**Miller’s Musings** **פרשת תְּצַוֶּה**

The Menorah. Symbol of Judaism throughout the generations, fuelled in the Mishkan by the purest, pressed olive oil, illuminating the world with its radiant spiritual luminosity.  The Medrash Rabbah offers an incredible insight into the rationale that G-d gives for instructing the Jewish people to bring said oil, informing Moshe that it needed to be so, not because He required the light (as HHHe so patently did not) but rather so that they should be able to cast light for Him, just as He does for them.   This is a rather curious idea that requires further ‘enlightenment’!

By means of explanation the Medrash brings the analogy of a fully sighted person who assists a blind person along their way, and then upon entering the house of their destination, requests from the blind person to ignite a flame to provide light for him.  This would not be because he could not perform the act himself, but rather because he wanted the blind person to feel less indebted to him for his assistance up until that point, and be able to repay the favour in some way.  So too Hashem in His infinite benevolence, wanted in some small part, to make us feel less beholden to Him for the phenomenal gift of light that He has bestowed upon us, by tasking us with the contribution of the Menorah’s oil.

This profound idea is expanded upon by Reb Yerucham Leibovitz zt’l who highlights the oft encountered tendency for a person to refuse any reciprocation of kindness when one has done a favour for another.   At first glance this seems an act of sincere altruism, and in some cases this might indeed be true.  But on many occasions the true motive is to leave oneself in a position of superiority and the other remaining obligated to you.  This may not be a fully conscious decision that one makes, but careful introspection will help you to reveal its veracity.  The Torah, in its consummate adherence to understanding the feelings and needs of all, teaches us that contrary to what may seem obvious, the greatest gift that one can give to another is to allow that act of repayment and to let the person you have helped regain their sense of self-worth and equal status to you.  G-d clearly did not require that light and perhaps we sincerely need no payment in kind for the good we have done. But if we are truly people who desire the best for others, the greatest feat of giving we can carry out may be to open our hands and take.

May we give to Shabbos as much as we take from it.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם

