

“Bnei Yisrael journeyed from Beeros Bnei Yaakon to Moserah; there Aharon died.” (10:6)

The story of Aharon *Hakohen*'s passing is juxtaposed to the breaking of the *Luchos*. *Chazal* derive from here that the death of a *tzaddik* carries with it the same impact as the breaking of the *Luchos*. *Chazal* also teach us that when a *tzaddik* passes from this world, he is immediately replaced by another *tzaddik*. Once the sun “sets” on one *tzaddik*, it begins to shine on another. This is especially true if the son of a *tzaddik* is eminently qualified and capable to assume his father's leadership role. Aharon passed away from this world after an exemplary “career” of leadership and inspiration. His son, Elazar, assumed the position of *Kohen Gadol*. If this is the case, why is the death of a *tzaddik* more of a tragedy than the passing of any person? The righteous influence does not wane with the passing of the *tzaddik*.

Horav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber, z.l., explains that this is the reason that Aharon's passing is connected to the breaking of the *Luchos*. When Moshe *Rabbeinu* descended the mountain on that fateful day and shattered the *Luchos*, it became an eternal day of infamy for our people. Although it was a great tragedy, were the first *Luchos* not replaced soon after by the second *Luchos*? The replacement is never the same as the original. Elazar *Hakohen* was truly a great *nachas* to his father. He had incredible leadership capabilities and was a great spiritual inspiration to the Jewish People. He was not, however, Aharon *Hakohen*. He was not his father. The second *Luchos* could not take the place of the first *Luchos*. While they were the *Luchos* which accompanied *Klal Yisrael* all those years, they still were not the original ones. We must remember that the spiritual status-quo of Torah diminishes as we move farther away from *Har Sinai*. When a *tzaddik* leaves this world his mission and legacy is immediately transferred to another *tzaddik*, who takes his place. The tragedy is that he is not the same as the original whom he replaced.