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**VERSE ID:** *Nu08-02a, Nu08-02b, Nu08-02c, Nu08-02d, Nu08-03a, Nu08-04a, Nu08-04b, Nu08-04c, Nu08-04d, Nu08-04e, Nu08-04f, Nu08-04g, Nu08-04h*

**BIBLICAL TEXT:** *God spoke to Moses to say over: Cite to Aaron (1) and speak to him: When you go up (2) to the wick-lights, the seven lights should shine towards the face of the Candelabra [Rashi: the central staff] (3) Aaron did so (4): He lit (2) the lights to the face of the Candelabra, as God commanded Moses. This (5) is the Candelabra form: solid (6) gold, it is non-soldered from its thigh to its flowers (7), consistent with the vision that God showed Moses, that is how He made the (human) Candelabra (i.e. soul) (8).*

**RASHI RULE:** Paragraphs

**RASHI COMMENTS:**

**(1) Rashi rule: Paragraph sequencing.** This biblical paragraph dealing with the Candelabra and the following biblical paragraph dealing with the inauguration of Levites, is sequenced immediately after the dozen previous paragraphs detailing the gifts of all the Tribal governors when the Desert Temple was inaugurated. The sequencing complements and supplements the underlying theme that each Jewish tribe contributed to the building of the Temple. The Tribal governors gave voluntary physical gifts detailed in Ex35 and in the previous paragraphs of Nu07. Contrastively, Aaron and Levites gave their services to the Temple

Rashi additionally phrases this in terms of the urge to volunteer and fairness. After the other Tribal governors gave their presentation, Aaron and the Levites may have felt left out. Therefore, this chapter shows Aaron's unique contribution accompanied with Levite support: Aaron performed the Temple service proper.

Ramban demurs that the Tribal Governors gave voluntary gifts while Aaron's service was obligatory. Ramban also demurs that it is not clear why Aaron's service for the Candelabra was selected as his contribution instead of some other service such as the offering of the daily incense.

However, both these objections of the Ramban can be answered. The Tribal governors brought incense in their voluntary gifts and hence to list the incense service that Aaron performs would simply be an imitation of what they did. Instead, Aaron has a unique service, the daily lighting of the Candelabra which is unique to the priests.

Ramban is also incorrect that Aaron's contribution was exclusively obligatory. While the lighting of the Candelabra was obligatory, what it symbolized, the education (lighting) of the human soul (Candelabra) was a primary voluntary service of the Priests, as the prophet Malachai (2:7) states: *The lips of the priest guard our knowledge*

of God; people seek Torah from his lips, for he is an angel of God. As we will see later on in Rashi's comments, this symbolic meaning of the Candelabra as God's symbolic blueprint for education is explicitly mentioned in the chapter.

Thus, the Tribal governors volunteered physical gifts while Aaron gave his spiritual services.

In passing, and as we shall see in the next few verses, for this reason – the attention needed to arrange the direction of the lights, the lighting itself, is called *arrangement* rather than lighting.

(2) Rashi rule: Prepositional connectives. Rashi interprets the Hebrew word *eth* as meaning *to* which is in fact one of its meanings. The verse therefore reads *when you go up to the candle-wicks* rather than *when you raise the candle lights*. Rashi is supported in this choice by the following parallelisms, verses using the word *go up* to indicate lighting (because flames go up).

Verse	Elevate	Eth?	The flame
Ex27-20	To elevate		The flame
Lv24-01	To elevate		The flame
Nu08-02	When you elevate	Eth	The flame

As can be seen, Nu08-02 uses the connective *eth* which is absent from the other verses thus suggesting the alternate meaning: *when you go up to the lights* vs. *to make the lights go up*.

A similar parallelism shows that the lighting of the wicks uses the verb *to arrange* not the verb *elevate*; in fact, Ex27-20 and Lv24-01 use *elevate* to indicate the purpose of the pure olive oil which is a good oil to assure that flames *go up uniformly*.

Verse	Description of olive oil	Description of lighting the wicks
Ex27-20:21	To make the flame go up	Arrange the flames
Lv24-01:02	To make the flame go up	Arrange the flames
Nu08-03	Not applicable	Aaron made the flames go up towards the central one

While Nu08 does use *go up* to indicate lighting, the emphasis here is on redirecting the position of the flames to point towards the central flame. The repositioning had to also preserve the smooth elevation nature of the flames which principally came from the pure olive oil.

Some technical notes are in order about Rashi's language: On Nu08-02b Rashi gives both explanations of *go up*: (i) *to light a flame*, that is, to make it go up (because flames naturally rise); (ii) *to go up to the flames*. Consistent with the research in my doctoral thesis, I argue that Rashi's second explanation is always the preferred explanation and

the explanation most consistent with the straightforward meaning of the text *the peshat*. Rashi's first explanation applies more to the use of the verb *go up* in the next verse Nu08-03 where as I explained the emphasis is not on lighting the Candelabra, which in other biblical verses is called *arrangement*, but on assuring that when these wicks and flames are repositioned to point in the direction of the central flame, the officiating priest should pay attention that the smooth upward nature of the flame, conferred by the pure olive oil should remain.

On a technical note, it is inferred from here, that a stepping stool was provided to the priests to *go up to the flames*, and this is mentioned by Rashi.

Some commentators demur: But the average person's height is taller than the Candelabra: Why then was a stool needed? I would respond that *lighting the Candelabra* was not as we might do it today, getting a flame and lighting the wick; rather the lighting of the Candelabra required actively tilting the wicks towards the central light and assuring they still have a smooth upward flame; this required extra attention and hence the stool was needed so that the officiating priest could look down and properly arrange everything.

Finally, we point out that in the description of the requirement of the stepping stool Rashi uses the word *derash*: *our sages nuance (derash) from here the requirement of a stepping stool*. Thus, it may appear that Rashi regards this as homily and fancy *derash* rather than the straightforward meaning of the text, *peshat*. But as I point out in my doctoral thesis, the word *derash*, and already in the Talmud, has 7 distinct meanings. True, one of them refers to *homily* and *fancy* but *derash* can also mean *nuance*. An English example might be the word *drive* which to a literate speaker does not mean *to go* but rather *to go by car*. The fact that *driving* has a *nuance* of *by car* is part of its straightforward meaning, albeit a nuance. Similarly in our verse: Rashi gives the straightforward meaning albeit he calls it *nuanced* because the word *eth* does not always mean *to*. It is interpreted that way in this verse because of the parallelisms shown above.

- (3) Rashi rule: Idiom. The literal biblical statement is *the seven lights should shine towards the face of the Candelabra*. Rashi interprets this as an idiom: *shine towards the face of the Candelabra* refers to the central light which directly emerges from the Candelabra, contrastive to the other 6 lights, which are on the protruding arms of the Candelabra. Rashi then interprets *shine towards the central light* to mean that their flames should not go straight up but rather be tilted to point towards the central light. Thus, the lights on left-hand side of the Candelabra are tilted to the right while those on the right-hand side are tilted to the left.

This explanation, that Rashi is explaining an idiom, answers the question dealt with by the *Sifsay Chachamim*: *Wouldn't it be more accurate to say that the six flames pointed towards the central one? Why then does it say that seven flames point.* The answer, as given by our explanation, is that this is an idiom and idioms don't have to strictly follow laws or precision.

On a technical note, there are two Rashi comments dealing with this idiom. However, since it is one idiom I think it proper to combine Nu08-02c and Nu08-02d as one Rashi comment.

- (4) **Rashi rule: Sentence focus.** Rashi addresses the focus and emphasis of verse, *Aaron did so*. However, Rashi only says: *To praise Aaron that he followed God's will*. Ramban beautifully elaborates (and hence this is an example of Ramban supplementing Rashi rather than disagreeing with him). Noting the parallelism in the following verses,

Verse	Who	Lighting	the Candelabra
Ex27-21	Aaron and his sons	Will arrange	The lights
Lv24-02	Aaron	Will arrange	The lights

Ramban concludes that although it is preferable that Aaron (the High Priest) himself light the Candelabra any priest (*Aaron and his sons*) may do so.

Therefore, since a theme of this paragraph and the preceding paragraphs is that *each* Tribal governor, Aaron, and the Levites all made contributions to the Temple, it is reasonable that in that spirit Aaron should delegate the lighting to his sons. Lv08-03 emphasizes that Aaron himself lit the Candelabra because of how precious the commandment was to him. In other words, Ramban would rephrase Rashi as follows:

The verse says, *Aaron did so --- raising the flames to shine towards the central flame – as God commanded Moses, to praise Aaron that he personally did this without delegating it to his children.* Ramban in effect adds the underlined phrase to the Rashi comment.

- (4) **Rashi rule: Prepositional connectives:** Rashi always interprets the biblical word *zeh* meaning *this* as pointing to something concrete and specific. The following table shows several such Rashi comments

Verse ID	Text of Verse with <i>this</i>	Rashi comment emphasizes pointing to something specific
Ex12-02a	This re-newing (of the moon) indicates the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the month for you	God showed Moses (in a vision) a picture of the new moon in the waning cycle
Lv11-02c	These are the animals that you may eat ( <i>kosher</i> )	Moses would physically take each animal and show it to his audience during his teaching of the law
Nu08-04a	This is the make of the Candelabra	Moses didn't fully understand God's verbal instructions. So, God showed him in a prophetic vision a candelabra of fire.

**(5) Rashi rule: Synecdoche:** *The candelabra in its make was solid and unsoldered.* The Hebrew word used to indicate this is *qa-sheh* which means *hard*. Rashi repeats this interpretation in several verses and even gives the old-French for *unsoldered*: Ex25-18b Ex25-18d Ex25-31a Ex25-31b, Ex25-31h. This is an example of *synecdoche*, naming something by a good example of it similar to the English naming of *sweet* things by the word *honey* which is a good example of sweetness. Something *solid* as well as something *unsoldered* are sturdier and harder to break; hence, *solid* and *unsoldered* are good examples of *hardness*. The requirement prohibits making the Candelabra *hollow* or making it by soldering its separate components (the shaft, arms, base) together.

Interestingly Rashi only explicitly mentions both requirements, *solid* and *unsoldered* at Ex25-31a. In the other places cited he simply mentions *unsoldered*. Thus, this is a good example of what I explain in my doctoral thesis: even with the best manuscripts the proper way to read Rashi comments is as *groups* of similar Rashi comments since only in the group will one see Rashi's full explanation.

**(6) Rashi rule: Prepositional connectives:** The verse says *it was unsoldered from its thigh to its flowers*. The form *...from...to...* is common in all languages. For example, we might say *everyone from infant to adult should receive certain vaccinations*. Typically, such a form gives extreme examples emphasizing an entire spectrum. Thus, in the *vaccination* example just given, the rule applies to all people, and the spectrum indicates from the very young, *infants*, to the older *adults*. In this verse, Rashi also explains the spectrum: *From base to flower* is the spectrum of all parts of the Candelabra from major components like its *base* to delicate artistic components like *flowers*.

**Rashi rule: Form:** The actual verse states *from thigh to flower*. Rashi explains that *thigh* refers to the *base* of the Candelabra. This is an example of naming something by its *form*. A simple English example might be naming the color *orange* by the fruit *orange*. In this case, the *form* refers to its location and hence we refer to the etymology as *locative*.

**(7) Rashi rule: Cross-reference:** The verse phrase *like the vision (of the Candelabra) that God showed Moses* cross references several verses indicating that God showed him prophetically visual pictures and diagrams of the Temple utensils: Ex25-09, Ex25-40, Ex26-30, Ex27-08. Rashi points out *the verbal instructions for creating the utensils did not suffice for Moses to understand and hence God showed him pictures and diagrams*.

**(8) Rashi rule: Symbolism:** The biblical text simply says *as God showed (the Candelabra) to Moses so did he make it*. If one interprets this verse as a stand-alone verse by itself it has a straightforward meaning, namely, *the Candelabra was made according to the specifications shown by God to Moses*. In this case, the *he* refers to *Bezalel* the chief Temple architect

But Rashi adds: *The Midrash Aggadah says the he refers to God*. So, the verse means *as God showed Moses so did He, God, make the Candelabra*. To fully understand this Midrash, we have

to go to its source: The Midrash Shemoth Rabbah which cites such verses as Pr20-27 *The candle of God is the soul of man*. In other words, God made the human Candelabra, the soul and cognitive faculties according to the (symbolic) blueprint of the vision that He showed Moses.

Before we explain further, we have to clarify what the straightforward meaning of the text, the *peshat*, is. As a stand-alone verse the straightforward meaning is that Bezalel made the Candelabra according to the vision that God showed Moses. But this paragraph, Nu08-01:04 occurs in a context. The surrounding context is all symbolic. The inauguration ceremony of the Levites in the paragraph following this one is clearly symbolic. To inaugurate the Levites their bodies are shaven. Rabbi Hirsch explains: *lack of hair is characteristic of the female; the procedure teaches that to become a Levite and participate with the Priests in guidance of the nation one must be a female, a good listener and receiver*. Similarly, the gifts of the Tribal governors at the inauguration of the Temple are symbolic reviews of human history: The 130 weight of the silver bowl refers to the age when Adam started rebuilding his family; the 70 weight single silver bowl refers to the 70 nations that came from Noah in the single ark; the 10 weight golden spoon refers to the 10 commandments. And indeed, interpreting gifts as symbolic is common in all languages and cultures.

But if the preceding and following paragraphs are symbolic, then the principle of context requires that this paragraph about the Candelabra also be interpreted symbolically consistent with its context. Therefore, the Shemoth Rabbah explains *so He made the Candelabra to mean So did God make the human Candelabra, the soul*.

To understand this more fully we mention two points.

Point 1: Rav Hirsch shows that the construction of the 18-inch (actually 18-*tefach*) Candelabra is a blueprint for the education of children in their first 18 years of life. Thus, at the 3rd inch of the Candelabra has a flower meaning that 3-year olds are taught some songs and important verse songs but nothing intellectual. The 7 branches of the Candelabra refer to an educational system with 7 subject components, the main one being religious training (central staff) and the others referring to other subjects. (One can't help but notice Gardner's theory of 7 distinct intelligent skills: musical, spatial, mathematical-logical, linguistic, kinesthetic, social and the 7<sup>th</sup> which Gardner calls *naturalist* would correspond to *spirituality*.) Similarly, the three bulbs, single bud and flower in inches 15-18 of the Candelabra height correspond to the intensive education of high school where one acquires a subject matter base (bulbs = gathering nutrients intensively), core discipline principles (bud = the germ or seed of the entire plant) and applications (flowers). Thus, the idea that the Candelabra mirrors the human Candelabra, the human souls and its needs is clearly seen.

Point 2: The Candelabra is unique among Temple utensils in that there are two forms to it: The preferred form and the minimal form. In a second, we will show how this corresponds to two fundamental types of people which we may loosely call the scholars and social people which for example mirrors the Chasidim (social) and Misnagedim (scholars)dichotomy. To

understand the two forms of the Candelabra we list the requirements of the Candelabra found in Exodus and here in Numbers in the following table.

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Non-soldered</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Bulbs, buds, flowers</i>	<i>7 arms</i>	<i>Made from a talent of Gold</i>
<i>Ex25-31:39</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Nu08-01:04</i>	<i>Yes*</i>	<i>Yes*</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Absent</i>

The table is clear that there are two different types of Candelabra's possible: A preferred Candelabra with bulbs, buds, and flowers made from one talent and a minimal Candelabra without bulbs, buds, and flowers. A technical exegesis found in the Talmud, Menacoth 28b states that the minimal Candelabra can be of any metal. Rashi does not bring this, and the interested reader can find a discussion of the derivation in the appendix to this posting.

Following up on the fundamental symbolic motif that the Candelabra is symbolic of the soul of people which are God's Candelabra, it emerges that there are two types of people addressed by the Temple symbolism: (#1) The scholars who have a golden education with core knowledge (symbolized by bulbs which are intense gathering of nutrients), core principles (symbolized by the bud which contains the germ from which the entire plant is made), and applications of principles (symbolized by the flowers); (#2) the social people who while also having a soul, and also having a professional look (no soldering and made of metal) are less detailed in their scholarship.

We see here, in this description of two types of people, a succinct summary of the various divisions that have plagued the Jewish people throughout the ages: The most famous is the Chasidim (social) Misnagedim (scholar) split of modern times; but also the scholars versus the workers in Talmudic times which drove the Conservative movement to posit that Jewish law is dependent on person type. Had this fundamental motif that there are two types of people been properly understood many of the divisions within the Jewish community throughout history would not have reached the intensity they did.

We may summarize this entire paragraph, *in the context of the surrounding paragraphs*, with the following bullet points:

- The Tribal governors brought voluntary physical gifts to the temple while
- The Priesthood-Levites brought services
- The priesthood's voluntary task (as symbolized through the Candelabra ceremony and construction) was to instruct the nation and teach Torah. The Levites assisted by being good listeners.
- But to do this effectively the Priest had to be aware of two fundamental types of people: The socialites and scholars.

This analysis shows that the Midrash Aggadah *as God showed [the Candelabra] to Moses so did He, God make the human Candelabra the soul*, is really the straightforward meaning of this text and blends neatly with the surrounding paragraphs.

## APPENDIX

(Very brief Overview of the Exemption of Gold from the Minimal Candelabra)

The actual verse in Ex25-31 requiring gold is written in a general detail general (ABA) form (what academic scholars call *inclusio*).

<p><u>Make</u>                      a                      Candelabra <i>pure gold, solid, and non-soldered</i> shall it be <u>made</u></p>
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This form indicates that the *detail* portion (in italics) is a good example, not taken restrictively, but generalized. The attributes listed, *gold, non-soldered, gold*, indicate a requirement of professionalism: The Candelabra should be professionally made. The law is inferred that any metal is valid for creating the Candelabra since metal, especially when non-soldered and solid gives a sturdy professional form. However, the requirement of non-soldered applies to the minimal Candelabra.