

When you kindle the Menorah, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light. (8:2)

Rashi addresses the juxtaposition of *parashas ha'Menorah* upon the end of the previous *parsha*. The latter detailed the *korbanos*, offerings of the *Nesiim* for the *chanukas ha'Mizbayach*. When Aharon noticed the involvement of the *Nesiim* in the dedication, he became chagrined that neither he nor any member of his tribe had been included. It is not that he was jealous; he simply desired to have a part in this sacred inauguration. Hashem calmed him, saying, "*Yours is greater than theirs, for you will light the Menorah.*" The Ramban explains that the *Mishkan/Bais Ha'Mikdash* would not always be around. Regrettably, it was destined to be destroyed and the *korbanos* offered on the Altar halted. We will, however, continue to light the candles of the *menorah* in remembrance of the miracle of Chanukah.

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, offers an alternative response to this question. During the dedication of the *Mizbayach*, after everyone had contributed heavily toward the *Mishkan* and the *Nesiim* had offered their *korbanos* toward the *Mizbayach*, Aharon realized that no member of his tribe had shared in this lofty endeavor. Perhaps the *klal* was truly holy and it was they -- not *Shevet Levi* -- who had "carried" the nation. After all, the *Leviim* did not go to war and had no land. To a great extent they were separated from the nation. What had their contribution been? How did they share in the eternity of *Am Yisrael*?

Hashem told Aharon, "Yours is still greater than theirs. You kindle the *Menorah*." Your work causes the light of *Torah* to penetrate throughout the nation. It is conceivable to build a *Mikdash* that is both esthetically appealing and spiritually holy, but will remain "dark" and lifeless unless the light of the *Menorah*, symbolizing *ohr ha'Torah*, is kindled. When Moshe walked into the *Mishkan*, only he could hear the voice of Hashem. There is no question that without the contributions of so many, the *Mishkan* would not have been a reality. Yet, a building that does not shine forth, in which *Torah* is not being studied, is nothing more than a mausoleum. Yes, Aharon had the greatest and loftiest position in the *Mishkan*. By lighting the *Menorah*, he validated the contributions of those who had preceded him. The light of *Torah* which emanated from the *Mishkan* lit up the hearts and minds of *Klal Yisrael*. The edifice is important, but let us not forget its purpose.