

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Beha'aloscho

18 Sivan, 5781 – May 29, 2021

Compiled from the works of
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by
Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn
North Miami Beach, FL

A Project of
Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos
Copyright 2021©

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Beha'aloscho
Likkutei Sichos Volume 18, Pages 92 – 103

Rashi in His Own Words

במדבר ה', ב': דבר אל אהרן ואמרף אליו בהעלתך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה ואירו שבעת הנרות:

רש"י ד"ה בהעלתך: למה נסמכה פרשת המנורה לפרשת הנשיאים, לפי שכשראה אהרן חנוכת הנשיאים חלשה דעתו, שלא היה עמהם בחנוכה, לא הוא ולא שבטו, אמר לו הקב"ה חייך, שלך גדולה משלהם, שאתה מדליק ומטיב את הנרות:

Bamidbar 8:2: Speak to Aharon and say to him, "When you light the candles (of the Menorah), the seven candles shall cast their light toward the face of the Menorah."

Rashi Heading: When you light: Why is the portion dealing with the Menorah juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the princes of each tribe? Because when Aharon saw the dedications of the princes, he felt distressed over not joining them in this dedication; neither he nor his tribe. So, Hashem said to him, "By your life¹, yours is greater than theirs. You will light and prepare the lamps."

Synopsis

This week we read the Torah portion of Beha'aloscho. The Parshah begins with Moshe's command to tell his brother Aharon to prepare and light the candles in the Menorah. Rashi cites the words "when you light" and explains the positioning of this Parshah. It immediately follows the story of the offerings brought by the twelve princes of the tribes to dedicate the Tabernacle altar. Rashi writes that Aharon was upset over not taking part in this dedication. Hashem "swore" to him that his lot is greater than theirs; he will light and prepare the lamps.

It is widespread for the Midrash to explain the reason for the juxtaposition of sections of the Torah. Rashi, on the other hand, does this very rarely. The reason is that whether a particular teaching of the Torah precedes or follows another does not concern Peshat. When Rashi explains the significance of the verses' positioning, he explains some difficulty according to Peshat. What might be difficult to understand here without Rashi's help?

Aharon's command to light and prepare the Menorah's candles was to begin on the day that the Mishkan was put to use, the first day of Nissan. It seems that Hashem gave the command to do so before that day. He could indeed not issue the commandment later than that day. That very same day was when

1. This is an expression designating an oath; i.e. G-d said that "I swear to you ..."

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

the princes began bringing their dedications. In other words, the Torah waited twelve days to tell us of Aharon's command. Rashi explains that the reason for the delay was to console Aharon.

We need to understand several things. Why did Aharon find Hashem's words that "yours are greater than theirs" a consolation? Hashem never explained why they were more remarkable. Perhaps it was something obvious which Aharon could understand on his own. If that was the case, why was Aharon upset? Furthermore, Hashem commanded Aharon to perform many other services in the Tabernacle daily. That being the case, we need to understand what caused his distress.

The explanation is that he wasn't upset because the princes performed a job he did not take part in. Instead, his distress came from the fact that the prince's offerings served to dedicate the altar in the Mishkan. He had no role in the dedication of the altar. Therefore, Hashem told him that his preparing and lighting the candles served to dedicate the Menorah. This inauguration *was indeed* more excellent than theirs. The Menorah was inside the Tabernacle building itself, while the altar was outside in the courtyard. Additionally, the offerings they brought were a one-time occurrence. Lighting the Menorah was performed every day.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Parshah, Beha'aloscho, begins by telling us that Hashem told Moshe to² "Speak to Aharon and say to him, 'When you light the candles, the seven candles shall cast their light toward the face of the Menorah.'" Rashi cites the words from the verse "when you light" and explains as follows. "Why is the portion of the Torah which deals with lighting the Menorah juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the princes of each tribe? Because when Aharon saw the dedications of the princes, he felt distressed over not joining them in this dedication; neither he nor his tribe. So, Hashem said to him, 'By your life¹, yours is greater than theirs. You will light and prepare the lamps.'"

Rashi is explaining the connection between the end of the last Torah portion, Naso, and the beginning of ours. Last week's Parshah concluded with the prince of each tribe bringing an offering to dedicate the altar of the new Tabernacle. Moshe Rabbeinu constructed the Tabernacle and dismantled it each day for seven days. On the eighth day, Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the Mishkan was erected and left standing. That is when they began using it on a regular, daily basis. For twelve consecutive days, the leader of each tribe brought offerings with which to dedicate the new altar. Aharon was upset because

2. Our Parshah, Bamidbar 8:2.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

neither he nor his tribe participated in this dedication. Therefore, Hashem consoled him here. Hashem swore to him that his preparing and lighting the Menorah at the beginning of our Parshah was more significant than whatever offerings the princes brought. Hence the connection between the two Torah portions.

We have often discussed that the Midrash often explains the reason for the juxtaposition of one section of Torah to another. Rashi, on the other hand, rarely does. The reason is apparent. In the vast majority of cases, the positioning of one Torah section before or after another makes no difference according to Peshat. It generally does not pose any difficulty in our understanding of what the Torah is saying. There are several instances where the juxtaposition of different areas of Torah *does* create a question in Peshat. Those are the cases that Rashi explains. This is one such instance.

Aharon's command to light the Menorah began on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The order to do so, which comes at the beginning of our Parshah, must have come beforehand. The latest it could have come was *on* Rosh Chodesh. The prince's dedications *began* on Rosh Chodesh and continued for twelve days. According to Peshat, the question is why the Torah waits to tell us of the command to light the Menorah. It does not mention it until after telling us of the sacrifices offered by each of the princes. Why did the Torah wait until twelve days had elapsed to tell us of Aharon's command to light the Menorah? Rashi explains this by telling us of Aharon's distress. His role in preparing and lighting the Menorah consoled him.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

Rashi writes that "yours (Aharon's) is greater than theirs (the princes)". Yet, we do not find that Hashem ever explained why Aharon's was more significant. Perhaps it was due to an apparent reason which Aharon could understand on his own. If that is the case, why was he distressed?

The Ramban asks several questions³ which present difficulties in Rashi's comments. Why did only the service of lighting the Menorah console Aharon? Hashem commanded only he and his descendants to perform many other tasks in the Tabernacle – Temple. He was the one to offer the "Ketores – Incense" every day. Only Kohanim could offer all of the sacrifices in the Tabernacle. There was a unique meal offering (called the Minchas Chavitin) which he alone⁴ brought, half in the morning and a half in the evening. More significant than all of the above is the fact that he alone could fulfill the entire service of Yom Kippur, including entering the Holy of Holies. No one else at any time was permitted there.

3. See the Ramban's comments to our Parshah, Bamidbar 8:2.

4. In following generations, it could only be brought by the High Priest, i.e. Aharon's successor.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Aside from Ramban's questions, there are other difficulties in understanding Rashi's comments⁵. Rashi says that Aharon was disturbed. Neither he nor his tribe was included in the offerings to dedicate the Mizbe'ach. However, only he and his fellow Kohanim were able to offer all dedications upon the altar. This means that they *were* included in an exceptional manner!

The Explanation

Aharon was not disturbed because the princes of each tribe took part in a particular service in which he could not participate. He found it distressing that he could not participate in the dedication, the inauguration of the Tabernacle. Therefore, Hashem told him that he is also participating in the inauguration of the Mishkan. Not only that but "*yours* is (even) greater than *theirs*. You will light and prepare the lamps." *They* dedicated the altar. However, *you* dedicated the Menorah.

In Rashi's words, Aharon "felt distressed over not joining them in this *dedication*." That was what bothered him. Hashem comforted him by saying that "you will light and prepare the lamps." With this phrase, Hashem explained to him why "his role is greater than theirs."

1. *You*: The leaders of each tribe did indeed bring the offerings for the dedication of the altar. However, only *you*, a Kohen was able to offer these gifts to G-d as sacrifices.
2. *Will light and prepare*: Aharon performed all of the steps needed in order to dedicate the Menorah. Not only did he prepare the lamps, but he also lit them. This is in contrast to the princes who could only perform the first stage of their dedication. All they could do was bring the offerings. They required the service of a Kohen to complete the service by actually offering it on the altar. Aharon could dedicate the Menorah from beginning to end; he could light and prepare the Menorah's lights.
3. *The lamps*: Aharon inaugurated the Menorah. This was inside of the Mishkan – Temple building. Additionally, this was a task which he (or one of his descendants) performed every day. As long as there is either a Tabernacle or a Bais Hamikdosh, they would always attend to the Menorah. On the other hand, the princes dedicated the altar, which was in the outside courtyard. Additionally, their dedication only took place once. The leader of each of the twelve tribes had only one chance to bring his gifts.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

The works of Chassidic philosophy explain that the spiritual candles of the Menorah are Jewish

5. This question is posed by the holy Ohr Hachaim.

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

souls⁶. This is keeping with the words of Scripture⁷ that "man's soul is the Lord's lamp." The unification of all Jewish souls is called the Menorah. The seven lamps of the Menorah are parallel to the seven levels of G-dly service. Aharon's job is to light the spiritual Menorah. He draws down Divine vitality into every soul. In this manner, he lifts each one. He brings each Jew to love G-d.

That is the deeper reason that when Aharon saw that "when Aharon saw the dedications of the princes, he felt distressed." This knowledge caused his distress that this would be a one-time occurrence. He thought that the same might be true of the Menorah. That would mean that he could not be there for those Jews who require extra inspiration. He found the thought that the dedication of the "Menorah – Souls" would only take place once very upsetting. If that were the case, it would only help those who left Egypt and received the Torah. They were already on a higher spiritual level.

Therefore, Hashem told him that "by your life, yours is greater than theirs. You will light and prepare the lamps." Hashem was telling him that he could spiritually be a positive influence on all Jews throughout all generations "by his life." By the source of all life, the essence of G-d, which transcends time and space, would not limit him to one time or even one generation. He will continue lighting the souls of each of us throughout all time.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Beha'aloscho 5725)

I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

To dedicate a week, a month, or a year of the Rashi of the Week, [click here](#).

You can find us on the web at www.RebbeTeachesRashi.org.

You can find our blog [here](#).

6. See Likkutei Torah at the beginning of our Torah portion.

7. Mishlei 20:27.

**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

* * *

IN HONOR OF
The Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim** and **Aiden Oded** שיקני **Morris**

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M.** and **Chaya Mushka** שיקני **Morris**

* * *

IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther** שתקלי **Sharabani**

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON
Mr. **Geri** שי **Bentov**

מוקדש לזכות
כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

*** * ***

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

לזכות

מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני

נדפס ע"י בנה

ר' גרשון שי' בן טוב