלך גדולה משלהם". Your path, through *hadlokas neiros* and through the menorah, will transcend the time and place of the *mizbe'ach*. Yours will last much longer than that of the *Nesi'im*. The menorah will help Klal Yisroel even outside of the Beis Hamikdosh and throughout the *galus*.

The Menorah, whether it is a symbol of *hashro'as Hashechinah* through *Ner Ma'aravi* (which is during *giluy ponim* of HaKadosh Boruch Hu), whether it is a *siman* of *hashgocha* even during *hester ponim* (through *Ner Chanukah*); or whether the Menorah's message of *Torah sheh'bal peh* (which it has during the time of the Mishkon, Beis Hamikdosh, and beyond as it continues forever), is an establishment of *hadloka* associated specifically with Aharon Hakohen. As well, *birchas kohanim* is directly attributed to him. This is the love connecting HaKadosh Boruch Hu to Klal Yisroel and Klal Yisroel to Him, as we say, "אשר קדשנו בקדושתו של אהרן וצונו לברך את עמו" ישראל באהבה". Both of these timeless *avodos* are associated with Aharon Hakohen. Perhaps it is because he is the one with the pure love when welcoming back his brother Moshe Rabbeinu to Mitzrayim, the same Aharon who was not bothered in the slightest of his younger brother taking over the mantle of leadership of Klal Yisroel, as well as the "אוהב שלום ורודף שלום אוהב את הבריאות ומקרבן לתורה". Maybe this is why Aharon Hakohen is the one *zoche* with connecting us to the Menorah and *birchas kohanim* through all times.

The difference between these two is that after *churban Beis Hamikdosh*, lighting the Menorah is transferred to all of Klal Yisroel, as we all light our own Menoros, whereas *birchas kohanim* is kept strictly for the Kohanim, the *bnei Aharon*. We all are the ones heralding the *hashgocha* of HaKadosh Boruch Hu even throughout *galus*, we are the ones communicating *pirsumei nisa* with our Menorahs. Freilichen Chanukah.