

# ALSHICH

## INSIGHTS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

ספר ויקרא

פרשת אמור

SERIES 1: ISSUE 29

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MENORAH AND THE LECHEM HAPANIM

### Chapter 24

**2)** *"Command Bnei Yisrael and they shall take for you the purest olive oil, specially crushed for the light to cause a continuous [flame on the] lamp to rise.*

**3)** *Outside the curtain of the testimony, in the Tent of Meeting, Aharon shall arrange [the lamp] from evening to morning before Hashem continuously, an everlasting statute throughout your generations.*

**4)** *On the pure Menorah, he shall arrange the lamps before Hashem continuously.*

**5)** *You shall take fine-quality flour and bake it into twelve loaves, each loaf being two-tenths [of an eifah].*

**6)** *You shall place them in two arrangements on the pure [gold] Table before Hashem, [each] arrangement [being of] six [loaves]."*

**(ב)** צו אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ כְּתִית לַמָּאֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד.

**(ג)** מִחוּץ לַפָּרֹכֶת הָעֵדֻת בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד יַעֲרֹף אֹתוֹ אֶהְרֹן מֵעֶרֶב עַד־בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי ה' תָּמִיד חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם.

**(ד)** עַל הַמִּנְרָה הַטְּהֵרָה יַעֲרֹף אֶת־הַנִּירוֹת לִפְנֵי ה' תָּמִיד.

**(ה)** וְלִקְחֹתָ סֹלֶת וְאַפִּיתָ אֹתָהּ שִׁתִּים עֶשְׂרֵה חִלּוֹת. שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִינִים יִהְיֶה הַחֻלָּה הָאֶחָת.

**(ו)** וְשִׁמַּתָּ אוֹתָם שִׁתִּים מֵעֲרֻכּוֹת שֵׁשׁ הַמִּעֲרֹכֶת עַל הַשֻּׁלְחָן הַטָּהוֹר לִפְנֵי ה'.

### Consider the following questions:

- How can it say (verse 3), *Aharon shall arrange [the lamp] ... an everlasting statute throughout your generations*? The mitzvah of lighting the Menorah only lasted as long as the Beis HaMikdash stood.
- Having said already in verse 3 that Aharon should arrange the Menorah before Hashem, why does it seem to say virtually the same thing again in verse 4?
- Why does the Torah state here (verse 4), *"the pure Menorah"*? Obviously the Menorah was *tahor*, because nothing *tamei* was allowed into the Beis HaMikdash that could have made it *tamei*.
- Why is the mitzvah of the *Lechem HaPanim* mentioned here? It seems unconnected to what comes before it.

To begin, we may take note of some anomalies in verse 2. First, it says that the mitzvah is *to cause a continuous [flame on the] lamp to rise* (לְהַעֲלִית) rather than just "to light" (לְהַדְלִיק) the lamp. Second, it describes it as a *continuous* flame, even though they only put enough oil in each lamp for it to burn through the night and not throughout the next day. Third, it describes the oil as being crushed *for the light* (לְמָאֹר) rather than "to give light" (לְהַאֲרִי).

We can explain as follows: The words “*for the light*” mean “for the One Who is the light that illuminates the entire Creation — namely, Hashem.” But this then raises the question, what is the point of lighting the Menorah, since Hashem does not need the light? The answer is that it is in order *to cause a continuous [flame on the] lamp to rise* in the higher worlds Above. That is to say, lighting the Menorah, on earth, has the effect of illuminating a spiritual light Above that is never extinguished — for a mitzvah performed in the physical world below causes an illumination in the world Above.

Indeed, the Torah does not simply command that Aharon should light the Menorah but that he should *arrange it* (verse 3). By this the Torah means that through Aharon’s arranging all the details of the mitzvah with the correct *kavanos* (intentions), his actions below cause an illumination of light *before Hashem continuously*, i.e., a spiritual illumination of the Heavenly Menorah that transmits *shefa* (spiritual bounty) to the world below and that never goes out, i.e., it is *an everlasting statute throughout your generations*.

One may ask, however, how the Torah can speak of this illumination lasting even after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, when there is no Menorah on earth anymore to arouse the spiritual illumination of the Menorah Above. To answer this question the Torah states (verse 4), *On the pure Menorah, he shall arrange the lamps before Hashem continuously*. Aharon did not just light the physical Menorah below, as described in verse 3. As taught in verse 4, he was also simultaneously “arranging” (i.e., lighting) the *pure Menorah* in the Beis HaMikdash Above (and called *pure* because it is completely pure of any dross of physicality). Since, as mentioned above, the spiritual illumination caused by the mitzvah of lighting the earthly Menorah below is eternal and does not fade, the Heavenly Menorah was able to burn *before Hashem continuously, an everlasting statute throughout the generations*. **[This answers Questions 1, 2, and 3.]**

The Torah then brings an even more tangible proof to our thesis from the *Lechem HaPanim*. The reason for the command to place twelve special loaves on the golden Table in the Mishkan was because they corresponded to twelve spiritual lights on the spiritual Table in the Beis HaMikdash Above. Through performing the mitzvah of placing the *Lechem HaPanim* below, the twelve spiritual lights Above were aroused, and through them a *shefa* of blessing also emanated to the world.

As we know, the *Lechem HaPanim* was placed on the golden Table on Shabbos, remaining there for a whole week until being replaced. Our Sages (*Menachos* 96b) tell us that when the old bread was removed it was still as warm and fresh as the moment it was placed there. This is a clear proof that the *shefa* from the holy, spiritual Table in the Heavenly Beis HaMikdash descended upon the Table below, making it as if the physical loaves had been placed on the spiritual table Above and were thus able to stay fresh. With respect to the *Lechem HaPanim* as well, the Torah says (verse 8) that the breads were to be arranged *continuously ... before Hashem*. This reflects the fact that the effect of the mitzvah here on earth would cause the spiritual lights above to be aroused before Hashem and their effect would be continuous. **[This answers Question 4.]**

---

This sedra sheet is an excerpt from the newly-released translation of the Alshich on Sefer Vayikra in memory of **Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu zt"l**. For further sponsorship opportunities and to participate in this groundbreaking project please call David Rose on +44 7833 938 734.