

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Beha'aloscho

21 Sivan, 5786 – June 6, 2026

Compiled from the works of
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Beha'aloscho
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Rashi in His Own Words

במדבר ה', ד': וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּנְרָה גו' כַּמִּנְרָה אֲשֶׁר הִרְאָה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה כִּן עָשָׂה אֶת הַמִּנְרָה:

רש"י ד"ה כן עשה את המנורה: מי שעשאה. ומדרש אגדה ע"י הקב"ה נעשית מאליה:

Bamidbar 8:4: This was the form of the menorah ... according to the form that Hashem had shown Moshe, so did he construct the menorah.

Rashi Heading: So did he construct the Menorah, i.e., the one who constructed it (namely, Betzalel). The Aggadic Midrash states it was made through the Holy One, Blessed be He.

Synopsis

At the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Beha'aloscho, we are told about Aharon lighting the Menorah in the Mishkan. The Torah goes on to tell us about the commandment to construct it. Commenting on "So did he construct the Menorah," Rashi explains why the Torah says that "he" built the Menorah without clarifying to whom the pronoun refers. His first explanation is that this short verse leaves out a word we are meant to understand ourselves. Rashi explains that "he who made the Menorah" constructed it. He then cites a Midrash, which says that "it was made by itself through the Holy One, Blessed be He." Why is Rashi not satisfied with the first explanation? There are many concise, elliptical verses in the Torah. If he does need a second explanation, why does he quote it from a Midrash, which is undoubtedly not Peshat?

Additionally, why does the Torah tell us about the construction of the Menorah here? It was discussed earlier when we were commanded to build the Tabernacle. Furthermore, the only thing added here regarding the Menorah's construction is that it was hammered from a solid piece of gold, which the Torah could have mentioned earlier.

At the beginning of this portion, Rashi tells us why Aharon's command to light the Menorah is taught here. "When Aharon saw the offerings brought by the leader of each tribe to dedicate the Mishkan (discussed at the end of last week's Torah portion), he was upset because neither he nor his tribe was included. Hashem swore to him that 'yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps.'"

The Rebbe explains that Hashem is not consoling Aharon by telling him that his job is even better than that of the other leaders. Hashem is telling Aharon that his job with the Menorah also served to dedicate the Mishkan. The leaders of each tribe dedicated the Altar, and Aharon dedicated the Menorah, which is more significant. The Menorah is the only vessel that Rashi tells us was shown to Moshe in a Divine vision. Moshe found it difficult to build the Menorah, so Hashem showed him a Menorah of fire. Why did Moshe find the construction of the Menorah difficult? Because it was more significant, higher than the other vessels. The point here is not to teach us about the

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construction of the Menorah, but rather to show us how great the Menorah is. This explains why Aharon's dedication of the Menorah was more significant than the tribal leader's dedication of the Altar. The Torah doesn't say who constructed it because that is irrelevant. Rashi goes even further with his second explanation by telling us that the Menorah was so marvelous that whoever built it could not have done so without G-d's help. As Rashi tells us, the one who made it "cast it into the fire, and out came the Menorah."

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Beha'aloscho, begins by recounting Hashem's command to Aharon to light the Menorah. It then briefly explains the construction of the Menorah. The Torah tells us¹, "This was the form of the Menorah; hammered work of gold, from its base to its flower it was hammered work; according to the form that the Lord showed Moshe, so did he construct the Menorah." Rashi comments on the words "so did he construct the Menorah," explaining to whom the pronoun "*he*" refers, with two explanations. The first is that "*he*" refers to "the one who made it," specifically Betzalel². In his second interpretation, Rashi quotes an Aggadic Midrash that states, "It was made by itself through the Holy One, Blessed be He." According to that interpretation, "*He*" refers to Hashem and would be spelled with an upper-case "*H*."

Several of Rashi's supercommentaries explain that the Aggadic Midrash disagrees with Rashi's first explanation. According to the first explanation, a very similar verse says³, "And someone (no one is mentioned in the verse itself) told Yaakov." There, Rashi explains these words to mean that "The *teller* (meaning the one who told) Yaakov (told him), but it is not specified who it was. Many (Scriptural) verses are elliptical." According to this, the one who made the Mishkan and all its vessels, namely Betzalel, made the Menorah. According to the Midrashic interpretation, G-d Himself made the Menorah.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

As discussed numerous times, Rashi first and foremost explains Peshat, meaning the text's simple meaning. However, according to Peshat, it is difficult to explain the verse in accordance with the Midrash Rashi cites. How can the text say Hashem constructed the Menorah "according to the form that Hashem had shown Moshe?" If Hashem Himself made the Menorah, what is the Torah teaching us?

Additionally, there does not seem to be any need to cite this explanation. The first explanation fully accounts for the verse according to Peshat. We cannot say that Rashi cites the second explanation, because, according to the first, the verse is terse and omits one word. After all, it is understood. We find many such verses throughout the

1. Bamidbar 8:4.

2. Betzalel and Oholiav were in charge of the building of the Mishkan and its vessels.

3. Bereishis 48:2.

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Torah⁴. Rashi writes explicitly⁵ that "this is customary for all elliptical verses. The matter is left unspecified concerning the one who is to do a particular thing." Granted, we prefer (when possible) to explain a verse in a manner that is not elliptical. However, Rashi's second explanation seems much less close to the text's simple meaning in this instance.

If Rashi's purpose *is* to explain the verse in a manner that is not terse, he has other options. He could have explained as the Ramban does, saying that the word "he" refers to Moshe. The Torah introduces our verse by saying⁶, "The Lord spoke to Moshe, saying." In modern terms, Moshe was the "project manager" of the Mishkan's construction. Rashi himself explains⁷ that there are instances where Moshe is given credit for building the Mishkan because he "totally dedicated himself to it. He saw the exact form of every element of the Mishkan to instruct those who did the actual construction and did not err in even one detail."

A more general question can be asked here. Why must the Torah tell us that "this is the form of the Menorah?" The Torah explained the commandment to build the Menorah and showed it to Moshe when it discussed the building of the Mishkan and all of its vessels⁸. Moreover, the only thing the Torah adds here to what was stated earlier is that the Menorah was "hammered work," meaning it was hammered from a single solid piece of gold rather than assembled from separate parts. This could have been stated earlier. Even if something new was being taught about the Menorah here, why wasn't it said earlier when the Torah commanded and described the building of the entire Mishkan?

The Explanation

Our Torah portion begins with the words, "Speak to Aharon and say to him, 'When you light the lamps, the seven lamps shall cast their light toward the face of the menorah.'" Rashi explains that "when Aaron saw the offerings brought by the leader of each tribe to dedicate the Mishkan (which was discussed at the end of last week's Torah portion), he was upset because neither he nor his tribe joined them. Hashem swore to him that 'yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps.'" However, this doesn't explain why the Torah needs to tell us the form of the Menorah. Other commentaries explain this. Rashi does not allude to an answer to this question.

When G-d consoled Aharon for not participating in the dedication of the Mishkan, He told him that "yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps." Aharon *played a part in the Mishkans'* dedication, and his dedication was greater than that of the leaders of all tribes. This means Hashem was not merely comforting Aharon by telling him he had the merit of preparing and lighting the Menorah. Instead, G-d was saying that Aharon was dedicating the Menorah. Therefore, he did not participate in the dedication of the Mishkan; he had an even more

4. Bereishis 41:13, 48:1, 48:2, just to cite just three of many such instances.

5. Bereishis 41:13.

6. Bamidbar 8:1.

7. Bamidbar 7:1.

8. Beginning with Shemos 25:31.

significant role.

We must understand why Aharon's merit was greater than that of the tribes' leaders. Granted, he dedicated the Menorah, but they dedicated the Altar! We might try to explain that Aharon personally prepared and lit the Menorah, unlike the tribal leaders, who did not bring their offerings on the Altar themselves. However, the fact that we are taught that Hashem consoled Aharon here must mean that Aharon's consolation had something to do with the Menorah itself. This being the case, one may explain that the Menorah was in the Temple Building, the Sanctuary, whereas the Altar was in the Temple courtyard. Perhaps this makes the Menorah greater than the Altar. Suppose that is why we should console him with incense for his service. The incense was also brought within the Temple building.

The answer is that all of these questions are answered by the beginning of this verse. "This was the form of the menorah" The Menorah was more significant than *all the other vessels in the Mishkan and the Bais Hamikdosh*. Hashem showed Moshe a vision of the Menorah. Rashi himself notes in our verse, "As G-d had shown him with His finger, for he had difficulty constructing it. That is why it says, "This is...." Rashi also⁹ said, "Moshe had difficulties with the construction of the Menorah until the Holy One, blessed be He, showed him a menorah of fire¹⁰." It is clear from Rashi that G-d only showed Moshe this vision because he had difficulty with it. Nevertheless, this shows how unique the Menorah was; it could not have been built without Divine vision.

What is it that made the Menorah more significant than all of the other vessels in the Temple? Rashi already explained its particular importance earlier¹¹. "The western lamp of the Menorah was a testimony to all the creatures on earth that the Shechinah, the Divine presence, rested upon the Jews. The Kohen Gadol would place the same amount of oil into it that he placed into the other lamps, and from it, he would begin lighting the Menorah. With it, he would finish cleaning the Menorah since it continued to burn miraculously until the following evening." That is the meaning of "This was the form of the menorah." It was built according to the Divine vision that Moshe was shown. Aharon's merit was indeed greater than theirs.

That is also why the one new thing we learn about the Menorah is that it was hammered from a single solid piece of gold. That was what made it so difficult. Rashi explains, "There was a block of gold weighing a talent, and he pounded it with a hammer and cut it with a chisel to extend its limbs in the prescribed manner. It was not made piece by piece and then connected.

This also explains why Rashi's first explanation says it was made by the one who made it. The Torah *made a point* of leaving out the name of the one who made the Menorah; that is irrelevant to us. Here, the Torah teaches us the greatness of the Menorah. It was made (by whomever) according to a Divine vision. This also explains why

9. Shemos 25:40.

10. The Gemorah (Menochos 29, a) does make the same statement regarding the Altar and the Table upon which the Showbread rested. However, in Rashi's commentary of the Torah, Peshat, *it is only written* regarding the Menorah.

11. Vayikroh 24:3.

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Rashi also cites the second Midrashic explanation. Aharon merited the dedication of a vessel made not only according to a G-dly vision but by Hashem Himself! That is why Rashi says, "It was made by itself through the Holy One, Blessed be He." The verse we discuss concludes with the words, "So did he construct the menorah." How can Rashi say that it was made by itself? The Midrashic explanation does not disagree with the first; rather, it serves to augment it. The Menorah was so unique that no person could have made it. The one who made it threw it into the fire. Afterward, the Menorah emerged from the fire. In other words, both explanations are valid. It was made by the one who made it, and by leaving out that person's name, the Torah emphasizes that it was made together with Hashem.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

There are two types of G-dly revelations. One comes about as a result of one's work. Chassidic Philosophy and Kabbalah call this an awakening from below, which in turn awakens from Above. There can also be an awakening from Above, which comes without preparation. This is a sort of Divine gift. It comes from a level far beyond anything one could reach alone. Such was the case with the Menorah. It was from a level so transcendent that it had to be created by Hashem; a person could not reach it on his own.

This is also the deeper reason for the Torah not mentioning a name, for it comes from a level beyond all G-dly names, the very essence of Hashem, which cannot be expressed in any name whatsoever.

This "awakening from Above" also applies to the coming of Moshiach and the building of the Holy Temple. Both the Zohar¹² and Rashi, in his commentary on the Talmud¹³, tell us that Hashem will build the Third Bais Hamikdosh and will descend from heaven. However, since building the Holy Temple is one of our 613 commandments, we must, and therefore we will, be involved. May it be G-d's will that this is fulfilled in the complete and true redemption through our righteous Moshiach. In the words of the Rambam¹⁴, "May he speedily be revealed, Omain, such should be Hashem's will!"

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Beha'aloscho 5730)

I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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12. The Zohar uses the expression "the building of ... the Holy One, blessed be He in Zohar Section 3, 221, a, and Section 1, 28, a.

13. Both Rashi and Tosfos say that the Third Temple will "be revealed and come from heaven. Talmud Sukkah 41, at the end of side a.

14. The Laws of Poroh Adumah, at the end of Chapter Three.

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in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

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