

"Every morning when he cleans the lamps, he shall bring it up in smoke. And when Aharon kindles the lamps in the afternoon he shall bring it up in smoke." (30:7,8)

It is notable that Aharon would burn the *ketores*, incense, daily at the same time as he would clean and kindle the *Menorah*. What is the significance of the juxtaposition of these various forms of service? *Horav Moshe Feinstein, z.l.*, offers two lessons to be derived from this relationship. The *Menorah* symbolizes *Torah* scholars who illuminate the world by virtue of their *Torah* study and dissemination. The *ketores* gave off a fragrant smell. The connection between these *avodos* is that a *Torah* scholar should possess an acute sense of smell. He should have the capacity to "sniff out" which philosophies and ideas are compatible with *Torah* ideology.

Often the actions of those who are opposed to the *Torah* way of life are veiled by lofty reasons that seem to justify their deeds. Only someone who is extremely erudite in *Torah* knowledge is able to ferret out these charlatans. It is, consequently, crucial that a *talmid chachom* who is making decisions for the *Klal* be proficient in sensing the hidden deceit/duplicity behind their intentions. It takes someone whose *Torah* knowledge has imbued him with a profound perception of "what's going on" to be able to discern between those who claim to act for the furtherance of *Torah* and those who truly do.

Horav Feinstein cites *Chazal* in the *Talmud Sanhedrin 93b* who state that *Moshiach* will "smell and judge," meaning that he will possess the sensitivity necessary to scrutinize each individual and cull the deceitful from the sincere. He explains that *Moshiach's* ability to judge will not stem from any prophetic vision, but from his exemplary *Torah* scholarship. People will be judged in accordance with the laws of the *Torah*, not by Heavenly interference. Likewise, every G-d fearing individual who devotes himself to *Torah* study can achieve this gift to some degree. Indeed, through the darkest times of our *galus*, the *gedolei Yisrael* illuminated the path of life for us with their keen perception.

Horav Feinstein infers another valuable lesson from the proximity of the *ketores* to the *Menorah* service in the *parsha*. The *avodas ha'ketores* was a service that was performed in private without fanfare and public spectacle. Yet, this covert service had far-reaching effects in that its pleasant odor permeated throughout Yerushalayim all the way to Yericho (*Yuma 39b*). The lesson is simple: He who devotes himself to *Torah* study and maintains a lifestyle consistent with *Torah* dictate, will, despite his insular mode of living, have an effect far beyond his immediate surroundings. The efficacy of the obscure service of the *ketores* parallels the spiritual influence imparted by the *Menorah*, whose light illuminated for a distance.