



## Sicha Summary

Chelek 18 | Behaalosecha | Sichah 1

### The Context:

*Beha'alotcha* opens with Aaron being commanded to light the *menorah* on the first of Nissan, the day the *Mishkan* was consecrated. The previous *parsha*, *Naso*, details the tribal leaders' twelve-day dedication of the *Mishkan* — each leader offered a sacrifice on a different day. This process began on the first of Nissan and extended to the twelfth. Why, then, does the Torah place Aaron's lighting **after** the narration of the leaders' offerings?

Rashi explains that this placement alludes to a concern that Aaron had in witnessing the tribal leaders' dedication. The *menorah* is G-d's response to this concern:

### The Rashi:

*When you light* — Why is the portion dealing with the *menorah* juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the tribal leaders? For when Aaron saw the dedication offerings of the leaders, he felt distressed that neither he nor his tribe were to join them in this dedication. So God said to him, "By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you light and prepare the lamps." (*Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 3*)

### The Questions:

- 1) G-d told Aaron that lighting the *menorah* was greater than the leaders' offering, but He did not explain why it is greater. How did this solve Aaron's concern? Perhaps it was obvious to Aaron why it was greater. But if Aaron was aware of this, why was he concerned in the first place?

- 2) *Ramban* asks why Aaron was not consoled by the many services he performed in inaugurating the *Mishkan*, such as the twice-daily incense and the offering of the daily sacrifices.
- 3) Why does G-d mention *preparing* the lamps? The verse here only discusses *lighting* the *menorah*.

### **The Menorah's Superiority:**

The superiority of performing the *menorah* service in contrast to the dedication of the altar is threefold, and it is hinted to in G-d's response, "for you light and prepare the lamps:"

*For you* — the leaders did not offer the sacrifices themselves; they merely brought an animal to the *Mishkan* where the *kohen* on duty offered it. Aaron, however, lit the *menorah* himself.

*Light and prepare* — while the leaders only prepared their offering, Aaron did the entire service, from preparation to lighting.

*The Lamps* — the *menorah* was located in the inner sanctum of the *Mishkan*. The leaders, on the other hand, consecrated the altar that stood in the courtyard, a place that had a lesser degree of sanctity.

### **The Explanation of Aaron's Concern:**

Despite this superiority, however, Aaron was concerned. According to the plain reading of the dedication narrative, it was Moses who performed all the services in the *Mishkan* on the day of its dedication. (*Shemos* 40:4ff.) Aaron did not begin his service until the following day. Aaron was thus under the impression that he did not have any part in dedicating the *Mishkan*, unlike the leaders who dedicated the altar by means of their twelve day program of sacrifices.

To assuage this worry, G-d forcefully told Aaron, "**By your life**, yours is greater than theirs." Through this oath, G-d established a reality in which Aaron's lighting the *menorah* after Moses did so first, still served to

consecrate the *menorah*. This is similar to the dedication of the altar which took place over a period of twelve days.

### **Further Clarification:**

A closer reading of the narrative according to Rashi yields a more complete picture of Aaron's role in the dedication. Regarding the twice-daily incense offering, it was Moses who performed both services on the first day. (*Shemos* 40:27) Regarding the *menorah*, however, Moses lit it in the morning, but Aaron lit it in the afternoon.

This is significant because according to Rashi, the *menorah* was lit only once daily, in the afternoon. In the morning, the *menorah* was merely cleaned and prepared. (*Rashi, Shemos* 27:20-21) It follows that Moses' lighting was not a typical *menorah* service; it was an exception to the rule. When Aaron lit the *menorah* that afternoon, he performed the actual, mandated service. Therefore, his consecration began on the **day of the dedication itself**, just like the leaders' dedication of the altar.

This would not apply to the incense, for Aaron only began that service on the second of Nissan.

### **The Wine of Rashi's Commentary:**

The *menorah's* superiority over the altar also applies to their relative spiritual effects.

The word for "dedication — *chinuch*" of the *Mishkan* also means "education." In educating a child, we lavish him with attention and reward him, in order to encourage him to apply himself to his studies and his character development well into adult life.

In personal divine service, the "education" of the altar represented the leaders drawing down an abundance of divine enlightenment to those among the Jewish people who were prepared to assimilate it properly. But this was a one-time event, a limited revelation available to spiritually sensitive individuals.

Aaron was concerned that his spiritual “education” of souls — represented by him lighting of the *menorah* — would also be limited to only those souls capable of receiving the *menorah*’s “light.”

To assuage this concern, G-d told Aaron, “By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you light and prepare the lamps.” *Light and prepare* is in the present tense, alluding to the fact that Aaron’s influence is ongoing and permanent. Unlike the leaders’ education, which could only be directed to receptive souls, Aaron’s education uplifted every Jew, even if, on the surface, they do not appear ready for Divine inspiration.

**The Lesson:**

When encountering a Jew who seems uninspired to engage in divine service, do not despair. Dedicate your life to lighting his or her soul, and soon the candle of their soul will shine bright with the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.