

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

The Source of the Light

“You shall make the Menorah out of pure gold...” (25:31)

The last of the vessels of the Holy Temple described by the Torah is the Menorah, and yet visually it was the most striking. Although its esoteric and mystical meanings are virtually without end, on the simplest level it expressed the majesty of the Holy Temple. It was made of pure gold and its lamps burned constantly. When entering the Holy Temple, one would be awed by its splendor.

It was placed in the outer chamber of the Holy Temple so that it would be impressive and inspiring to all who entered. But its placement in the outer chamber also conveyed another, more subtle message. The Torah, in the Holy Ark, in the Holy of Holies, needed no light. The Torah is its own light. Both the Hebrew word “Torah” and its Aramaic counterpart “Orayasa” contain the same root word, “Ohr,” which means “light.” This emphasizes that the true source of light in this world is the Torah.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Jewish People are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard there is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a Laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *Kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the Table of showbreads, the *Menorah*, and the Golden Altar for incense. Entrance to the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, was permitted only for the *Kohen Gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

Q & A

Questions

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do techelet and argaman share that orot eilim m'adamim do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that shesh and orot techashim do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "tachash" as "sasgona." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of:
 - (a) oil ,
 - (b) spices,
 - (c) jewels.
8. The aron was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the keruvim resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the lechem hapanim baked?
12. What does miksha mean?
13. What was the purpose of the menorah's gevi'im (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the menorah?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with nechoshet?
20. What function did the copper yeteidot serve?

Answers

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half-shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; orot eilim are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; shesh and orot techashim are not.
5. 25:5 - The tachash delights (sas) in its multi-colors (g'vanim).
6. 25:5 - Arazim ~ cedars.
7. 25:6-7:
 - (a) The oil was lit in the menorah and used for anointing.
 - (b) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense.
 - (c) The precious stones were for the ephod and the choshen.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half amot plus a tefach plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the kaporet. (The kaporet was a tefach thick. ~ see 25:17)
9. 25:16 - It testifies that G-d commanded us to keep the mitzvot.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a menorah of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 amot.
18. 26:23 - 10 amot.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Terumah: A Table for Thee

One of the most important components of the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple was the golden *shulchan*, upon which the twelve loaves of the weekly shewbread (also spelled showbread) were placed. The word *shulchan* is commonly translated as “table,” and refers to a flat surface upon which food is put down. In the 21 times that the word *shulchan* appears throughout the Pentateuch, it always refers to the ritual *shulchan* found in the Tabernacle. However, in the other 50 times that this word appears in the Bible, it can also refer to a general “table” upon which a king or an important person eats and feeds the members of his household. In this essay we encounter three words in Rabbinic parlance that also mean “table” and are understood to be equivalent to the Biblical Hebrew *shulchan* – *petora*, *taka* and *tavla*.

Ibn Janach (990–1055) and Radak (1160–1235) trace the word *shulchan* to the trilateral root SHIN-LAMMED-CHET (“to dispatch,” “to send away,” “sword”), but exactly how it connects to the meanings derived from that root are not readily apparent. Menachem Ibn Saruk (920–970), in *Machberet Menachem*, sees *shulchan* as derived from its own quadrilateral root, SHIN-LAMMED-CHET-NUN. Either way, the Targumim consistently render the Hebrew word *shulchan* into Aramaic as *petora*. Conversely, Rashi (to *Beitzah* 29b) defines the Aramaic word *petorah* (when it appears in the Talmud) as *shulchan*.

There is another parallel between *shulchan* and its Aramaic equivalent *petorah*: In Mishnaic Hebrew, the term *shulchani* refers to a “moneychanger” (*Maaser Sheini* 4:2, *Bava Metzia* 2:4, 3:114:6, 9:12, *Shavuot* 7:6, *Meilah* 6:5, *Keilim* 12:5), as those who served in that occupation typically worked from behind a *shulchan* (“table/desk”), upon which they would place the money. Just like *petorah* in Aramaic means the same thing as *shulchan* in Hebrew, so does *petora’ah* in Aramaic mean the same thing as *shulchani* in Hebrew – “money changer” (see Rashi to *Chullin* 54b).

When Balak sought out the services of the evil sorcerer Balaam to put a hex on the Jews, the Bible relates that Balak sent messengers “*petorah*” (Num. 22:5), which literally means “to Pethor.” In line with the above, the Midrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah* §20:7, *Tanchuma Balak* §4) and Rashi (to Num. 22:5) explain that when the Bible associated Balaam with *petorah*, this means he functioned, after a fashion, like a moneychanger, as all the different kings ran over to Balaam to “do business” with him, just like those involved in commerce might chase after a moneychanger to “do business” with him. The *Matnot Kehunah* explains this connection by noting (as we already explained) that *petora* in Aramaic means “table,” and the Hebrew term for moneychanger in the Mishnah is *shulchani*, which derives from the Hebrew word *shulchan*.

Rabbi Avraham Menachem Rappaport (1520–1596) in *Minchah Behulah* (to Num. 22:5) offers two more exegetical ways of interpreting the word *petorah* used in connection with Balaam: Firstly, he connects *petorah* to the word *pitaron* (“interpretation/explanation”) as a reference to Balaam’s occupation as a “dream interpreter.” Secondly, he sees the word *petorah* as related to the Aramaic word *petora* for “table.” The way he explains it, Balaam’s pagan practices included idolatrous rites like “setting a table (*shulchan*) for Gad” (Isa. 7:5). Just as in the Holy Temple there was a ritual *shulchan* set up for the holy worship of Hashem, so too did idolators also set up a ritual table for their unholy worship of their deities. This is because the acts of the holy and unholy often parallel each other in mirror images.

Either way, it is interesting that the Talmud (*Shabbat* 36a) states that the word *petora* and its diminutive form *petorta* respectively once referred to a “big table” and a “small table,” but that after the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the meanings of those two words switched.

Our second word for “table” in Rabbinic literature is *taka*. Indeed, Rashi (to *Brachot* 46b, *Gittin* 67b, *Kiddushin* 81a) defines the Aramaic word *taka* as *shulchan*. This word appears many times in the Talmud, but I will only cite a few colorful examples: The Talmud states (*Brachot* 42a) that once the table (*taka*) has been removed at the end of a meal, one has essentially declared intent to recite the Grace after Meals, and is therefore no longer allowed to eat until after doing so. Yet, the Talmud records a story wherein Rava once ate at the exilarch’s house and even after Rava’s table (*taka*) had been removed, Rava continued to eat food sent to him by the exilarch. When questioned about this behavior, Rava remarked that even though his table had been removed, he did not yet intend to recite the Grace after Meals because he relied on the exilarch’s table (*taka*), which had not yet been removed.

Although the Aramaic word *taka* does not seem to appear anywhere in the Bible, there is one particular verse in which some commentators explain a word that is similar to *taka* as referring to our word. When describing the Jewish People’s relationship with Hashem, Moses described their servility by stating, “...and they are *tuku* to Your feet.” The meaning of the word *tuku* in this passage is obscure and various explanations have been offered throughout the generations. In particular, Rabbi Shmuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865) and Rabbi Ezra Reuven Dangoor (1848–1930) write that the word *tuku* is related to the Aramaic *taka*, explaining that *tuku* refers to the act of “sitting a table.” The way they explain it, Moses’ description refers to the Jews as though they sit at Hashem’s “table” to accept His directives and receive His blessings, like a guest who sits at their host’s table.

Now that we have established that *petora* and *taka* both mean “table,” we can start discussing the interplay between these two words and whether or not they are truly synonymous.

The Talmud (*Pesachim* 115b) relates that one Passover Night, Abaye was hosted at Rabbah’s house, and upon the onset of the *Maggid* portion of the Passover Seder, the “table” was lifted up in order to be removed, as though the meal had already been finished. Abaye was surprised by this irregularity, which prompted him to ask why the “table” was removed if the meal had not yet even been served. His teacher Rabbah responded that Abaye’s question exempted the sages from asking the Four Questions.

In our printed versions of the Talmud, the word used for “table” in this anecdote is the Aramaic word *taka*. However, when Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi (1013–1103) cites this story (*Pesachim* 25b in the Alfasi pagination), his version of the story uses the word *petora* in both instances. A third version is found in Rabbi David Abudarham’s commentary to the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*, according to which the word used by the narrator for the “table” that was removed is *petora*, but when Abaye asked about this occurrence, the word for “table” used in his dialogue is *taka*. All three of these variant readings of the Babylonian Talmud are also attested to in manuscripts of the Talmud available on the *Hachi Garsinan* website. For our purposes, it seems that the interchangeability of these two Aramaic terms points to the notion that they are indeed synonymous.

The famous Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534–1572), often known as the Arizal, wrote a series of liturgical poems in Aramaic. Each poem begins with the words *Atkinu Seudata* and is supposed to be recited at a different meal. In referring to the “Shabbos Table” in these Kabbalistically-infused poems, Arizal uses two different Aramaic words for “table.” In his poem for the Friday Night meal, he refers to a *petora chadatah* (“new table”) and in his poem for the Shabbat Morning meal, he refers to *l’ater petora* (“to adorn the table”). Yet, in his poem for the Third Meal on Shabbat, Arizal refers to “this table” (*hai taka*), replacing the Aramaic word *petora* with *taka*. But do *petora* and *taka* actually mean the same thing?

Rabbi Mordechai Dov Yudelovitch of Lida (d. 1951) would say “No.” He writes that *petora* refers to a “large table,” while *taka* refers to a “small, private table” upon which people would customarily eat on festive

occasions or in the presence of esteemed guests. In other words, *taka* refers to a portable personal tray-table for one, while *petora* refers to a longer table of the sort one might have in one's dining room. This approach is endorsed by Rabbi Shaul Goldman, who independently arrived at the same conclusion. Thus, despite Rashi defining both terms with the Hebrew *shulchan*, these two Aramaic terms do not mean exactly the same thing. Indeed, if one looks back at all the examples of *taka* in the Talmud cited above, one will see that they refer to private tables upon which single individuals would eat, as opposed to the more communal *petora*.

Our third word for "table" in Rabbinic parlance is *tavla*. This word appears multiple times in the Mishna (*Erwin* 5:1, *Yoma* 3:10, *Keilim* 2:3, 16:8, 25:1, 27:1, *Mikvaot* 4:2), as well as in the Talmud (for example, see *Pesachim* 57a). Rabbi Eliyahu HaBachur (1469–1549) in *Sefer Tishbi* notes that *tavla* is the Rabbinic Hebrew equivalent to the Biblical Hebrew word *shulchan*. In his entry on this word, HaBachur connects *tavla* to the Latin *tabula*, which is the forebearer of the English words *table*, *tablet* ("small slab"), *tabulate*, *tabloid*, and more.

Nonetheless, Rabbi Shimshon of Sens (*Rash M'Shantz* to *Ohalot* 15:2) writes that a *shulchan* actually differs from a *tavla*, because a *shulchan* is a flat surface that is attached to four legs that hold it up, while a *tavla* simply refers to a table top that is not attached to four legs (so it can even be simply a flat board or plank serving as an even surface).

Interestingly, Rabbeinu Manoach (to Maimonides' Laws of *Chametz & Matzah* 6:7) writes that the word *tevel* (in reference to food from which tithes had not yet been taken) is related to the word *tavla*, in the sense that just as a person cannot eat a wooden or metal table – but rather eats food *from* such a table – so too a person cannot eat *tevel* but rather must separate tithes and only then may eat from a subset of that foodstuff.

Alternatively, he explains *tevel* as a portmanteau of *tav* ("good") and *lo* ("not"). [This explanation is also offered by *Sefer Ha'Aruch*, Bartenura (to *Brachot* 7:1), Rabbi Chaim Vital in *Eitz Chaim* (*Shaar* #50 ch. 3), and *Kli Yakar* (to *Jud.* 11:3)]. Additionally, Rabbi Manoach suggests that *tevel* is related to the Arabic word *mitabel* (food that has something mixed into it), which – although he does not note this – is a cognate of the Hebrew word *tavlin*, "spice" (see also *Ha'Ktav V'Ha'Kabbalah* to *Ex.* 22:28).

One last interesting point is that we find names of Torah Sages in the Talmud related to the word *petora* (for example, Ben Petora, also spelled Betorah) and *tavla* (for example, Rav Tavla appears in *Bava Batra* 111a, *Chullin* 132b), but not *taka*. Although, I should also point out that the Yiddish names Tevle/Tevele are unrelated to the word *tavla*. Instead, Alexandre Beider explains that they are permutations of the names David (with the interchangeability of the t-sound and d-sound) and/or Tuvia, with the additional diminutive *-le* appended.

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TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Bava Kama 107-113

Audacity and Oaths

“A person does not have the *chutzpa* and audacity to lie to someone who did him a favor by lending him money.”

The Sage Rabbah said this reason to explaining why a person who admits to owing only part (*modeh b'miktzat*) of the amount claimed by the lender must take an oath that he does not owe the remainder. This oath is required by Torah law. Rabbah explains why there is an oath when the borrower admits to part of the claim:

“The borrower would like to deny the entire amount of the claim, even if this is not true, but does not have the audacity to do so. Therefore, he would like to admit that he owes the full amount claimed by the lender, if in fact he does owe it, but he is hesitant to admit to the full amount since he may not be able to pay it on time. So, perhaps he is admitting only to the amount he can pay now and is thinking to himself that, when he gets the rest of the money to pay the loan, he will indeed pay the balance in full. For this reason, the Torah imposes an oath upon him to find out what the truth really is.”

This reasoning applies only if a person admits to part of the claim for repayment of a loan. But, if the person denies the entire claim (*kofer hakol*), he is exempt from this Torah oath. The type of person who stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah would not have had the audacity to lie in denying the entire amount claimed by the kind lender. Therefore, if he actually denied the entire claim, we assume he must be telling the truth, and no further oath or clarification is necessary. (It is worthwhile noting that although the people who stood at Mount Sinai did not have this *chutzpah* and audacity to lie and deny the entire amount to their lenders, later generations were less upright, and eventually a Rabbinical oath was instituted for the sake of getting the truth out of people who denied the entire amount claimed by the lender).

Rashi states on our *daf* that the logical reasoning that “A person does not have the audacity to lie and deny owing a loan to the lender” is the reason why a person who denies the entire claim is exempt from a Torah oath. If he denies the entire amount, he must be telling the truth.

Tosefot in Bava Metzia (3a), however, apparently disproves this reasoning of Rashi, and instead offers a completely different explanation for why a *kofer hakol* does not require a Torah oath. If the lender dies and the heir of the lender is claiming repayment of the loan, the borrower would not be acting in a brazen manner if he were to falsely deny owing the entire amount being claimed by the heir. The heir was not actually present when the loan took place, and a denial to him would not be brazen since the heir likely does not have clear knowledge of the details and history of the loan. Therefore, Tosefot offers a reason different than Rashi's to explain why a person who completely denies a claim for loan repayment is exempt from an oath according to the Torah. There is a special teaching in a verse in the Torah from which we learn that one who admits to *part* of the claim for loan repayment must take a Torah oath, in which he swears that he does not owe the rest of the claim (Ex. 22:8). Since the Torah writes a verse as source for a Torah oath *only* in the case in which the borrower admits to *part* of the claim of the lender, it logically follows that there is *no* Torah oath for a borrower who completely denies owing any of the amount claimed by the lender.

▪ *Bava Kama 107a*

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PART 13)

BLUEPRINT OF JEWISH DESTINY

“Anyone who recites Birkat HaMazon is blessed through it.”
(Zohar HaKadosh to Parshat Terumah)

The fourth Blessing concludes: “He was bountiful with us, with grace and with kindness and with mercy, with relief, salvation, success, blessing, help, consolation, sustenance, support, mercy, life, peace, and all good; and of all good things may He never deprive us.”

Our Sages teach (*Berachot 45b-46a*) that our blessing does not end with the formula, “Blessed are You, Hashem...” is because it has a different status than the first three blessings. It is a blessing that was mandated by the Rabbis and not by the Torah. In fact, despite its relative lengthiness, the essence of our blessing can really be summed up with two words: “Hatov v’Hameitiv – Who is good and does good.” Interestingly enough, there is also a much shorter blessing that has exactly the same phrase of “Hatov v’Hameitiv,” one that is recited when a person hears good news (*Orach Chaim 222*).

What is the connection between the shorter version of the blessing and the longer one we recite in Birkat HaMazon to commemorate the miraculous burial of those martyred at Beitar? In his brilliant composition, *Anaf Yosef*, Rabbi Chanoch Zundel ben Yosef explains that the preservation of the dead bodies in Beitar for seven years without their decomposing was an enormous kindness for each one of the slaughtered. When the wicked and cruel Romans finally granted permission for their burial, it was a moment of great blessing for everyone, both the dead and the living. This is as our Sages teach that the soul of the deceased can only really complete its passage into the World to Come once the physical body has been buried.

Fascinatingly, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau (1713-1793), in his penetrating insights on the Talmud titled *Tziyun L’Nefesh Chayah* (commonly known by its acronym, *Tzelach*), writes that in this world we recite the blessing “Hatov v’Hameitiv” over good news, and we recite the blessing “Dayan haEmet” over bad tidings. However, we are taught that, in the future, the blessing of “Hatov v’Hameitiv” will be made for both good news and bad news. Explains Rabbi Landau, this does not mean that in the future there will not be disturbing news. Rather, it means that we will be able to recite “Hatov v’Hameitiv” over it because we will then be able to discern why whatever happened needed to happen.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, an influential spiritual mentor, relates that in 5776/2015 in Bnei Brak, very late at night after Rosh Hashanah, many people were waiting at the bus stop for the last bus to Yerushalayim. The bus was scheduled to pick them up at 1:15, but at 1:30 there was still no sign of it. Among those waiting were parents with young children, elderly people and those with infirmities. It became later and later, and emotions were running high. At some point, an empty bus finally drove up, but according to its number it wasn’t going to Yerushalayim. Rather, it was on its way to Rechovot. The people were already exhausted, frustrated and at the end of their patience. In desperation, some of them spoke with the driver, pleading with him to have pity on them and change his route to take them to Yerushalayim instead. At first, the driver said that it was impossible. But after a while, he agreed to do it. He changed the number of his bus and they all

started boarding. As they entered, they inundated the driver with heartfelt blessings. They blessed him that he should have a sweet year. A year of prosperity. A year of success in all his endeavors and his personal relationships. In short, they blessed him with anything and everything they could think of.

On the highway going to Yerushalayim, one of the passengers asked the driver why he agreed when he would probably get into trouble with the management. He replied, "The company was perfectly aware that the bus never arrived and that there were a lot of people waiting to get to Yerushalayim. So, they sent me in place of the bus that never came. But I was scared. I knew that if I got to the bus stop instead of the bus that hadn't arrived, everyone would be furious with me for coming late. After all, you couldn't possibly have known that it wasn't my fault. I would probably end up being cursed by everyone. So, I showed up as if the bus was supposed to go to Rechovot and then I "changed my mind" to help you. As you saw, everyone blessed me. I received so many blessings. And now, on the strength of all your blessings, I am certain that it will be an absolutely outstanding year!"

What an astonishing message. Everything that Hashem sends our way is for our benefit. Even when it seems as if the bus is going in the wrong direction, it is a case of Hashem being "*Hatov v'Hameitiv*."

To be continued...

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS

Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

"Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance." (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

THE GOLDEN MENORAH

Mitzvah #98 Sefer HaChinuch

THE MITZVAH

After commanding us to construct a Shulchan (golden table) for the show-bread in the north side of the Mishkan, Hashem commands us to construct the Menorah and to place it in the south side. The Menorah is sculptured from a solid gold piece weighing one *kikar* (120 *manah*), with a central "trunk" from which emerge an additional three "branches" on each side, totaling seven lamps. It is decorated symmetrically with twenty-two long and narrow cups, eleven spheres shaped like a certain species of apple, and nine flowerlike designs. The Sages have a tradition that its height is eighteen handbreadths (approx. 1.5-1.7 meters). The wicks of the six braches on the side were turned to face toward its center (*Shemos* 25:31-40; *Bamidbar* 1-4; *Menachos* 28b). The Menorah alludes to many deep ideas and esoteric secrets, a selection of which will be presented here. This mitzvah has practical relevance even today, for the Kabbalists teach that the Shabbos and Chanukah lights present the Menorah in the Jewish home. Some have a custom to light seven Shabbos candles for this reason.

A ROYAL CANDELABRUM

On a simple level of understanding, Hashem commanded us to erect the Menorah next to the Shulchan in the same way a king would place a magnificent candelabrum next to his table. Light gladdens the mind because the soul is made of Divine Light, and it expands and experiences delight when exposed to light. Seven is a standard number of branches for an elegant candelabrum (*Rabbeinu Bachaye*).

THE CELESTIAL BODIES

On a deeper level of understanding, the Menorah symbolizes that Hashem provides illumination for His world. Its seven lamps allude to the seven significant celestial bodies (*kochavei leches*), namely, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury, and the moon (*Tanchuma 7*). The central, main lamp represents the sun (*Avodas HaMenorah*). The Menorah is placed on the south side of the Mishkan, just as the sun runs along the equator to the south of Eretz Yisrael (*Chizkuni*). Its golden material resembles light. The requirement for all its parts to be made of a single piece of gold, which weighed a single *kikar*, the way its branches stem out from a single trunk, the way its lights turned toward the center of the Menorah – all suggests the there is a single source for all light: Hashem. Since the most basic form of idol-worship in olden times was that of the celestial bodies, and of the sun in particular, it is especially significant that Menorah proclaims Hashem's unity with regard to them.

HOLINESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

In addition, the Menorah alludes to the holiness that shines down into our world during the holy days of the year. The seven lamps correspond to the seven days of the week. The one in the center corresponds to Shabbos; the other six lamps turn toward it, for it is the focus of six days of the week. The twenty-two cups correspond to the twenty-two days of the festivals in the year (in the Diaspora), the eleven spheres correspond to eleven Roshei Chodesh (not including Rosh Hashanah, which is a festival), and the nine flowers correspond to eight days of Chanukah and one day of Purim (*Rav Yosef Masas*, cited in *Mayim Chaim* §277).

SYMBOL OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

The *ner maaravi* (western lamp) never went out, so long as the Jewish people were worthy of this miracle. This was a constant testimony that Hashem's Divine Presence rested amongst the Jewish people (*Menachos 86b*). The seven branches correspond to the seven *Sefiros*, all emerging from one central branch, which symbolizes Hashem's absolute unity (*Rabbeinu Bachaye*).

The Menorah also symbolizes the wisdom of the Torah. This will be explained in detail in a separate article, which will appear in a future issue of Ohrnet Magazine.