

# להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה

## I. Introduction

In the beginning *pesukim* of *Parshas Beha'aloscha*, Aharon *hakohen* is commanded to light the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan*. After listing the command, the *pasuk* describes the obvious: Aharon did exactly what he was told (*Bamidbar* 8:3)

במדבר ח:ג

ויעש בן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה נרותיה כאשר צוה ה' את משה

On the spot, *Rashi* comments, telling us that the extraneous *pasuk* meant to praise Aharon, for his unwavering commitment to the word of *Hashem*.

רש"י שם:

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The very obvious question emerging from *Rashi* is: What is so unique about Aharon not wavering from the word of *Hashem* and Moshe? Was he not a *Tzaddik* who never wavered in the first place? Why does *Rashi* feel a need to tell us that he didn't change? Why did the *pasuk* feel a need to tell us that Aharon followed through?

## II. The Hafla'ah's Explanation

The *Ba'al Hafla'ah* (in *Panim Yafos*) writes that as a result of the death of Nadav and Avihu – the sons of Aharon – inside the *Mishkan*, all that was in the *Ohel Moed* became ritually impure. Although technically the *Halacha* states that one may light candles inside an impure *Menorah*, Aharon went the extra mile to ensure that he would not accidentally come into contact with the *Menorah* and become impure. This was the praise of Aharon that *Rashi* mentioned. His diligence in the performance of a *Mitzvah* ensured it would be commanded, even with the risk of becoming impure. His precision in the performance of the *Mitzvah* ensured that such a mishap would not occur.

After understanding the fascinating answer of the *Hafla'ah*, we must address the following: What is the nature of the impurity that reached the *Menorah* after the death of Nadav and Avihu?

## III. בחלל חרב – Rejecting the Hafla'ah

In the *Amvuha D'Sifrei*, we are told about the following *din* that relates to our question. One law of impurity is that one who touches a corpse is considered impure. *Chazal* teach us that not only is one who touches a corpse impure, but since the *pasuk* that teaches us this law uses the wording "בחלל חרב", one who comes into contact with an impure metal object (made impure by contact with a corpse), has the same level of impurity as if he had touched a corpse. However, the *Amvuha D'Sifrei* quotes the *Zayis Ra'anani*,

teaching us that since the commandment of *Tuma'as Ohel* was not taught until after the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, the metal vessels of the *Mishkan* could not have been made impure! Therefore, the answer of the *Ba'al Hafla'ah* is rejected! There was no impurity in the *Mishkan*, and Aharon did not need to be so diligent in ensuring that he did not become impure in the process of lighting the candles.

#### IV. A Second Question on the Approach of the Hafla'ah

Clearly, in the *Ba'al Hafla'ah's* original interpretation, there would be a serious problem of ritual impurity in the *Mishkan*. He must have believed that unlike the *Amvuha D'Sifrei*, there would be an issue of "בחלל" – an impurity in a metal vessel like that of a corpse. We are taught from *Acharonim* that when it came to the initial lighting of the *Menorah*, to inaugurate the vessel, there could not be any ritual impurity at all. If that is the case, how could Aharon light the *Menorah* in the first place?

#### V. Understanding the Hafla'ah

In the sefer *Chavtzeles Hasharon* (*Behaaloscha* 278), it is explained that there are really two distinct *dinim* in the commandment of lighting the *Menorah*. Firstly, there is a *din* to have a lit *Menorah*. Secondly, there is a *din* of the *klei haMikdash*. Included in this *din* is the commandment of having a physical *Menorah* in the sanctuary of the *Beis Hamikdash*; additionally, one should light candles on top of this vessel. If we understand these two *dinim* separately, we can come to an understanding and reconciliation in the following manner: Although one cannot light the *Menorah* as a vessel in the *Mishkan* because of the impurity that exuded from it, one would still be able to fulfill the *din* related to having lit candles in the *Mishkan*. Therefore, although there was impurity in the *Menorah*, and one aspect of the *Mitzvah* would not be able to be fulfilled, Aharon was still able to light the *Menorah* to fulfill the commandment of having lit candles in the *Mishkan*. It was with this lighting that he was careful not to contract any ritual impurity.

#### VI. A Message

*Rashi* praises Aharon for being consistent with the way he was taught to light the *Menorah*. The *Ba'al Hafla'ah* added that this consistency came in the face of the adversity of ritual impurity. Although it did not seem like an optimal time to light the *Menorah*, Aharon at the very least found a way to fulfill one portion of the *Mitzvah*. As was noted from the *Ba'al Hafla'ah*, Aharon also lit the *Menorah* following the death of his two sons in the *Mishkan*. Perhaps the praise of Aharon is not only related to the wisdom of finding a way to be *mikayem* the *Mitzvah* of *hadlakas neiros*, but it also relates to the emotional fortitude of a bereaved father. Aharon is praiseworthy because even though he was thrown one of life's most difficult and unthinkable challenges, he continued in his service of G-D the exact same way. In the *hakdamah* to *Ein Yaakov*, a *Midrash* is quoted, detailing a *machlokes* amongst the *tana'im* about which *pasuk* encapsulates the entire corpus of Torah. *R' Shimon ben Pazi* stated "תעשה בין הערבים את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני". This *pasuk* was chosen because the eternal message of the *korban tamid* is that of consistency in our Judaism. When faced by *Halachic*, emotional, or spiritual challenge, one can choose to back down, or to stay constant.

Perhaps this is hinted to in *Rashi* at the beginning of *Behaaloscha* as well. Aharon was commanded to kindle the flames of the *Menorah* until "flame would stand by itself". The message of consistency is to kindle the passions (and even some of the non-passions) of our lives until they are able to stand tall and proud, with the inherent ability and agility to weather the storms of life. The entire corpus of the Torah stands on this message, because Hashem inevitably throws us challenges in life, and it is up to us to remain consistent and unwavering in the face of those challenges.