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And this was the work of the menorah: it was hammered [of a single piece of] gold (8:4)

We find that Moses experienced more difficulty in understanding the construction of the menorah than he did in that of all the other vessels of the Sanctuary... So G-d said to him: Take a talent of gold, cast it into the furnace and take it out again, and the menorah will assume shape of its own accord. Thus the verse says (Exodus 25:31): "Its cups, its knobs, and its flowers, shall come out of it"...

Moses smote [the piece of gold] with a hammer and the menorah took shape of its own accord. For this reason it says, "of hammered work it shall be made" [te'aseh]-implying that it shall be made of its own accord. (Midrash Rabbah)

The menorah represents the people of Israel - G-d's "light unto the nations." Its many components attest to the fact that the Jewish nation is comprised of different tribes and includes individuals from all walks of life.

But even as the menorah's form expresses the diversity within Israel, there are two laws which point to the menorah's integrity. One law concerns the making of the menorah, and the second law, the manner of its lighting.

An artifact of the menorah's complexity is usually fashioned by first molding each of its parts on their own and then welding them together. The menorah, however, was hammered out of a single piece of gold, originating as a single object and remaining a single object through the various stages of its construction to the finished product.

This represents the fact that while there are nations that are a coalition of variant groups, each formed by its own ancestry and experience but welded together by common interest and habitat, this is not the case with the Jewish people: all souls of Israel are of a single essence, and their division into distinct individuals is merely their investment into different bodies and physical lives.

The second law is that although the menorah sheds its light with seven lamps, they must all be turned toward the central stem, in keeping with G-d's instruction to Aaron that "the seven lamps shall give light toward the face of the menorah." This expresses the truth that although the soul of Israel shines not with a single light, but by means of a seven-lamp menorah representing the various prototypes of human character [the seven sefirot], at the same time, all lamps of the menorah face the body from which they extend, emphasizing their singular origin and their singular goal.

In other words: we all come from the same place, and we are all oriented toward the same goal. The differences are only in order to better express our Source and to more completely achieve our goal. Which makes them not differences, but the ultimate expression of oneness. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) - chabadonline.com

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When you raise light in the lamps (8:2) When the Kohen came to kindle the menorah's lamps each afternoon in the Holy Temple, he found them fully prepared for lighting: earlier in the day, the lamps had been cleaned and filled with oil, and fresh wicks had been inserted. All he had to do was bring near the flame he carried, so that its proximity to the waiting lamp would unleash the potential for illumination which the lamp already holds.

Therein lies an important lesson to the spiritual lamplighter: do not think that you are achieving anything that your fellow could not, in truth, achieve on his own; do not think that you are giving him something he does not already possess. The soul of your fellow is a ready lamp, filled with the purest oil and equipped with all that is required to convert its fuel into a blazing flame. It only lacks the proximity of another lamp to ignite it. If your own soul is alight, its contact with another's soul will awaken its potential for light, so that it may illuminate its surroundings and kindle other souls, in turn. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) -

And this was the work of the menorah... from its shaft, to its flowers (8:4) The menorah also represents the Torah, the source of Divine light in the world. This is alluded to in the menorah's design, which is detailed in the 25th chapter of Exodus. The Menorah had seven branches, eleven knobs, nine flowers, twenty-two goblets and was seventeen hand-breadths in height. These numbers represent the five books of the Written Torah: the first verse in the book of Genesis has seven words, the first verse of Exodus has 11 words, the first verse of Leviticus has nine words, the first verse of Numbers has 17 words, and the first verse of Deuteronomy--22 words. (Divrei Noam)

And at times it was, that the cloud abode from evening until morning... then they journeyed (9:21) The Sanctuary was a formidable structure, consisting of hundreds of foundation sockets, wall sections, pillars, tapestries and furnishings; a work crew of several thousand Levites assembled the Sanctuary at each camp and dismantled and transported it when the Divine command would come to move on. Yet the "Tent of Meeting" was erected at every encampment--even if only for a single day!

This teaches us that each and every one of our "stations" in life is significant unto itself. A person may find him or herself in a certain place or in a certain situation for a very brief period, and it may seem to him that he is merely "on the way" to some other place. Yet there is always something in that place or situation to be sanctified--something that can serve as a "Tent of Meeting" between Heaven and earth. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) chabadonline.com

"The camp of the Children of Don gathered for all of the camps." [10:25] Rashi explains, "The tribe of Don traveled in the rear; if anyone lost anything they returned it to him." There exist Jews who have lost their connection to and love for G-d Al-mighty. This is the work of Don: he sacrifices his own personal good and travels at the back in order to return to every Jew his "loss." (Lichutei Sichot [Sichat HaShavuah #335], www.ascent.org.il)

"All Torah study not combined with work will eventually cease and lead to sin" (Pirkei Avos, Mishna 2, perek 2) Although the obvious meaning of the term "work" is actual labor, there is the possibility of an extended interpretation. My father-in-law [and predecessor] related that R. Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev would quote the Baal Shem Tov as explaining that in this context, "work" refers to ahavas Yisrael -- our efforts to establish bonds of love with other Jews. For Torah study to be perpetuated, it must be coupled with ahavas Yisrael.

R. Levi Yitzchak explained that this teaching brought about a fundamental change in his life, motivating him to dedicate himself to the welfare of his fellow Jews. Why does the mishnah refer to ahavas Yisrael as "work"? To teach us that we must strain to extend our ahavas Yisrael to include even those whom we have no inclination to love. And we must use every means possible to reach out to others. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, In the Paths of Our Fathers by Eliyahu Tauger (Kehot), www.ascent.org.il)

"Be as careful with a "minor" mitzvah as with a "major" one." (Perek 2 Mishna 1) The Hebrew word for "careful" zahir, also means "glowing", or "shining". Thus, the mishnah informs us, the soul should shine and glow in the fulfillment of a "minor" mitzvah just as it shines in the fulfillment of a "major" one. Ultimately, "the Torah desires the heart". (Sanhedrin 106b) (The Baal Shem Tov, Fathers and Sons by Tuvia Kaplan (Targum Press), www.ascent.org.il)

THIS IS THE ACTUAL TIME OF THE "FOOTSTEPS OF MASHIACH. (1) IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE FOR EVERY JEW TO SEEK HIS FELLOW'S WELFARE - WHETHER OLD OR YOUNG - TO INSPIRE THE OTHER TO TESHUVA (RETURN), SO THAT HE WILL NOT FALL OUT - G-D FORBID - OF THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL WHO WILL SHORTLY BE PRIVILEGED, WITH G-D'S HELP, TO EXPERIENCE COMPLETE REDEMPTION.

FOOTNOTES: 1. THE FINAL AGE PRIOR TO MASHIACH'S ADVENT. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, SIVAN 18)

Intellect can orbit about the truth forever, but it doesn't have feet to land. There is a faculty, however, that doesn't need to travel to find Truth. For which truth was never hidden or obscured. For it is a native of Truth from birth. It is not blind faith. It is an inner vision. It is not mind, but even more essential to our very being. It is the foundation from which meaningful thought begins and with it all things resolve. For it knows intimately that which the mind can only peer at through the shifting clouds. -Be Within, Stay Above by Tzvi Freeman