



# Likkutei Sichos — Adaptation

Volume 18 | Behaaloscha | Sichah 1

## Light Their Lamps

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Adapted by Rabbi Eli Block

A note to our readers: For technical reasons, we are unable to publish a translation of this *sichah*. In its place, we offer this adaptation, which summarizes each section.

A note on the adaptation: This adaptation carries no official authority. As in all translations, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists. **Your feedback is needed — please send all comments to: [info@projectlikkuteisichos.org](mailto:info@projectlikkuteisichos.org)**

## 1.

### The Context

*Behaaloscha* opens with Aharon being commanded to light the *menorah* on the first of Nissan, the day the *Mishkan* was consecrated. The previous *parshah*, *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 until the twelfth. Why, then, does the Torah place Aharon's lighting **after** its narrative of the leaders' offerings?

Rashi explains that this placement alludes to Aharon's distress after Aharon witnessed the tribal leaders' dedication. The commandment to light the *menorah* was Hashem's response to this concern:

### The Rashi

*When you light* — Why is the passage dealing with the *menorah* juxtaposed to the passage dealing with the tribal leaders? For when Aharon saw the dedication offerings of the leaders, he felt distressed that neither he nor his tribe were to join them in the dedication of the *Mishkan*. So Hashem said to him, “By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you light and prepare the lamps.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2.

### The Questions

- a) Hashem told Aharon that lighting the *menorah* was greater than the leaders' offerings, but He did not explain why it is greater. How did this alleviate Aharon's distress?

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<sup>1</sup> See *Tanchuma*, “*Behaaloscha*,” sec. 3, 5.

- b) Perhaps the reason that the lighting was greater was obvious to Aharon. But if Aharon was aware of this, why was he distressed in the first place?
- c) Ramban asks a two-pronged question: Why was Aharon not consoled by the many services he performed in inaugurating the *Mishkan*, such as: (a) the twice-daily incense; and (b) offering all of the sacrifices brought on the seven days of inauguration?
- d) Additionally, presumably Aharon himself offered the leaders' sacrifices. Why did he feel inferior?

### 3.

#### Further Questions

- a) Why did Hashem need to make an oath, “By your life?”
- b) Why did Hashem mention *preparing* the lamps? The verse here only discusses *lighting* the *menorah*!
- c) Why did Hashem use the present tense, “you light and prepare the lamps”? He was speaking to Aharon after the leaders' sacrifices on the twelfth of Nissan, referring to Aharon lighting the lamps earlier, on the first of Nissan!

### 4.

#### The Consolation

Hashem assuages Aharon's concern that he did not “join them in this dedication” of the *Mishkan's* vessels. Not only did Aharon dedicate a vessel in the *Mishkan*, the *menorah*, but this dedication was superior to the leaders' dedication of the altar.

The superiority of performing the *menorah* service over the dedication of the altar was threefold, and it is hinted at by Hashem's response, "for you light and prepare the lamps."

## 5.

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

*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. Aharon, however, lit the *menorah* himself.

*Light and prepare* — the leaders only prepared their offerings, whereas Aharon did the entire service, from preparation of the *menorah* to its lighting.

*The Lamps* — the *menorah* was located in the inner sanctum of the *Mishkan*. In contrast, the leaders consecrated the altar that stood in the courtyard, a place with a lesser degree of sanctity.

## 6.

### **The Explanation of Aharon's Concern**

Despite this superiority, however, Aharon was distressed. According to a plain reading of the dedication narrative, it was Moshe who performed all the services in the *Mishkan* on the day of its dedication.<sup>2</sup> Aharon did not begin his service until the following day. Aharon 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.

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<sup>2</sup> *Shemos* 40:4 ff.

To assuage this worry, Hashem emphatically told Aharon, “**By your life**, your {role} is greater than theirs for you light and prepare the lamps.” Through this oath, Hashem established a reality by which Aharon lighting the *menorah* after Moshe did, still served to consecrate the *menorah*. This is similar to the dedication of the altar which took place over a period of twelve days. Even though Nachshon ben Aminadav brought the first sacrifice, the dedication still spanned twelve days. So, too, Aharon’s lighting of the *menorah* during those twelve days also affected its dedication.

## 7.

### Further Clarification

Questions remain, however.

- a) To assuage Aharon, why did Hashem choose the *menorah* as the vessel for him to consecrate? Why didn’t He apply the same innovation to the inner altar where the incense was offered — that even though Moshe offered the incense on the eighth day, Aharon would still be considered to have consecrated it with his subsequent offering?
- b) How is it possible to say that “yours is greater than theirs” when Aharon’s dedication occurred on the day after the *Mishkan*’s inauguration, while the dedication of the altar began on the day of the *Mishkan*’s inauguration itself, by Nachshon offering the first sacrifice?

The explanation:

According to Rashi, Moshe performed the morning and afternoon incense offerings on the first day — just as it was performed every day

throughout the year.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the *menorah*, however, it was lit by Moshe in the morning, but by Aharon in the afternoon.

This is significant because, according to Rashi, the *menorah* was to be lit only once daily—in the afternoon. In the morning, the *menorah* was merely cleaned and prepared.<sup>4</sup> It follows that Moshe's lighting was not a typical *menorah* service; it was an exception to the rule. When Aharon lit the *menorah* that afternoon, he performed the actual, mandated service. Therefore, his consecration began on the **day of the dedication itself**, just as the leaders' dedication of the altar.

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

## 8.

### Halachic Implications

According to Rambam, the *menorah* was lit twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. Therefore, Moshe's lighting in the morning would be considered the beginning of the *menorah's* consecration, because it was the beginning of the intended use of the *menorah*. According to Rashi, as mentioned, the *mitzvah* was only to light it in the evening; thus, it was Aharon who indeed consecrated the *menorah*.

## 9.

### Further Probing

How does Rashi arrive at the conclusion that it was Aharon who lit the *menorah* in the afternoon? There is no hint of this according to the

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<sup>3</sup> *Shemos* 40:27.

<sup>4</sup> Rashi's commentary on *Shemos* 27:20-21.

plain meaning of Scripture. Perhaps Moshe lit it in the morning and it burned into the night?

Rashi maintains, however, that the same measure of oil was always placed in the *menorah* – enough to last throughout the longest night of the winter.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, if Moshe would have placed this amount of oil in the *menorah* in the morning, it would have been consumed by early evening. Aharon, therefore, would have had to light it again that evening so that it could burn the requisite length of time in the evening.

## 10.

### A Simple Question

The Talmud says that “lighting the *menorah* is not considered a Temple service,”<sup>6</sup> and Rambam therefore rules that a *non-kohen* can light the *menorah*.<sup>7</sup> Why, then, does the Torah refer to the command for Aharon to light the *menorah* as, “*when you light the lamps?*”<sup>8</sup>

Several answers have been offered:

- a) The inaugural lighting had to be done by a *kohen*. This consecrated the *menorah*; after being consecrated, anyone could technically have lit it.
- b) A *non-kohen* could have lit all of the candles, aside from the “western lamp.” If this lamp was extinguished, it could only have been relit from a flame taken from the outer altar. Only a *kohen* could approach the altar; therefore, only a *kohen* could have lit the western lamp.

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<sup>5</sup> *Shemos* 27:21.

<sup>6</sup> *Yoma* 24b.

<sup>7</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis HaMikdash*, ch. 9, par. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Tosfos Yeshanim*, on *Yoma* 24b.

According to Rashi, however, to begin with, there is no question: Aharon lighting the *menorah* on the first day of Nissan, and on all subsequent days of the twelve day inaugural period, was part of the process to dedicate the *menorah*. This is why the *mitzvah* was given to “you,” to Aharon, specifically.

## 11. and 12.

### The Wine of Torah in Rashi’s Commentary

The *menorah*’s superiority over the altar also related to their relative spiritual effects.

The Hebrew word for dedication of the *Mishkan* — “*chinuch*” — 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 to character development, well into adult life.

In a person’s personal divine service, the “education” of the altar represents the leaders drawing down an abundance of Divine *light* 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 those able to reach a new and elevated state in the service of Hashem.

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

To assuage this concern, Hashem told Aharon, “By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you light and prepare the lamps.” *Light and prepare* is written in the present tense, alluding to the fact that Aharon’s influence was to be ongoing and permanent. Unlike the leaders’ education, which could only be directed to receptive souls, Aharon’s education uplifted every



Jew, even if, on the surface, they did not appear ready for Divine inspiration.

The source of this spiritual endurance was Hashem's oath, "by your life." An oath is a forceful statement, a guarantee, which alludes to a lofty revelation of G-dliness that empowered Aharon to bestow his *light* upon all Jews for all time.

### 13.

#### **The Lesson**

When encountering a Jew who seems uninspired, unwilling to engage in divine service, do not despair. When you engage with him with *mesiras nefesh* in your efforts to light his soul, soon the candle of their soul will shine bright with the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.

-Adapted from a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Behaaloscha*, 5725 (1965)