



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

## Lighting the Lamps

The sidra begins with the verb T'TZAVEH, "command".

It does not say, "Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them...", but "Command the Children of Israel".

In the Sifrei the rabbis point out that "command" is stronger than "speak" and it implies MIYAD ULDOROT, "now and for all time".

Building the Mishkan was not an eternal command in that sense.

In time the Mishkan was replaced by the Beit HaMikdash, and though we continue to pray for the restoration of the Mikdash, we have had nearly two thousand years in which the twin sanctuaries of the synagogue and the home have been our sacred centres.

What has never been in limbo has been the kindling of the lamp; the command was "to cause the lamp to burn continually".

The word "lamp" means the Perpetual Light, the NER TAMID; it also means bringing the light of the Divine into our lives and our world.

## Smells & Spices

Part of the building program of the Mishkan was the altar for incense.

Strangely, it is not mentioned until the end of the parasha, as if it was to be left as long as possible.

There may be a symbolism here, reflected in a Talmudic comment in Tractate Tamid that as far away as Jericho people could smell the incense that was burnt in Jerusalem in the Beit HaMikdash.

Smells are potent and penetrate long distances so the longer the altar of incense was left the less the impact on people's lives.

However, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein turns what seems like a negative into a positive. A really great leader, he says, is able to send the aroma of the Torah far afield. His (we can add, "her") influence not only permeates geographically but historically through the generations.

The altar of incense represents the original outreach projects of Judaism. So why wait so long to build this altar? Because it is the culmination of the whole sanctuary project.

Everything else has to be in place before the Mishkan can really exert a spiritual influence. **-OZ**

**Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH**