

# THE NEW NOW!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*HASHEM said to Moshe saying, "Speak to Aaron and say to him: When you "light-up" the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light." Aaron did so- (Bamidbar 8:1-2)*

Aaron did so: To teach you the praise of Aaron that he did not change. (Rashi)

What's so great that Aaron lit the lights? Anybody could do that! Why would he do differently than what he understood with perfect clarity G-d had told him to do? So what's the great praise for?

The Sefas Emes offers an answer that not only did Aaron not deviate in the behavior of lighting the first time but for all forty years in the desert he maintained the same high degree of intensity and excitement as if it was the first time. Even though people are naturally dulled by repetitive actions and driven to search for something fresh the "first time" is the choicest of them in terms of pure passion!

The Sefas Emes quotes a well-known Rashi on a familiar verse in the 2nd Paragraph of Shema, "And it will come to pass if you continually hearken (accept and review) My commandments that I command you today..." (Devarim 11:13) Rashi explains the double expression of listening, "If you will listen to the old you will understand the new!" On the latter word "today" he says that words of Torah, the commandments should be new and fresh to you as if you heard it spoken to you today!

It sounds a little counter intuitive that if you listen to the old you will understand the new. If one wants a flavor of new it seems backwards to pursue the old. Rather turn the page and go onto something new!

Maybe we can understand the dynamics at play with the following Chinese proverb that caught my attention in a book of notes from poets. The saying goes like this: "Read 100 poems, write like one hundred poets! Read 1000 poems, write like your-self!"

It seems that in order to access the new, one needs to master the old. That makes sense! How can one venture into the creative world without first having gained proficiency that which is already known. Perhaps that's why musicians and comedians appreciate that improve is the highest form of art. Speaking impromptu is not to be unprepared. It is rather to be prepared for anything!

What had Aaron mastered? Perhaps we can posit that grasped the fine art of experiencing the new in the old! After all, King Solomon the wisest of all men had already informed us in Koheles that "there is nothing new under the sun". There is nothing new! Why then are we obsessed with news?

Everything being reported is a recycling of the same old jealousy, appetite, and glory seeking take a man out of the world. Where then does this insanely overpowering drive derive from?

We say twice daily in our morning prayers, "Ha Mechadesh b'kol yom tamid Ma'aseh Breishis- He renews all day constantly the act of creation!" HASHEM is looking into the Torah and creating the world now and now again! The world only seems void of the flavor of "newness" "under the sun". That's where boredom and frustration is found!

However, from beyond the sun the world is constantly being reinvigorated and affirmed with the freshest of "newness". The Nefesh HaChaim points out that most every Brocho-Blessing is cast in the present tense! It's the current creation and the constant recreation of the apple we bless, not the history of the fruit.

Even though the first time a deed is done it naturally has the advantage of originality and the benefit of novelty. However, when one is able to reach and live beyond the sun, he can repeat an act thousands of times and be continually bathing in the light of **the new- now!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).