

"And you shall make a candelabra of pure gold, hammered out shall the candelabra be made." (25:31)

Chazal teach us that the *menorah* was the only vessel which was "*mikshah*," hammered out. Its various parts were "drawn out" from an original mass of gold by means of the beating of a hammer. The commentators, each in his own inimitable style, suggest rationales for the distinct technical deviation in the shaping of the *menorah*. We suggest the following reason. In his commentary on *Avos 4:17*, the *Maharal* explains the *Mishnah* which states: There are three crowns, the crown of *Torah*, the crown of *Kehunah*, and the crown of royalty, but the crown of a *shem tov*, good name, rises above them. He cites the *Midrash* that infers that the "four" crowns mentioned in the *Mishnah* represent the four primary vessels in the *Mishkan*. *Keser Torah*, the crown of *Torah*, is represented by the *Aron Ha'kodesh*, the receptacle which contained the *Torah*. *Keser Kehunah* was symbolized by the *mizbei'ach* because of the *avodah*, service, performed on it by the *kohen*. *Keser Malchus*, the crown of royalty, is indicated in the *shulchan*, the sacred table. Finally, the *menorah* alludes to the *keser shem tov*, the crown of a good name.

Let us first explain the *Mishnah*. The astute reader of the *Mishnah* will at once find a difficulty in the text which states that there are three crowns. Indeed, there are three crowns, but the *Tanna* goes on to mention a fourth! *Rashi* explains this apparent textual inconsistency. He suggests that a good name is not a fourth crown akin to the other three, but rather it is a higher one that is achieved through the vehicle of the other three. Indeed, *Chazal* have some sharp words for the *ben Torah* who does not earn the distinction of a good name.

There is another explanation given by *Horav Moshe Swift z.l.*, which we find appropriate for the *menorah*. The first three crowns of distinction are given to us by others. The crown of *Torah* is conferred upon us by our *rebbe* who teaches us and inspires us to study *Torah*. The crown of *Kehunah* is inherited from one's father. One must be born into a priestly family in order attain the status of *kohen*. The crown of *malchus* is bestowed upon the king by the people. In contrast, the crown of a good name is neither conferred nor inherited; it is acquired through one's own efforts. It is an achievement which is attained through determination and resolve. It is won by commitment and sacrifice. One does not simply acquire a "good name;" he literally must transform himself into another human being worthy of bearing the mantle of *shem tov*.

The *menorah* represents *keser shem tov*. It is transformed from a mass of gold, a potential *menorah*, into a beautiful sublime creation. Just as the *shem tov* must be earned through one's own efforts, to become one's personal diadem, so, too, the *menorah* is created from itself.

Horav Mordechai Ilan z.l., makes a noteworthy observation. All the vessels, the *aron*, *shulchan* and *mizbei'ach*, each had a golden border/crown around its surface. The *menorah*, however, did not have the *zer zahav*, golden crown. Why? *Horav Ilan* explains that a border implies limits. The *menorah* connotes the concept of a good name. There are no restraints on a good name. The

effects of a good name/reputation are limitless and everlasting.