

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

Rashi explains that the three wicks on the right and the three wicks on the left were all directed towards the *Menorah*'s central stem, thereby concentrating the light toward the center. Since its light was focused, rather than spread out, the *Menorah* symbolized the notion that Hashem does not need its light. As the Source of all light, Hashem does not need the *Menorah* to illuminate the Sanctuary. The *Shem MiShmuel* quotes his father, the **Avnei Nezer**, in explaining the need for seven lights, all focused on the center. The *Yalkut Shimoni* makes a fascinating statement concerning the *Menorah*. "Why are there seven lights? They correspond to the seven days of Creation." The *Avnei Nezer* explains that the six branches of the *Menorah* correspond to the six working days of the week, while the middle lamp symbolizes *Shabbos Kodesh*.

To paraphrase the *Shem MiShmuel*, "My holy father taught that *Shabbos* is a *dugma*, example, of the *Menorah*. The three days preceding *Shabbos*, and the three days following *Shabbos* are all focused on the seventh day, *Shabbos Kodesh*, which, according to the *Zohar HaKadosh*, is the source of all blessing. Likewise, the three lamps on the right and the three lamps on the left all turn towards the *ner ha'emtzai*."

He quotes the *Zohar HaKadosh* who says that all of the blessings of Above and below are contingent upon the Seventh Day. The *Shabbos* influence infuses the weekdays. Days one, two and three are considered to be *basar Shabbata*, "following (the previous) *Shabbos*," and days four, five and six are referred to as *Kami Shabbata*, preceding *Shabbos*, because they belong to the upcoming *Shabbos*. The *Avnei Nezer* teaches us that the middle lamp alludes to the centrality of *Shabbos* and its overriding influence in supporting the success of our weekday endeavors.

In his inimitable manner of blending *nistar*, esoteric Torah thought, with *niglah*, revealed Torah, **Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita**, cites the **Ohr HaChaim** in *Parashas Shoftim*. He, in turn, quotes the *Zohar HaKadosh* that, prior to *Shabbos*, Hashem dispatches a *neshamah yeseirah*, added soul, from Heaven Above, whose purpose is to guide man and serve as a vehicle for saving him from sin. This *neshamah yeseirah* coincides with a man's individual spiritual plateau. It complements him and grants him the means to grow in his specific traits.

The *neshamah* is called a *ner*, candle/lamp, as Shlomo *Hamelech* writes in *Mishlei* 20:27, *Ner Hashem nishmas adam*, "The candle of Hashem is the soul of man." Thus, the *pasuk* would be interpreted homiletically: *Behaalosecha es ha'neiros*, "When you kindle the lamps – ie, when you seek to elevate the *neiros*, which are an allusion to *neshamos*, souls, of a person." *El mul pnei ha'Menorah ya'iru shivaas ha'neiros*, "Toward the face of the *Menorah* shall the seven lamps cast light." The secret to elevating *neshamos* successfully is to implement the *neshamah yeseirah* from the "middle light," *Shabbos kodesh*, and allow it to inspire the "right" and "left" lamps.

We might use this as sound advice for outreach to the unaffiliated. Invite them for *Shabbos* and allow the holy day with its *neshamah yeseirah* to do its “work.” *Shabbos* is transformative. A Jew who has experienced the beauty of *Shabbos* is no longer the same. Now we know why.

Rav Friedman expounds on the *Zohar HaKadosh* who says: “The Holy Master sends a *neshamah yeseirah* from the Heavenly abode to guide man on the straight path, and, through it, he will be saved from the one who attempts to cause him to sin.” This statement begs elucidation. Who is attempting to make man sin? How does the *neshamah yeseirah* make a difference? The Arizal writes in his *Shaar HaGilgulim* that when Adam *HaRishon*, Primordial Man, ate of the *Eitz Hadaas*, Tree of Knowledge, incurring the punishment of death to be decreed on humanity, his sin included all of the *neshamos* that would descend from him. Thus, each and every human being must atone for and repair his individual component of the sin.

Adam sinned on the sixth day in the tenth hour of the day. Since the *neshamah yeseirah* does not descend until *Shabbos kodesh*, no *neshamah yeseirah* was involved in Adam’s sin. The sin took place during the waning hours of the weekday – not *Shabbos*. Thus, *Shabbos* is outfitted with a very special *neshamah* – one that is unlike the regular *neshamah* that is forced within man. This is an unaffected, spiritually healthy, untainted by sin, *neshamah yeseirah*.

We now understand how the *neshamah yeseirah* of *Shabbos* has the power to guide and inspire man to live a spiritually pure life. Man enters *Shabbos* with a *neshamah* which, through no fault of his own, has been affected by the sin of eating of the *Eitz Hadaas*. Thus, man, who is replete with sin, has great difficulty ascending from the grips of transgression. Indeed, the *neshamah* with which he was born has a natural tendency to gravitate towards sin. Hashem protects man with the spiritual antidote: the *neshamah yeseirah*. Returning to the opening *pasuk* of our *parsha*, we interpret the following: One who seeks to elevate the *neiros/neshamos* should face the middle lamp, which alludes to *Shabbos kodesh*. It is from the inspiration of *Shabbos* provided by the *neshamah yeseirah* that man receives the guidance and fortitude to elevate himself in his service of the Almighty.