

You shall make a Menorah of pure gold. (25:31)

Noticeably, the enjoinder to build the *Shulchan*, Table, precedes that of the *Menorah*. In the *Kisvei Chasam Sofer*, the *Chasam Sofer* cites a *Kadmon*, early *Rishon*, who explains this based on *Chazal* who rationalize that Zevulun, the brother who engaged in commerce, precedes Yissachar, who devoted himself wholly to Torah study. In order for Yissachar to be able to learn unimpeded by worry over his financial obligations, it is critical that he be supported by the *tomchei Torah*, supporters of Torah. Likewise, the *Shulchan*, which represents sustenance, precedes the *Menorah*, the symbol of Torah. Bearing this in mind, the *Ksav Sofer* wonders why the *Aron HaKodesh*, which is the repository of Torah and represents Torah at its pristine zenith, should likewise also be preceded by the *Shulchan*.

The *Ksav Sofer* distinguishes between two types of *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar; one who is a *tzaddik gamur*, perfectly righteous; and one who has yet to achieve this apex of spiritual devotion. The one who is a paragon of spirituality, whose faith and trust in Hashem parallels his erudition, who is similar to Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa (whose trust in Hashem was unequivocal; he represents the exemplar of spirituality) does not require Zevulun's support. Indeed, he supports Zevulun! The scholar, however, who has not attained this level of trust, still requires the support of Zevulun.

We now understand why the *Aron* precedes the *Shulchan*. The *Aron* is placed in the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*, Holy of Holies. It is the receptacle in which the Two *Luchos*, Tablets, were placed. The *Aron* understandably signifies the scholar whose Torah study supports Zevulun's commerce. It is Zevulun's great merit to partner with Yissachar's Torah study. The *Menorah*, however, represents the Torah scholar who is devoted to Torah and has achieved a significant level of erudition. His learning notwithstanding, he has yet to scale the ladder of spirituality as does his counterpart, who is represented by the *Aron*.

I think the *Aron's* precedence to the *Shulchan* imparts a powerful message: Pure Torah precedes everything. Zevulun's support of Yissachar is only due to the fact that he understands the true value of Torah. A Zevulun who contributes because of the fanfare and accolades that he garners will only give as long as he is recognized to be a significant partner and even (in his own mind) greater than Yissachar. Such support hardly lasts. Thus, this Zevulun seeks attention more than he wants to support Yissachar. While it is important to manifest our gratitude to him, we must remember that easy come – easy go. We can lose it at any time if our homage misses its mark.