

# Aaron's Obedience & Simplicity

Parashat Behaalotecha

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Aaron kindled the Menorah's lamps just as he had been commanded: "Aaron did so; he lit the lamps toward the face of the menorah, as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Numbers 8:3). Following a midrash in Sifrei, Rashi notes, "This shows Aaron's virtue that he did not deviate [from God's command]." Rashi's comment requires further elucidation, after all, what is so extraordinary about Aaron's obedience in this instance?

The Dubner Magid (R. Jacob ben Wolf Kranz of Dubno, 1741–1804) offers a wonderful parable:

A story is told of three men who became gravely ill and went to visit an expert doctor. The doctor prescribed each various medicines, restrictions, and instructions.

The first man followed the doctor's note to a tee and after a while recovered from his illness.

The second man, who was a doctor himself, but not an expert in that particular field, researched the sickness thoroughly. He evaluated and assessed each of the doctor's recommendations and prescriptions, which led him to follow some and not others, as he reasoned that some of these had no connection whatsoever to his medical condition. After a while, his condition worsened and he died from his illness.

The third man was also a doctor, though similarly, he was not an expert himself. He too conducted further research and inquired after the benefit of each of the doctor's recommendations, yet even as he did so, he decided to ignore his own investigation and followed the doctor's instructions to a tee. He reasoned that the doctor was an expert, with greater knowledge than him. After a while, he recovered from his illness like the first man.

Our relationship to Torah and Mitzvot can be divided into three categories:

There are those who accept the yoke of Torah without question and without the need for deep study.

There are those who seek the meaning for each and every law and custom. This group of people might ultimately disregard or disobey a particular mitzvah when the reason for its performance is not clear or deemed justified to them.

Finally, there are those, like Aaron himself, who both seek the meaning of mitzvot and perform them obediently, to a tee, even when a particular mitzvah or custom is not completely clear or explainable to them.

The Israeli journalist and Torah commentator, Sivan Rahav Meir adds another insight from Rebbe Nachamn of Breslov. She writes, "Rabbi Nachman of Breslov wrote a sentence that I find absolutely amazing: 'The time will come when being an upright and simple person will be as revolutionary as being the Baal Shem Tov.'"

She concludes with this question: "Have we already come to the point when everything is so confusing and challenging that the person who is not constantly reinventing things and thinking out of the box is in fact the biggest novelty of them all?"