

## When you kindle the lamps. (8:2)

*Rashi* addresses the juxtaposition of the *parshah* of the *Menorah* upon the conclusion of the previous *parsha*, which details the *korbanos*, offerings, of the *Nesiim* for the *chanukas ha'Mizbayach*. When Aharon took note of the involvement of the *Nesiim* in the dedication of the *Mizbayach*, he became chagrined that neither he nor any members of his tribe, *Shevet Levi*, had been included. We must remember that envy is not a word that could ever apply to someone of the caliber of Aharon *HaKohen*. His spiritual stature obviated any possibility of attributing such a term to him. He was not jealous; he simply desired to play a role in the sacred inauguration. He did not have to have it all; he felt bad when he missed any opportunity to glorify Hashem.

The Almighty knew the source of Aharon's discomfiture. He calmed him saying, "Yours is greater than theirs, for you will light the *Menorah*." *Ramban* explains that the *Mishkan/Bais HaMikdash* will not be around forever, and, with its loss, we will also be left bereft of the *Mizbayach*. With no *Mizbayach*, there can be no *korbanos*. The *Menorah* will be supplanted, however, by the *neiros Chanukah*, the lighting of the *Chanukah Menorah*, commemorating the *Chanukah* miracle, which will continue to inspire *Klal Yisrael* until the advent of *Moshiach Tziddkeinu*.

Thus, Aharon's feelings were mollified. Was Aharon really troubled over the *korbanos* brought by the *Nesiim*, or was it the fact that the *Nesiim* were selected over the *Leviim* for this sacred service? The *Mekor Baruch*, *zl*, of Seret Vishnitz explains that Aharon was aggrieved that no member of his tribe was included. It was not a negative reason, but as far as Aharon was concerned, it weighed heavily upon him. Who were the *Nesiim*, and why were they chosen for this prestigious position? These were the *shotrei Bnei Yisrael*, guards, whom Pharaoh had appointed as taskmasters over their brothers. It is regarding them that the Torah relates: "The guards of *Bnei Yisrael* were beaten."

*Rashi* explains that these guards were Jews who had pity on their oppressed brothers who slaved for Pharaoh. They refused to pressure the Jews. Thus, when they would turn over the bricks to the Egyptian taskmasters and something was missing from the quota (which their Jewish brothers did not supply), the Egyptian taskmasters took out their anger on the Jewish guards, saying that had (they) pressured the Jews more, the quota would have been achieved. Because of this, the guards were found worthy of becoming members of the *Sanhedrin* and the seventy elders. The *Nesiim* were selected for this distinction because they suffered beatings on behalf of their brethren. Aharon wished that he, too, could/would have similarly suffered for them. In other words, it was not the function of lighting the *Menorah* that troubled Aharon; rather, he was disturbed by the fact that because he and his tribe had not been included in the Egyptian slave labor, they did not have the avenue for *mesiras nefesh*.

Aharon was the consummate *ohav Yisrael*. How could he not have been present for his brethren? *Shevet Levi's* function was to learn 24/7. Therefore, the opportunity for *mesiras nefesh* did not avail itself for them. Hashem comforted Aharon that his portion would be greater, because his

descendants, the *Chashmonaim*, would sacrifice for *Klal Yisrael* and be the vehicle for the *Chanukah* miracle. It was not about *korbanos* versus candle lighting – *Mizbayach* versus *Menorah*, but rather, about two forms of *mesiras nefesh*: that of the *Nesiim* aka *Shotrei Yisrael*, and the *Chashmonaim*. In any event, we should derive from this spiritual dialogue between Aharon and Hashem that which concerned *Klal Yisrael's* first *Kohen Gadol*: How much more *mesiras nefesh* can I have?!