Behaloscha 2013

1.

What is really everlasting?

Nachlas Tzvi page 346

"Speak to Aaron and say to him: When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light." (8, 2)

"בהעלתך את הנרת אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות."

Rashi quotes the Medrash Tanchuma that asks why is this parsha which discusses the Menorah next to the parsha which discusses the Leaders (Naseim) of the tribes. When Aaron saw the inauguration of the princes aka their contributions and offerings, he became weak because neither he nor his tribe was with them. To help Aaron overcome his disappointment, Hashem told him that he and his tribe are greater than the others because the others can bring korbanos (sacrifices) in the Beis Hamikdash (temple), whereas the preparing of the lighting of the candles is forever. The question on this Medrash is the following; the lighting of the Menorah was discontinued when the Temple was destroyed? The Ramban answers that this Medrash is referring to lighting the Chanukah candles, which replace the lighting of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash. The Nachlas Tzvi offers another answer; the Menorah alludes to the Torah as stated in the pasuk in Mishlay (6, 23) "נר מצוה ותורה אור." "For a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light." The Gemara in Shabbos (116) says that the Torah consists of seven books rather that five (Bamidbar has three) which corresponds to the seven candles of the Menorah. Therefore, Hashem told Aaron that your tribe is greater because Torah is being learnt every day and is everlasting, whereas Korbanos are only applicable when the Beis Hamikdash exists.

2.

Direct involvement

"Aaron did so; toward the face of the Menorah he kindled its lamps, as Hashem had commanded Moshe." (8, 3)

"ויעש כן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה נרתיה כאשר צוה ה' את משה."

Rashi quotes the Sifrei who comments that this pasuk is coming to praise Aaron that he did not deviate. (להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שינה)

The question arises; why did Aaron light the candle after the fact that this lighting can be performed by a zar (non Kohen)? Furthermore, why would we think that Aaron wouldn't have completed the task that he was commanded by Hashem to perform? **The Maharik explains that Aaron carried out this task personally, and did not assign the task to one of the other kohanim. Even though this task included some menial aspects such as preparing the wicks which involved soot and soil, nevertheless Aaron individually performed this task.** (Even though one can perform a mitzvah via a shaleyach (messenger) (שלוחו של אדם כמותו), nevertheless the Gemara (Kiddushin (41)) says it is better to perform mitzvos directly. (מצוה בו יותר מבשלוחו))

The Chasam Sofer (Derashos Chasam Sofer page 787) offers an additional answer. Aaron lit the candles even the day following the death of his children Nadav and Evihu. Even though there was no obligation for Aaron to light the candles that day and he could have easily given that task to someone else, nevertheless Aaron still performed the task himself. Aaron demonstrated that he accepted the decree of Hashem for the death of his children. With this we can understand the Mishna (first perek) in Avos that says don't be like servants who are serving their master to receive reward, rather serve without the intent of receiving reward (אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס אלא הוו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל). Additionally and similarly, the Gemara in Kiddushin (39b) states that reward for Torah learning or the performance of mitzvos is not given in this world (שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא). The question arises; why does the Torah in many places discuss reward that will be granted for the performance of mitzvos? Furthermore, the Gemara in Berachos (28a) relates that when Rebbi Zara was sick (and therefore unable to learn) he would sit in front of the Yeshiva and stand up when the talmiday chachamim (Torah scholars) would walk by. He said 'I will receive reward.' How is this so? Furthermore, the Gemara in Pesachim (8) relates that if someone says I will give this money to tzedaka (charity) in order that my son will live or in order that I will have a portion in the world to come, he is a tzadik gamor (completely righteous person)(האומר סלע זו לצדקה בשביל שיחיה בני או שאהיה בן העולם הבא הרי זה צדיק גמור). Tosfos points out and asks; doesn't this Gemara seemingly directly contradict the (aforementioned) Mishna in Avos? The Ramban explains that **when one goes above and beyond the letter of the law then reward will be granted.** Rebbi Zara didn't have to sit by the Yeshiva in order to perform the mitzvah of standing up for talmiday chachamim, he was sick and exempt. He went out of his way and above the letter of the law; therefore reward was granted to him. Also regarding tzedaka, when one gives more than the obligatory minimum (10%), then reward will be granted even in this world. So too Aaron didn't have to perform this mitzvah, but nevertheless righteously did so. **This pious and dedicated act deserves the spot-light and our sincere recognition. So too, regarding us, many times that which we are normally expected to do doesn't get recognized. Dissimilarly, something that we unexpectedly do will typically get acknowledged more. For example, a husband who brings home flowers in the middle of the week** (in addition to bringing home flowers erev (before/eve of) Shabbos) even if the midweek flowers are half the size and price of the flowers that were brought erev Shabbos, nevertheless they **will typically be appreciated more than the Shabbos flowers since the midweek flowers are unexpected.**