



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 16 | Terumah | Sichah 5

## A Question of Candelabra

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## 1.

### THE LAMPS OF THE MENORAH – ATTACHED OR DETACHED?

The Talmud<sup>1</sup> records a dispute regarding how the lamps<sup>2</sup> of the menorah were made. According to one opinion, the lamps were an intrinsic part of the menorah, because the requirement to make the menorah “hammered” {out of one block},<sup>3</sup> and not by soldering “separate pieces,”<sup>4</sup> also applied to the lamps. According to the other opinion, however, the lamps were separate utensils. Before they were lit, though, they would be placed on top of the branches of the menorah. And when later the lamps needed to be cleaned, “they were removed (from the menorah), and placed in the Tent, and cleaned...”<sup>5</sup>

The Talmud links the above-mentioned dispute with another one, concerning whether the directive in the verse,<sup>6</sup> “He shall make it {i.e., the menorah} from one *kikar*<sup>7</sup> of pure gold, with all these utensils,” also included the lamps, indicating that they, too, were to be made from this one *kikar* of gold. If this were the case, the lamps would also have to be “hammered” {out of that same block of gold}. Alternatively, only the menorah was made from the *kikar*; not the lamps. If this were the case, the lamps were not “hammered” {out of that same block of gold, but made separately, from other gold}.

Rambam codifies the law as follows:<sup>8</sup>

When a menorah is produced from gold, its total weight, *including its lamps*, shall be one *kikar*. It must be fashioned entirely by hammering it out of one block {of gold}... for the lamps were *embedded* in the menorah, and were included in the *kikar* {of gold, from which the entire menorah was made}.

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<sup>1</sup> *Menachot* 88b. *Braisa* of *Melachat HaMishkan*, ch. 9. See *Ramban*, on our *parsha*, Ex. 25:39, *et al.*

<sup>2</sup> {In the Heb. original, נרות, the receptacles inside which the oil and wicks were placed.}

<sup>3</sup> Our *parsha*, Ex. 25: 31, 36.

<sup>4</sup> See Rashi's commentary, and Rashi *MS*, on *Menachot*, *ibid.*, s.v. “פרקים”; s.v. “מסלקין.”

<sup>5</sup> *Menachot*, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Ex. 25:39.

<sup>7</sup> {A talent, *kikar*, was equivalent to 3000 *shekels*, or about 68.5 kilograms (153.5 pounds) in modern measure.}

<sup>8</sup> *Hilchot Beit HaBechirah*, ch. 3, par. 4, 6.

## 2.

### ACCORDING TO RASHI – TWO UNRELATED ISSUES

As discussed numerous times, Rashi interprets Scripture according to פשוט, even if an interpretation does not coincide with Halacha. This is particularly obvious in Rashi's commentary regarding this subject.

As mentioned, the Talmud links the dispute about whether the lamps were “hammered,” to the dispute about whether the lamps were made from the same *kikar* as the menorah. As *Ramban* states, “All opinions in the Talmud agree that only what constituted the hammered menorah came from the *kikar* of gold.” Therefore, he goes on to explain that according to the opinion, in the “*Braisah* of *Melachat HaMishkan*,”<sup>11</sup> that the *malkachaim* and *machtos* were made from the *kikar*, it turns out that these items were not separate utensils, but were part of the menorah. (*Malkachaim* – “these were golden lids {made on the rim of the lamps, which opened and closed, to ensure that nothing fell into the oil}”; *machtos* – “these were receptacles under each lamp {to catch any sparks}”).

In contrast, on the phrase,<sup>9</sup> “one *kikar* of pure gold,” Rashi says, “its weight, including *all* its utensils, should be only one *kikar*...” On the previous verse,<sup>10</sup> Rashi comments, “*malkacheha* – are the tongs,” “*machtoseha* – are a type of small bowl into which ashes in the lamp were raked each morning.” Thus, according to Rashi's opinion, the *separate* utensils were also made from the same *kikar* of gold.<sup>11</sup>

The rationale for Rashi's opinion: This is the פשוט,<sup>12</sup> the *simple* meaning: 1) of the terms, *malkachaim* and *machtah* – in numerous places in Scripture, these

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<sup>9</sup> Ex. 25:39.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 38.

<sup>11</sup> *Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh, et al*, suggest that when Rashi said, “including *all* its utensils,” he was referring only to the lamps of the menorah. See there. However, as discussed numerous times, Rashi, in his commentary employs a diction that is *clear* even to a young student of Scripture, a style that doesn't lend itself to misunderstanding because of ambiguity. Since Rashi wrote, “*all* its utensils,” the simple meaning is that this includes *malkacheha* and *machtoseha*. This, too, is how *Ramban* understands Rashi's comments. [Indeed, *Ramban* further declares that Rashi's interpretation is in accord with *the simple meaning* of Scripture. See, also, *Ibn Ezra*, *infra*, on v. 40.] See *Nimukei Shmuel* on *Ramban*, *ad loc.*

<sup>12</sup> In contrast, if adopting a homiletic, or halachic, exegetic approach, one could say that only the specific requirement to use “pure gold” applied to “with all these utensils.” See *Menachot*, *loc cit.*; and *Ramban*, *ibid.*

are separate tools used for some purpose – e.g., for use with the altar;<sup>13</sup> 2) of the verse,<sup>6</sup> “He shall make it from one *kikar* of pure gold, with all these utensils.” *It*, i.e., the menorah, and “*all* these utensils” – *all* the utensils mentioned in the passage must be made from the same “*kikar* of pure gold.”<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, according to Rashi, the question of what needed to be hammered is unrelated to the question of what needed to be made from the “*kikar* of pure gold.” So although the lamps needed to be made from the *kikar* of gold, this does not prove that they also had to be hammered out, as an integral part of the menorah.

### 3.

RASHI DOESN'T SAY EXPLICITLY WHETHER THE LAMPS WERE ALSO “HAMMERED”

At first glance, it may appear that Rashi maintains that the requirement for the menorah to be hammered also applies to its lamps. For on the verse,<sup>15</sup> “the menorah shall be hammered {out of one piece},” Rashi comments:

“{The craftsman} shall not make it out of separate pieces, nor shall he make *its branches* and *its lamps* out of separate parts and afterwards attach them by a welding process called *solder* in Old French, but rather it shall be made entirely out of one piece {of gold which} he beats with a hammer and cuts with his craft tools and [thus] makes separate *branches* on both sides.”

If it were prohibited to make the lamps out of “separate parts and afterwards attach them,” this would seem to imply that the lamps then needed to be made by being “hammered,” together with the menorah.

However, after careful analysis, we see that this conclusion is not necessarily warranted. Rashi only states that the verse, “the menorah shall be hammered,” precludes the possibility of making the menorah out of separate pieces and then attaching them. In other words, the menorah could not be constructed from disparate components that were soldered together. So

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<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 6:6; Ex. 27:3, and Rashi, *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> Such an interpretation is also buttressed by the fact that the commandment regarding the *kikar* was stated only at the conclusion of the section, after the commandment to make all the other utensils.

<sup>15</sup> Ex. 25:31.

concerning this Rashi says that just as it was prohibited to make the branches separately, and then to attach them, so, too, was it prohibited to attach the lamps to the menorah. Doing so would disqualify the menorah from being a *menorah* made from “one block” of gold.

But this doesn’t speak to the possibility that the lamps were made as separate parts of the menorah, which were placed on top of the branches as separate parts. In this way, the menorah would still be “hammered” out from “a single block” of gold, with nothing else being *fused* to it.

On this basis, we also now understand why Rashi, at the end of his commentary, mentions only the *branches*, not the *lamps*.

#### 4.

#### THE SEQUENCE OF THE VERSES IS INSTRUCTIVE

Since Rashi doesn’t *explicitly*<sup>16</sup> state his opinion regarding this issue, and nor does he declare his uncertainty, by saying, “I don’t know,” as he does elsewhere<sup>17</sup> when the meaning of a passage is unclear, we can surmise that according to *טפח*, the explanation is so simple that Rashi needn’t tell us. It can be readily discerned and understood from the verses themselves.

The explanation:

Scripture discusses the menorah in the following order:<sup>18</sup> first, the commandment to make the menorah is related, “You shall make a menorah of pure gold... hammered out... its base and stem, its ornamental cups, knobs and flowers shall all be formed *from it itself*...” (Scripture goes on to detail how to make the branches, the cups, etc. Scripture concludes by saying that the knobs and branches must be hammered out of pure gold.) Only *later*, are we told,<sup>19</sup> “You shall make seven lamps for it... and its tongs (*malkacheha*), and scoops (*machtoseha*)... He shall make it from one *kikar* of pure gold...” (Similarly, in

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<sup>16</sup> It would be quite farfetched to suggest that Rashi relies on us to infer his opinion from the fact that he omits the word “lamps,” from the header to his comments on this verse.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Gen. 28:5.

<sup>18</sup> Our *parsha*, Ex. 25: 31, *et passim*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 37.

*parshas VaYakhel*,<sup>20</sup> where we are informed how the menorah was actually made, these details are related again in the *same* order.)

Since the commandment to make the lamps was communicated only after the detailed instructions concerning the construction of the menorah itself, and only *after* telling us that the menorah had to be hammered out of a single block of gold, it is understood that according to פשוט, the straightforward understanding, the approach that Rashi adopts in his commentary on Scripture, the lamps were separate utensils, and not intrinsic to the menorah.<sup>21</sup> The lamps were thus in the same grouping as the *malkocheha* and the *machtoseha*, mentioned *immediately* after the lamps.

## 5.

### CONFIRMATION FROM PARSHAS PEKUDEI

Further proof: In *parshas Pekudei*, we are told<sup>22</sup> how the *Mishkan* was brought before Moshe. It says there,<sup>23</sup> “the pure {gold} menorah, its lamps....” Now, if we posit that the lamps were *separate* from the menorah, we can understand why Scripture enumerates them separately when describing the sequence in which the *Mishkan* was brought.<sup>24</sup>

However, if the lamps were actually hammered out as part of the menorah, then it would be superfluous to say that the menorah was brought, along with its lamps. For by bringing the menorah, one would then necessarily also be bringing the lamps! (Thus, to say so would make as much sense as saying that the *menorah* was brought, *along with* its branches, the cups, etc.)

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<sup>20</sup> Ex. 37:17, *et passim*.

<sup>21</sup> This is also the opinion of the *Or HaChaim*, *ibid.*, v. 36, and at the beg. of *parshas Ba'haalotcha*; also the opinion of *Chizkuni* on v. 37. Note that in his commentary on *II Chronicles* 4:20, Rashi states explicitly that the lamps were not attached to the menorah; however, some scholars maintain (*Shem HaGedolim*, by the *Chida*, in his discussion of Rashi) that the commentary on *Chronicles* popularly attributed to Rashi was not actually authored by Rashi.

<sup>22</sup> Ex. 39:33, *et passim*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 37.

<sup>24</sup> The reason why the lamps are mentioned separately will be understood from the explanation later, in the text, at the end.

## 6.

### QUESTIONS ON RASHI'S COMMENTARY ON *PARSHAT VA'YAKHEL*

In view of the above, that in his commentary on Scripture, Rashi adopts the position that the lamps were not included in the commandment for the menorah to be hammered out, we can explain a number of discrepancies (between Rashi's commentary here and his commentary in *parshas VaYakhel*), and clarify a number of difficulties that arise from his commentary in *parshas VaYakhel*, where the subject of the *Mishkan* is addressed again:

From the verse,<sup>25</sup> “and the light-giving menorah, its utensils and its lamps,” Rashi quotes the word, נרותיה, “its lamps,” and explains: “*luzes*<sup>26</sup> in Old French (lamps), bowls in which the oil and the wicks are placed.”

We need to understand:

- a) In our *parsha*, when the subject of the menorah's lamps is first discussed, Rashi quotes the words,<sup>27</sup> את נרותיה, “its lamps,” and comments, “A type of bowl into which the oil and wicks were placed.” So why does Rashi explain the term again in *parshas VaYakhel*, seeing that he explained it already in our *parsha*?
- b) The above difficulty is even more pronounced when we consider that Rashi himself points out in *parshas VaYakhel*, a few verses earlier, “I have already explained the contributions of the *Mishkan*, and the labor its construction entailed, at the place in Scripture, where the commandment is first recorded.”

For this reason, Rashi does not repeat there his explanation of the majority of contributions to the *Mishkan*, and the various labors its construction entailed, except when some novel point is introduced – a point that is not evident in the place in Scripture, where the commandment is first recorded. Otherwise, Rashi relies on his earlier commentary.

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<sup>25</sup> Ex. 35:14.

<sup>26</sup> In our texts, לוציני"ש. In earlier editions, and in MSS, there are variations, such as ש"לוציני.

<sup>27</sup> Ex. 25:37.

So if Rashi already clarified the meaning of the term “lamps,” when this commandment was first given—why does he explain it again?

- c) Why does Rashi, at the beginning of his remarks, add “*luzes* in Old French”? Either way, this addition is problematic. For if the explanation, “a type of bowl...” does not suffice, and we need to know the translation of the word, Rashi should have told us the first time he commented on the term “lamps,” in our *parsha*.<sup>28</sup> And if the explanation “a type of bowl...” does suffice to clarify the term, why, then, in *parshas VaYakhel*, does Rashi insert the translation?

## 7.

### AN ADDITIONAL INFERENCE FROM RASHI'S COMMENTARY

In order to resolve the above difficulties, we need to draw attention to an additional peculiarity in Rashi's remarks. As discussed numerous times, each word and letter in Rashi's commentary on Scripture was chosen with the utmost precision. This is true not only regarding the words of the commentary itself, but also regarding the words from the verse that Rashi quotes in the heading of his commentary. These, too, were chosen with absolute precision.

One of the places where this exactitude is most conspicuous is in the abovementioned commentary of Rashi, on the verse,<sup>25</sup> “and the light-giving menorah, its utensils, and its lamps, and the oil for lighting.” In commenting on this verse, Rashi provides three different headings: (1) “*וַאֲת כְּלֵיָהּ*, and its utensils – tongs and scoops”; (2) “*בְּרִתֵּיהָ*, its lamps – ‘luzes’... (as explained above)”; (3) “*וַאֲת שֶׁמֶן הַמְּאֹרֶה*, and the oil for lighting – this also required the skill of the wise-hearted men....”

In these three headings, we see a glaring difference: In the first and the third heading, Rashi also quotes the preposition, *וַאֲת*, from the verse. In contrast, in his second heading, Rashi quotes *only* the noun *בְּרִתֵּיהָ*, but *not* its preceding preposition, *וַאֲת*.

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<sup>28</sup> As the *Rashbam* comments here, in our *parsha*.



## 8.

### “ITS LAMPS” – PART OF THE MENORAH’S UTENSILS

The abovementioned anomaly can be understood, however, in light of the earlier explanation that Rashi maintains that the lamps were *not* included in the directive that the menorah be hammered {out of one block}:

Since according to Rashi’s viewpoint the lamps were not part of the menorah itself, we must say that when the Torah says,<sup>9</sup> “He shall make *it* from one *kikar* of pure gold, with *all these utensils*,” the lamps were included not by the pronoun *it* (referring to the menorah), but rather by the words, “*all these utensils*” – as the lamps were among the menorah’s *utensils*.<sup>29</sup>

But in *parshas VaYakhel*, when we come across the verse,<sup>25</sup> “and the light-giving menorah, its utensils and its lamps,” the question arises: Since the verse already mentioned “its utensils,” and since the lamps were considered part of “its utensils,” why does the verse need to specify, “and its lamps”?

To resolve this difficulty, Rashi quotes the words, “וְאֵת כְּלֵיהֶּ, *its utensils*,” and explains, “tongs and scoops.” Then, immediately, Rashi quotes the word, נִרְחִיָּה, *omitting* the word וְאֵת, to underscore, thereby, that we need to understand the verse as if the word וְאֵת did not precede the word נִרְחִיָּה, *its lamps*, because the lamps are mentioned only as a *specification* of the earlier term, “its utensils” {and not as an object in its own right}.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the meaning of the verse is as follows: “its utensils (which are) tongs and scoops, and lamps.”

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<sup>29</sup> A similar interpretation would apply to Ex. 30:27; 31:8; 37:24.

<sup>30</sup> Unlike the “oil for lighting,” which was not regarded as one of the menorah’s utensils. Rashi points implies this by also quoting the preposition, וְאֵת, in the heading that follows – “וְאֵת שֶׁמֶן הַמְּאֹרֶת, *and the oil for lighting*” – even though the preposition is not directly relevant to the substance of his remarks on this term.

## 9.

### THE LAMPS – THE CORE COMPONENT OF THE MENORAH

Still, the following problem remains: Why does the Torah {in *parshas VaYakhel*} itemize the lamps separately from the menorah's other utensils?

To resolve this difficulty, Rashi adds, “*luzes* in Old French.” The word *luzes* is etymologically related to the word *light*. The reason why the lamps were called by a term denoting light was because (as Rashi goes on to say) they were “bowls in which the oil and the wicks are placed.” Meaning, the lamps embodied the purpose of the menorah – to generate light<sup>31</sup> by means of the lamps, in which “oil and the wicks are placed.”

Since the lamps were the core component of the menorah, it makes sense for the Torah to mention the lamps separately from the other utensils of the menorah.

From a talk delivered on *Shabbos Parshas VaYakhel-Pekudej*, 5737

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<sup>31</sup> Although there was no practical need for its light (as Rashi notes in his comments on Lev. 8:2), nonetheless, as understood, the menorah's function was to produce light.