

## Speak with Aharon...when you kindle the Menorah toward the face of the Menorah.(8:2)

*Rashi* explains the juxtaposition of the command to Aharon to light the *Menorah* upon the previous *parsha*, which discussed the dedication offerings brought by the *nesiim* to dedicate the *Mizbayach*. Aharon was depressed and concerned that neither he nor any member of his tribe had a role in the dedication of the *Mizbayach*. He felt that this comprised retribution for his part in the sin of the Golden Calf. Hashem assuaged his feelings by telling him that his role, of lighting the *Menorah*, holds greater importance. The *Mizbayach* serves its purpose only as long as there is a *Mikdash*, while the lights of the *Menorah* continue on. What is the deeper meaning of this statement?

We suggest that the *Menorah* and the *Mizbayach* represent for the *Kohen* two variegated relationships with his community. The *Mizbayach* was there primarily to provide a vehicle to expiate sin. Man offered *korbanos* which served various objectives, all of which endeared the people to Hashem. In contrast, the *Menorah's* main objective was preventative in nature. It represented the light of *Torah*. As the primary teacher, the *Kohen* reached out to the masses via the light of *Torah* which illuminated lives as it kindled spirits.

Both the *Mizbayach* and the *Menorah* enhanced man's relationship with Hashem. The focus of the *Mizbayach*, however, remained stationary, for the people had to go to the *Mikdash* in order to confess their sins and expiate their guilt. The *Menorah* was the symbol of outreach. Not constricted by the periphery of the *Mikdash*, its light shined and reached out in the distance. Furthermore, the *Mizbayach* served its function after man had failed. The *Menorah's* function was to see to it that man would not fail. While the phenomenon of the *Mizbayach* has been replaced by our *tefilllos*, prayers, the objective remains the same: man reaching out to Hashem in repentance and hope. The message is conciliatory and concessionary. The *Menorah's* function, in contrast, has been supplanted by those who devote themselves to perpetuating Judaism through the teaching of *Torah*, a more positive approach. Teaching focuses on man's ability to grow and develop his spiritual self, so that his communion with Hashem will be of a more progressive nature. Thus, Aharon understood the prominence of his role as disseminator of *Torah* to *Klal Yisrael*.