

Seven Paths Diverge into One

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Parshat B'ha'alot'cha

The Menorah is to be made of hammered-out gold. (Numbers 8:4)

While the text does not say so explicitly, our tradition has understood this verse to mean that the Menorah was made of a single piece of gold, hammered into the prescribed shape. The Menorah was made of hammered-out gold, not of welded-together gold. And, from its base, seven branches emanated, all part of the same single piece of gold, shaped by hammering-out. The six outer branches (three on each side) are said to face the center light.

We understand that the Torah's tales contain spiritual truths, aside from (and not necessarily dependent upon the accuracy of) their literal meaning. We are told elsewhere that the human soul is the light of the Eternal, and we thus understand the six outer branches of the Menorah as symbolic of the individual human soul. The center light is symbolic of G*d, and we therefore understand the Menorah as teaching us that, while we diverge from each other (either psychologically, as in the process of individuation, or spiritually, in the many faith traditions which G*d has graciously granted to humanity), we must ultimately acknowledge, as we turn toward G*d at our center, that we are all one.

Seven paths diverge into one.

Shabbat Shalom.

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