

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 163

Beha'alotcha | The Menorah - Illuminating the Earth

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

פרשת בהעלותך | אנגליית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Beha'alotcha

Full Repentance

Rabbi Mordechai Gerlitz shared the following story:¹

The sun's heat burned intensely in Anipoli.

The sun seemed to burst forth from its sheath, embedding its scorching rays into the universe.

This was true throughout all hours of the day, but in the afternoon, it was even more so, when the earth's vapor seemed to rise like the smoke of a furnace.

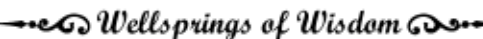
The cracked rafters, which shadowed over the shaky dwelling of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Zusha, released the dreadful vapor they absorbed from the scorching sun directly onto the head of the tzaddik, who sat and engaged in Torah study, disturbing his concentration.

The rabbi ignored the heavy burden of the hot summer,

oppressive to the breath. Still, the sweat beads incessantly dripping from his wrinkled forehead onto the pages of the Talmud before him did not allow him to immerse in his study as his soul desired.

With no choice, the rabbi had to escape the vapor dominating the house and find shelter under the trees not far from his dwelling. Their shade was pleasant, and water flowed beneath them. On the bank of that water, Rabbi Zusha found a stone, leaned over it, and settled upon it to continue engaging in his Torah study and divine service.

The tzaddik sat on the stone, the water channel at his feet, and swayed with immense devotion, as was his holy custom, drifting to higher worlds and forgetting the world and its vanities.



1. 'Besod Avadechah' (Part I - Page 159).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Full Repentance

Suddenly, a man's figure walked and approached the tzaddik. The man was a coarse fellow and of a rough appearance.

He was one of the city's lesser people, and his behavior and conduct did not bring honor to the town and its inhabitants.

He was a porter and practically lived in the marketplace among the uncouth gentile wagon drivers and their apprentices, and he spent most of his time in their company.

While many in town gossiped about him and sought to discredit him, they did not even reach half his demerits.

As he approached the tzaddik, the traditional long Jewish cloak he always wore was missing.

It was not out of righteousness that this porter wore the traditional cloak but because that cloak, which differentiated between the Jews and their gentile neighbors, made him stand out and be unique. If not for it - how would he attract customers from among the many gentile porters in the market? When a Jew came to the market

and recognized the cloak, he immediately knew that a Jewish porter stood before him and would avail himself of his services.

Now that his cloak was missing, the appearance of this porter was nearly indistinguishable from that of a gentile porter.

"Rabbi, save me!" - he called out with his coarse and booming voice as he entered the tzaddik's presence.

The rabbi, all compassion and mercy, heard that he was being asked to save a Jew and trembled and jumped up at once to understand what was being spoken of.

"They are thieves, the city's officials!" - the porter grumbled with a throaty growl - "They stripped from me my cloak and took it as a pledge until the rabbi testifies on my behalf that I have repented and will no longer return to misdeed."

"What does this mean?" - the rabbi wondered aloud."

"It happened like this" - the man went on and explained -

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Full Repentance

"They falsely accused me and fabricated against me accusations, and decreed upon me to strip off my cloak and to walk about as a gentile in the city streets until the rabbi gives a handwritten note testifying that I have returned in complete repentance, and only then they will return it to me."

"Well?" - the tzaddik challenges him - "Have you indeed returned in complete repentance that I can testify about you thus and command them to return your cloak to you?"

"Rabbi!" - the porter became enraged and stamped his foot - "Why do you descend and delve into the difficulties of others, and what business and concern do you have with that 'gang' of violent city officials? I stand and beg before you, help me retrieve my stolen cloak, yet you burden me with difficult questions."

Indeed, a great burning love was in the heart of the tzaddik for all Jews, yet even so, he did not rush to respond to the request and plea of this lowly man, but he also did not want to miss the unique opportunity given to him, to bring him closer to

the gates of repentance, which he was generally quite distant from.

The rabbi returned to studying the holy book he held in his hands, completely ignoring the man's presence, and a melody of study was heard from his lips.

The porter began speaking, muttering, and raging angrily, yet the rabbi seemed deaf and did not respond to the words being addressed to him.

The man's patience burst, and he raised his harsh voice and cried out in irreverence: "Only a Jew could be so cruel, for the gentile priest would have already shown me mercy and lent his ear to my supplications."

As soon as the rabbi heard these terrible words, words of denunciation against Jews, he jumped up from his place like bitten by a snake and shuddered until he lost his balance.

"Woe and alas," - the tzaddik cried out in distress - "Woe to Zusha's head. I caused a Jew to utter wicked words from his mouth. Woe to Zusha."

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Full Repentance

Thus, the tzaddik leapt from one place to another, jumping on stones and clapping hands, shedding tears, and shouting until his foot slipped and he fell into the water flowing at his feet.

Seeing the tzaddik plunging into the stream at his fault, the porter panicked and began shouting for help. People gathered from all around, and when they saw the tzaddik struggling in the raging stream, they jumped in after him and rescued him.

They laid him on the ground, revived him until he came, and then led him to his house.

Seeing the horror and commotion surrounding the rabbi, the porter began to fear that it would become known to the public what had caused the tzaddik's outcry, and they would come to take revenge on him. Therefore, he slipped away secretly, fled, and hid in a nearby thicket.

From his hiding place in the thicket, the porter pondered everything that had happened, and

his soul began to agitate within him. The tzaddik's dreadful tremor from the heretical words he had uttered, to the extent of endangering his life, ignited a pure fire in his deceitful heart. Never before had he experienced such a tangible manifestation of righteousness as he had just now witnessed.

A wave of thoughts of repentance suddenly surged within him, and his eyes welled up with tears.

He did not remember the last time he cried, but it was clear that these were pure tears he shed now. These tears, arising from the deepest recesses of his soul, together with feelings of regret and consolation, began peeping into his heart and filling his entire being till he started choking.

Meanwhile, on his bed, the tzaddik lay, pale as a sheet and soaked to the bone, breathing and panting heavily and reproaching himself: "Woe and alas to Zusha. Zusha caused a Jew to utter defamatory words from his mouth."

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Full Repentance

Gradually, the commotion subsided, the rabbi's spirit and breathing returned to him, and the gathered crowd began to disperse until the rabbi was left alone. Tranquility returned to reign in his humble abode.

The porter then exited his hiding and hurried to stand before the tzaddik.

"Rabbi" - his choked and tearful plea was heard - "Please give me an order of repentance and correction for my numerous sins. My sins have reached the Heavens, and there is no soundness in me from the sole of my foot to my head.

Please, rabbi, pity my wretched soul and teach me the way of repentance to cleanse myself of my impurities."

"Oh, dear Jew," - the tzaddik replied with a broken and crushed voice - "Is it repentance that you seek or the cloak."

"No, rabbi. No, not at all. - the porter replied with tears - "The cloak is replaceable. Please teach me a path of repentance."

The tzaddik sprang up and got off his bed. A spark of hope flickered in his eyes. It seemed that the Jew intended his words sincerely.

"Do you know, dear Jew, what repentance means?" - the tzaddik pressed on emotionally - "It means to return to the L-rd our G-d. To wash the soul from its filth, to remove from it the disease of sins, transgressions, and misdeeds, and to approach 'with a clean and pure soul' to our Father in Heaven."

"Yes, rabbi." - the man continued to plead - "That is exactly what I intend."

"But for that," - the rabbi explained - "there is a need first to recognize the sin, to confess it, and to regret it, for only then it is possible to reach the rest of the stages of repentance.

Yet you have just previously claimed that you are free from sin, and it was only false accusations that were fabricated against you."

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Full Repentance

"I confess." - the porter exclaimed - "I confess, holy rabbi, that I am a sinner and transgressor. I have sinned, done wrong, and acted wickedly."

"Oh, ok." - the rabbi voiced - "If so, it seems you are very much like Zusha. Like me, like you, a sinner and transgressor full of sin and iniquity. Come then, let us at once and let us together return in repentance."

The tzaddik threw himself to the ground - and the porter after him. Both of them sat on the

earth, weeping and repenting, until the day turned to evening and the rays of light had fled.

The porter did not move on until he received a written note from the rabbi, testifying that he had returned in complete repentance to G-d with all his heart and soul.

From that day onwards, the wayward porter, now a penitent, fixed his place in the study hall, and fear of Heaven was upon him and his descendants for many generations.²

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

2. As is known, when the Temple existed, the Jewish people would sacrifice on each of the three pilgrimage festivals (Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot) the Olat Reiyah, the Chagigah offering, and the Shalmei Simchah.

Since the Shavuot festival was only one day, there was a completion period of another six days (for those who didn't get a chance to offer) - until the 12th of Sivan.

Today as well, although we have neither the Temple nor sacrifices, these days are days of joy, and we do not say Tachanun.

It is told that once the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch asked his grandfather, the Ba'al HaTanya: Why does the

celebration of the Shavuot festival extend for seven days until the 12th of Sivan?

The Alter Rebbe replied to him, it is similar to merchants who go to a great trade show and buy up a lot of merchandise. After the fair, before going back home, they linger a few days to pack up the merchandise well so that it does not get damaged or lost.

Similarly, during the festival of the Giving of Our Torah, everyone certainly acquired spiritual revelations from this festival, and need to take some time to process them. This is the concept of celebrating some additional days following the festival to 'tie down well' these spiritual attainments so that they are not lost in the rush of time. (Sefer Hasichot, 5698 - Page 318).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - At the Foot of Mount Sinai

Thus the Righteous in every generation light up the souls of the Jewish people, whoever they may be.

As we shall explain, this is the inner meaning of what we are

instructed in our Torah portion: "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, When you raise the light of the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light to the front of the menorah." (Numbers 8:2).

At the Foot of Mount Sinai

The date of the 15th of Nissan, is forever engraved in the annals of world history.

On that day, in the year 2448 to the creation of the world, all of the Jewish people gathered in Rameses in Egypt. By noon that day, they left Egypt and began their march towards Mount Sinai.

From Rameses, they traveled to Sukkot, where G-d surrounded them with seven clouds of glory.

To quote Rabbi Meir Lamberski:³

When the people of Israel reached Sukkot, they were granted a wonderful divine gift: they were graced with the close

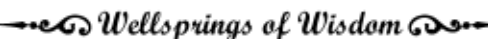
escort of seven clouds of glory - in the merit of Aaron the High Priest.

Six clouds surrounded them from all sides - above, below, and from their four sides.

The cloud above them - protected them from the sun and rain. The cloud below them protected them from thorns and crawling creatures, such as snakes and scorpions, while the four clouds on their sides - protected them from any possible assailant.

The seventh cloud went before the camp of Israel to direct them on their path and straighten it.

This cloud would lower mountains - and raise valleys,



3. 'Al Haparshah' (Exodus-1, Page 488).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - At the Foot of Mount Sinai

until the path of the children of Israel was smooth and straight, without ascents or descents.

The Jewish people were also graced with a cloud of fire that went before them, lighting up their way to allow them continuous travel.

Thus, by day - the cloud column went before the camp of Israel and through it, G-d, directed their path, and by night - the pillar of fire took its place.

It is marvelous to contemplate the kindness of G-d, who prearranged so that the Jewish people would not suffer even the slightest discomfort, would not suffer from the elements, would not need to pave their way through mountain trails and valley paths, and that their path would be illuminated and clear before them.

Let us not forget. We are not speaking of pampered people, accustomed to comfortable lives, who now had to take the staff of wanderers in their hand and went out to the desert.

Even pampered people, when forewarned that they will undergo some hardships, consider this and do not complain.

Yet, the children of Israel were not long beforehand slaves who suffered the yoke of torment and enslavement. It is clear, therefore, that even if their path to freedom was fraught with hardships from beginning to end - they would have no justification for even the slightest complaint.

Yet, G-d did not consider this. He cared for His children to the utmost and to the best possible comfort, so that their well-being was complete - like a father who provides his children with the best.

Four days after leaving Egypt, on the 19th of Nissan, Pharaoh's servants grasped their heads aghast: "What have we done, that we have released our slaves?"

They approached Pharaoh, asking him to go to war to bring the slaves back to Egypt. Pharaoh responded, "I am afraid." But his servants were not convinced.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - At the Foot of Mount Sinai

Yielding to his servants, Pharaoh went to the war, from which he did not return.

Fifty days later, on the 6th of Sivan, the people of Israel stood, emotionally charged, at the foot of Mount Sinai.

All the Heavens opened, and G-d revealed Himself to the people of Israel, together with 22 myriads of angels who descended with Him,⁴ and the people of Israel received the Torah.

In the words of the Midrash:⁵

‘When the Holy One, blessed be He, appeared on Mount Sinai, 22,000 myriads of angels descended with Him, as it is said: "The chariots of G-d are myriads, thousands upon thousands" (Psalms 68:17), and they were all divided up by

flags, as it is said: "Distinguished among the myriads" (Song of Songs 5:10).

The Midrash continues:⁶

‘Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, created four winds and corresponding to them four flags, so too around His throne are encircled four angels: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael.’

Thus, the Midrash reveals that the angels are divided by flags as well, as Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto wrote:⁷

‘When the time comes for the service of the angels in Heaven, a herald goes out through the Heavens saying: "Be prepared, faithful servants, for the service of your Master."

Immediately, all the angels ascend with song and joy, each

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4. Midrash Rabbah (Portion 2 - Letter 3).

5. Ibid. (Letter 10).

6. ‘Tikkunim Chaddashim’ (Tikkun 38).

7. **The** inner meaning of the flags: Through the 'flag,' every angel recognized its place and its specific mission, and

according to his flag and place, recognized and knew what was expected from him - and carried out his mission faithfully.

The people of Israel also longed for such 'flags' that would reveal to them their role, and G-d granted them this.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Down All the Stairs

divided according to his flag. The leaders of the flags are the four angels: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael.'

When the people of Israel saw the angels arranged according to flags, they too, desired this arrangement,⁸ and ultimately received it.

Down All the Stairs

The forty days of waiting for Moses' return were coming to a close, and on the 17th of Tammuz, a mixed multitude approached Aaron the High Priest and demanded from him: "Make us g-ds who shall go before us" (Exodus 32:1). Aaron the High Priest appeased them and unwittingly, made them the Golden Calf.

On that day, Moses broke the tablets. The next day (the 18th of Tammuz), he ascended Mount Sinai to plead before the L-rd to forgive the people of Israel for this grave sin. He stayed there for forty days until the 29th of Av, when G-d was appeased toward the Jewish people and told Moses to descend from the mountain, to carve a second set of Tablets and to

ascend again with them to the mountain.

The next day (the 1st of Elul), Moses again ascended Mount Sinai with the second Tablets and stayed on the mountain for another forty days until Yom Kippur. On that day, G-d forgave the Jewish people with joy for the sin of the Golden Calf and said to Moses, "I have pardoned, according to your word" (Numbers 14:20). It is for this reason that Yom Kippur was established as a day of forgiveness, atonement, and pardon for generations to come.

On that day of Yom Kippur, G-d told Moses: "Make Me a sanctuary so that I will dwell among them."

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

8. "The L-rd said to Moses, 'Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with

you, and also believe you forever.' And Moses told the words of the people to the L-rd" (Exodus 19:9).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Inauguration of the Leaders

The next day, on the 11th of Tishrei, they began to collect materials - and within two days they had collected all the materials and began constructing the Tabernacle and its vessels.

About six months later, on the 23rd of Adar, the seven days of the inauguration of the Tabernacle

began, during which Moses uniquely served in white garments.

On the 1st of Nisan (beginning the second year of the departure of Egypt), the Tabernacle was consecrated, and from then on, an eighth cloud of divine glory descended and dwelled upon the Tabernacle.⁹

The Inauguration of the Leaders

On that first day of Nissan, the leaders of the twelve tribes approached Moses and expressed their desire to contribute to the inauguration of the altar.

The Midrash relates¹⁰ that Moses initially refused to accept their offerings until the Al-mighty commanded him: "Let them bring their offering,

for the dedication of the altar" (Numbers 7:11).

Moses was still uncertain about two things:

A. How to organize those offerings, who would offer first, who second, etc ?

B. Would they all offer on the same day or would each leader

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

9. Up until now, there were seven clouds, but after the Tabernacle was erected, an eighth cloud was added.

In the words of the Chizkuni (Numbers 9:15):

'**The** cloud covered the Tabernacle' - above the Tabernacle dwelled a cloud more special and lofty than those clouds that serviced the Jewish people, as written in Tanhuma regarding the cloud

of the Shechinah that walked atop the camp of the Levites and so on.

It is said in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Numbers 736): "On the day that the Tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered it" (Numbers 9:15) - it was that same cloud upon which G-d revealed himself on Mount Sinai.

10. Midrash Rabbah (12:21).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Inauguration of the Leaders

bring their offering on a specific day, thus extending the offerings over twelve days?

The Al-mighty answered both questions: The leaders would offer according to the order of their encampments, and each leader would bring the sacrifices on a different day.

As the verse states: "G-d said to Moses, 'One leader per day, one leader per day, shall they bring their offering for the dedication of the altar'" (Ibid.).

From the 1st of Nissan to the 12th of Nissan, the twelve leaders offered their respective sacrifices for the dedication of the altar:¹¹ Judah (on the 1st of Nissan), Issachar (on the 2nd of Nissan), Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.

Only Aaron the priest, who was the leader of the tribe of Levi,¹² did not consider bringing an offering. When he realized he had been given an opportunity to offer, he was deeply troubled and thought: Surely because I sinned and made the golden calf, the Al-mighty does not desire me.

The Al-mighty comforted Aaron: Do not be saddened, you are guaranteed that your role is greater than theirs since you clean and kindle the lamps of the Menorah.

The Ramban (Numbers 8:2) presents the following difficulty:

'It is not clear to me why the comfort to Aaron was specifically in the lighting of the lamps that he performed. Why was it not in the fact that he brought the morning and evening incense, the offering

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

11. Every leader brought with him an offering: 'One silver bowl... full of fine flour, a golden ladle full of incense'.

In addition they each brought: Three burnt offerings - one bull, one ram, one lamb.

One sin offering - a goat.

Seventeen peace offerings - two cattle, five rams, five goats, five lambs of one year.

12. As it is said: "You shall write Aaron's name on the staff of the tribe of Levi, for there shall be one staff for the head of their father's house" (Numbers 17:18).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Prison Break

of the omer, the service of Yom Kippur which was only valid if performed by him in the Holy of Holies, and that he was who was consecrated to

stand before G-d to serve Him and bless in His name in His temple?'

Before we answer this question, let us precede.

Prison Break

Two types of souls were created in the world:

The first type - holy and pure souls, complete and worthy.

The second type - hollow and empty souls, souls without any inner reality.

On the sixth day of creation, when Adam was created, the Al-mighty took all the holy and pure souls and placed them inside the body of Man, while the hollow and empty souls, the Al-mighty imprisoned in some place, without any ability to be released and break free.

In the depths of darkness, deep within the bowels of the prison, the hollow and empty souls sat and waited impatiently for their

moment to arrive, for the moment when they would be released and go out into the world.

That moment arrived swiftly.

Adam ate from the Tree of knowledge, and as a result, the prison walls collapsed, and all the hollow and empty souls burst out, organized together, and entered the body of Adam.

Until then, only the meritorious and pure souls were in Adam, but now, after the sin, the hollow and empty souls also entered him.

Just as they had managed to enter the body of Man, they would now enter the bodies of his descendants, who soon 'began to multiply upon the face of the earth'.¹³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

13. In the words of Rabbi Isaac Luria (Likutei Torah, Psalms - Chapter 32):

When G-d created Adam, only the souls of Israel were included within

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Twelve Gates in Heaven

As a result of the sin, the hollow souls descended into the world, and with their dark deeds, drove away the Divine Presence, and engulfed the world with a great spiritual darkness.

Many years passed, until Jacob our forefather arrived and merited to draw purity to the world from anew.

Jacob, succeeded to distinguish and separate between the two types of souls.

From here and onward, the holy souls came out of Jacob, while all the rest - from the rest of the families upon Earth.

To quote the Or HaChaim (Deuteronomy 32:8):

'Everything the L-rd did, He

created one opposite the other, good and evil; all souls in the created beings were planted by the L-rd from two trees, one good and one evil.

The good tree was personified by Adam, while the evil tree includes all the wicked powers.

When Man sinned and evil was mixed with good, evil souls emerged from Adam as well, until one pure soul of Jacob our forefather - peace be upon him - emerged, in which all the holy souls were included, and the 'good tree' was purified from anew'.

Since then, all the souls, both good and evil, were arranged in three 'trees', one good, while the evil one itself was divided into two - one of Ishmael and one of Esau.

The Twelve Gates in Heaven

In 'Megaleh Amukot' ('Beha'alotcha'), the following is written:

All souls, both the holy and the 'hollow' ones, are each

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him, and if he had not sinned, the nations would not have emerged into the world. **After** he sinned, the sparks of the nations of the world were mixed within

him, as reflected in the verse: "You are men - 'Adam'" (Ezekiel 34:31) - this referring to the Jewish people, whose souls were included within Adam.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Twelve Gates in Heaven

arranged in a system made up of twelve gates:

The system of the souls of Israel, contains twelve gates, and each soul among the people of Israel derives its vitality from one of these gates.

The system of the souls of the nations of the world is divided into two parts:

The first consists of the nations that draw their vitality from the right side of the impure powers, while the second part draws their vitality from the left side of the impure powers.

This is the inner meaning of the verse in Job, which contains this idea:

"Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?" (Job 38:17).

'Gates of death' refers to the souls that come from the right

side of the impure powers, and they consist of the twelve gates of Ishmael,¹⁴ and are called the 'gates of death'.

'Gates of the shadow of death' are the souls that come from the left side of the impure powers, and they consist of the twelve gates of Esau, which are called the 'gates of the shadow of death'.

After these systems were arranged, the Al-mighty placed upon the souls of Israel the mission to influence the nations of the world and imbue them with holiness and divinity.

As the Ramchal writes:¹⁵

'Among the profound matters of G-d's providence is the matter of the Jewish people and the nations of the world, for while in the aspect of human nature they seem to be truly equal, in matters of the Torah, they are vastly different and completely separate, as if two different species'.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

14. As it is said: "These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names in their villages and encampments, twelve

princes by their nations" (Genesis 25:16).

15. Derech Hashem (Part 2, Chapter 4:1).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Holiness to the Nations of the World

The Ramchal writes further:¹⁶

'In the world generally, there is good and evil, which are manifested in humankind through the Jewish people and the nations of the world.

The rectification of the world will be when the good shall rule and the evil shall be subdued, which in terms of mankind means that the Jewish people shall rule and the nations of the world shall be subjugated under them.

When this is so, it is good for all, for then holiness shines in the Jewish people and is strengthened in them, and the nations of the world who are subjugated under them, become rectified by them and draw from their holiness.

But if the nations of the world break free from under the hand of the Jewish people and rule, and the Jewish people are subdued, then both the Jewish people and the nations of the world lose.

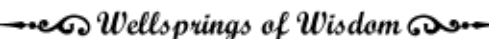
The Jewish people are degraded, and their holiness is not felt in the world, since the source of it - the Jewish people are not in their full strength.

And the nations of the world themselves lose as well, for they do not draw any illumination from that holiness, but rather, on the contrary, become impure and distance themselves even further away from the good.'

Following this introduction, let us return to the inaugural offerings of the leaders.

Holiness to the Nations of the World

On the 1st of Nissan, the leaders began to offer their sacrifices, and through the offering of the sacrifices, they



16. 'Ma'amar Hachochma' (Rosh Hashanah Prayers).

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Holiness to the Nations of the World

performed awesome and exalted deeds.

The Holy Zohar reveals one of the effects of their sacrifices (Naso 148b) as stated there:

‘Rabbi Shimon said, if these twelve leaders had not offered their sacrifices, the world would not stand due to the prosecution over the "Twelve princes to their nation" (Genesis 25:16) - the twelve princes of Ishmael.

But since the twelve leaders of the Jewish people offered their sacrifices, they took the power of dominion away from Ishmael, and through this, influenced the sons of Ishmael with holiness.

In addition, they also purified the twelve gates of spiritual endowment of Esau, for all his spiritual nourishment is from the wicked Satan, represented by the letter 'samekh' (which numerically equals 60),¹⁷ and by the leaders’

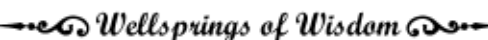
sacrifices of "rams - sixty, goats - sixty, one year old lambs - sixty" (Numbers 7:88), they removed the power of dominion from Esau, and influenced them with holiness.

When Aaron saw the marvelous deed they had performed, he was troubled and thought: Surely because I sinned and made the golden calf, the privilege to influence the nations of the world with holiness was taken away from me.

The Al-mighty at once comforted him, saying, “your greatness is greater than theirs, since you kindle and clean the lamps.”

Before we explain the meaning of this reassurance to Aaron, let us move on to a further section in this week's Torah portion.

Note: The explanations below follow the words of the divine Kabbalist Rabbi Nathan Neta of Krakow (‘Megaleh Amukot’, in our Torah portion).



17. See ‘Megaleh Amukot’ (ibid).

The Children of Israel Journeyed On

When the Al-mighty revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, 22,000 myriads of angels descended, all fashioned and designated with banners.

At that time, the Jewish people desired to have banners as well and that their encampment be arranged according to the order of the Heavenly chariot, but it was only a year later when they merited this.

Our Torah portion states, "The children of Israel traveled on to their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud rested in the Paran Desert" (Numbers 10:12).

'Their journeys' - refers to the fact that they merited to be arranged below as the Heavenly chariot is arranged above.¹⁸

It is also stated further: "These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went forth by their camps; and they journeyed" (Ibid

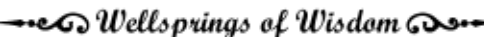
verse 28) - every journey that the Jewish people undertook was according to the Heavenly hosts, and as the angels journeyed above, so did they journey below.

When Moses saw the immense stature of the people of Israel, he was filled with joy, and said in his heart 'We are advancing in giant steps towards rectifying the world under the kingdom of G-d'.

At that time, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law was in the camp of Israel, and he was debating whether to return to his country - Midian - or to stay in the camp of Israel.

Moses turned to him and explained why it was worthwhile for him to stay:

"Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, 'We are setting out for the place of which the L-rd has said, "I will give it to you."



18. See in depth the 'Megaleh Amukot' there.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - "Yours Is Greater Than Theirs"

Come with us and we will do you good, for the L-rd has promised good concerning Israel" (Ibid verse 29).

He explained to him, "Reuel, see with your own eyes that we are journeying to a higher destination, and on a higher plane, for 'the L-rd has spoken good concerning Israel', - because we are from the good tree - "G-d is solely good to Israel" (Psalms 73:1), while the nations of the world are from the evil tree.

Despite this, Reuel did not want to stay - "He said to him, 'I will not go; rather I will leave to my country, and my homeland'" (Numbers 10:30).

Reuel left, and the people of Israel continued strong on their path upward.

"Yours Is Greater Than Theirs"

The Al-mighty turned to Aaron the priest and told him: It is true that through the sacrifices offered by the leaders, they took the power of dominion from the world's nations, and thus influenced them with holiness.

When Moses saw that the Jewish people had merited to be like the Heavenly chariot above, he said: "Rise, L-rd, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let them that hate You flee before You; and when the ark rested, he said, 'Return, L-rd, to the myriads of thousands of Israel'" (Ibid verses 35-36).

'Rise, (literally 'Stand up'), L-rd' - refers to the arrangement of the Heavenly chariot above which is called 'the standing of stature', and to indicate this, he said 'Rise, L-rd'.

At Mount Sinai, 22,000 myriads of angels descended, and to hint that the Jewish people merited this, he said: 'Return, L-rd, to the myriads of thousands of Israel' (two myriads - ten thousands - and two thousands).

However, that was a one-time event, but yours is greater than theirs, for you, through your daily divine service with the menorah, in lighting and cleaning, subjugate the impurity of Ishmael and Esau as well.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Lighting the Menorah

This lighting is not a mere task, but an ongoing and continuous act, for the menorah is lit daily.

The 'Megaleh Amukot' elaborates on the act of lighting the lamps of the menorah and also on the Priestly Blessing that the priests blessed the people, refer to the discussion there at length.

In this way, we may answer the question of the Ramban as to why the Al-mighty comforted Aaron specifically with the lighting of the menorah.

For it, in fact affects the same result that the leaders achieved with their offerings.

Now let us expand a bit on the divine service of the lighting of the menorah.

Lighting the Menorah

On the 1st of Nissan in the year 2449 to the creation of the world, the Tabernacle was erected.

The Tabernacle was divided into three parts: the courtyard, the Tent of Meeting, and the Holy of Holies.

In the courtyard - the bronze altar and the laver were located.

In the Tent of Meeting - there was the golden altar, the table, and the menorah.

In the Holy of Holies - there was the ark, its cover, and the cherubim.

The menorah stood in the Tent of Meeting on the south side, the table on the north side, and the golden altar was placed in the middle.

The ark was placed in the Holy of Holies to the west side.

As mentioned in our Torah portion, Aaron the priest was commanded to light the lamps.

Thus it is said: "Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When you raise the light of the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the menorah" (Numbers 8:2).

Rashi explains:

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Soul of Man is the Flame of G-d

'When you raise the light' the lamps, meaning: 'When you ignite the lamps'. For the nature of a burning fire is that the flame ascends upwards, hence, in the context of lighting the lamps, the term for elevation is used.

The choice of the word 'בָּהֵאֵלֶיךָ' ('when you raise the light') instead of other terms for creating fire (such as 'burning' or 'igniting') conveys the idea that one must light the lamp until the flame

ascends on its own - meaning, one should not move from one lamp immediately after the fire catches on, but should rather wait at each lamp, continuing to kindle it until it burns and ascends on its own without assistance. Only then should one move to the next lamp (Shabbat 21b).

Following this introduction, we move on to the lesson learned from the Menorah lamps' lighting.

The Soul of Man is the Flame of G-d

In a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, he said:¹⁹

The Torah portion of Beha'alotcha is always the first portion in the Torah that is read after the "Time of the Giving of Our Torah."

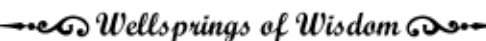
From this, it is understood that this Torah portion has a special connection with the time after the holiday of Shavuot, the 'Giving of the Torah'.

To understand this connection, we must precede:

As is known, the soul of every Jew is called a 'candle,' as stated: "The soul of man is the flame of G-d" (Proverbs 20:27), and the seven candles of the menorah correspond to the seven emotions contained within one's soul: love, fear, etc.

The collective souls of the Jewish people as well, are together called a menorah, as hinted to in the prophetic words of Zechariah:

"I saw, and behold, a menorah made of all gold, with its bowl



Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Soul of Man is the Flame of G-d

above it, and its seven lamps thereon, seven and seven pipes to the lamps which are above them" (Zechariah 4:2).

The work of a Jew is expressed in 'When you raise the light' - to ignite the 'candle of the L-rd is the soul of man', to light the divine spark within him, until this flame ascends on its own.

The way to merit this is by "a commandment is a candle and the Torah is light" (Proverbs 6:23) - through studying Torah and performing the commandments, one draws divine light and sanctity upon himself, and through this illuminates his body and spirit.

To phrase this alternatively:

In the Menorah of the Temple, there were two aspects:

1. The body of the menorah, which was composed of a central stem and six branches.

2. The soul of the menorah, which were the candles, the flames of the fire.

A Jew likewise, has a body and a soul.

The body we are well acquainted with. The soul is a part of G-d from above, 'The soul of man is the flame of G-d'.

Just as in the menorah the role of the candles, the flame of the fire, was to illuminate, so too the role of the soul, is to illuminate the body, until 'it will be openly visible that the body is but a vessel for the light of the soul'.

Just as with the menorah the High priest would not leave the candle until the flame ascended by itself, so too, the role of a Jew is to illuminate his being so much so, that he shines with his own light.

This expresses a principle and foundation in the service of G-d - to use one's own strength and effort, as we will expand upon shortly.

The Longings of the Souls in Heaven

At the time of the creation of the world, all the souls of the Jewish people were created, and already then received from G-d their specific and unique role.

Ever since that time, the souls wait impatiently for their time to descend to this world, for they know that this descent is essential, important, and fateful.

They know that their eternal fate depends entirely on their actions while here - in this world.

To illustrate this point, we bring a story that occurred long ago:

There once lived a man whom G-d blessed with an immense gift - 12 sons and 12 daughters.

G-d Al-mighty bestowed upon him great kindness, and he merited to marry off 23 of his children.

Alas, with one daughter he was stuck.

All attempts and spiritual remedies were tried - but in vain, the daughter remained unmarried.

There are no words to describe the parents' sorrow.

Although there is a famous rule that 'time - heals all pain', here the passing 'time' was the cause of their sorrow.

Every day that passed that their 'chick' was still inside 'the nest', intensified their feelings of sorrow.

'What will be with their precious daughter, the epitome of virtues? When will the 'diamond' that is worthy of her arrive? Who will merit her, and when will he arrive?'

Another day passed, and then another month, a year, two years.

The pain was great. She longed to get married and her parents pleaded to G-d in prayer that He send her a match, so that she could finally leave the house and build her own life.

One day the incredible happened, and behold, the long awaited time had arrived.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - The Longings of the Souls in Heaven

G-d sent her a distinguished young man, the epitome of virtues.

The young man comfortably entered her family, as if he was born into it. Truly a gift from Heaven.

The week following the wedding hadn't even ended, and the parents already turned to their daughter, asking her: Please come to spend Shabbat with us. Such is the way of the world.

That is the story.

This is an accurate illustration of the process that happens with the soul.

Before descending to this world, it is like a grown daughter living in her parents' home. She lives in the house at her father and mother's expense, it's her home, but not entirely so.

It's her home - to use, to eat, drink, sleep, but she can't sell it, and she doesn't own it, she is entirely dependent on her parents.

Only when she gets married does she enter her own home.

The soul above similarly, resembles a grown daughter waiting to go out on her own and get married.

For it is only in this world, that there is the advantage for one to achieve things that are impossible to achieve anywhere else.

These accomplishments however, are often hindered by several imaginary illusions that prevent a person from fulfilling its mission.

Sometimes the matter that needs correction has been waiting for hundreds of years, and even from the time of the creation of the world, for that soul to come and rectify it.

As written in Hayom Yom (3rd of Elul):

‘He who believes in divine providence knows that "from the L-rd are man's steps established."'

Each soul has a specific mission, and it is incumbent upon it to rectify and correct some refinement and rectification in a particular place.’

Parshat Beha'alotcha - G-d Descended Upon Mount Sinai

Every soul before coming to this world was 'thousands of years' by G-d side, and waited impatiently - when would it finally be its turn to descend to this world.

The souls above know full well that this world is very precious, and that only in it is it possible to increase in Torah and good deeds and draw endless spiritual pearls and gems, each person according to their capabilities.

And when the soul comes down to this world, it's like a married daughter who goes off to build a home.

Upon completing successfully the divine mission down here in this world and when the soul is laden with the bounty of pearls and gems it managed to gather in this world, it must return after many days and years to its Father in Heaven, as our sages says (Pesachim

50a): 'Happy is he who comes here, with his accomplishments in hand'.

This is akin to the parents who wish that their married daughter come to visit for Shabbat. All week the parents have butterflies of excitement, what a beauty will the upcoming Shabbat be when the grandchildren will come to stay. The parents breathe it, sleep on it, and wake up with it. They have a festive week before them, just from the knowledge that their grandchildren plan to come.

This great divine service accomplished by man in this world - with one's own strength - all began specifically after the Giving of the Torah.

It therefore follows that the Torah portion of Beha'alotcha be read only after Shavuot.

G-d Descended Upon Mount Sinai

Even before the Torah was given to the people of Israel, it was studied by our holy patriarchs, who also fulfilled its

commandments. Yet despite this, specifically the event at Mount Sinai is considered to be the time when the Torah was given.

We must understand why this is so.²⁰

This can be explained by the parable quoted in the Midrash:²¹

'A king once decreed and said: The citizens of Rome shall not go down to Assyria, and the citizens of Assyria shall not go up to Rome.

So too when G-d created the world He decreed: "The Heavens are the Heavens to the L-rd, but the earth He has given to the children of man" (Psalms 115:16).

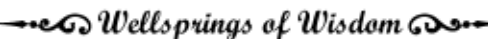
When He wished to give the Torah He annulled these decrees and said, the lower ones shall ascend to upperward and the upper ones shall descend lower', and I will be the first to do so, as is written: "The L-rd descended upon Mount Sinai" (Exodus 19:20).

The concept of 'decree' - 'gezerah' is also derived from the term of cutting and separation.

Before the Giving of the Torah, divinity was 'cut off' and disconnected from materiality. There was no connection between them, divinity is pure spirituality and while the world is a lower physical reality.

However, during the Giving of the Torah, G-d annulled this 'decree,' and separation, and granted the people of Israel the ability to connect and unite the physical reality with the divine, so that the physical objects in which they perform commandments themselves become 'objects of holiness.'

The main innovation at the time of the Giving of the Torah is this possibility for the divine light to penetrate the physical reality and unite with it. The commandments given to us at Mount Sinai have the power to infuse holiness into the human



20. This section is excerpted from *Machshevet HaChassidut* (Part 1 - Page 201) by Rabbi Yoel Cohen, of blessed memory.

21. *Shemot Rabbah* 12:3.

body as well as the physical objects and to sanctify them.

For example, with the commandment of Tefillin, besides the fact that the leather of the Tefillin and the parchment become holy objects, through performing the commandment of Tefillin, divine light penetrates the arm and head of the person who puts on the Tefillin.

When a Jew places Tefillin on his arm and head, he causes a profound internal change in the physical reality of the arm and head, sanctifying them, and infusing them with divine light.

With this, the difference between the divine service of the patriarchs and our own divine service is understood:

Before the Giving of the Torah, the decree that 'the upper ones shall not descend below and the lower ones shall not ascend above' was in full effect.

There was no possibility to infuse holiness into the physical reality and to elevate the physical world to a higher spiritual level.

Indeed, the patriarchs brought down sanctity and divine light through their service, but this divine light was like a scent: it wasn't the essence of divinity, but only a reflection of it.

As a result, the light did not remain in the world in a permanent manner, and did not unite with the physical reality. This light shone at that moment only, but afterwards ceased to illuminate the world.

Whereas after the Giving of the Torah, the power to sanctify the world was given to the Jewish people, and since then, the role of the Jewish people has been to make for Him, blessed be He, a dwelling in the lower realms.

After the Giving of the Torah the service of the children of Israel began to draw down holiness through their own means, which is why the preparation for the Tabernacle took place then - "Let them make Me a sanctuary" (Exodus 25:8).

We now understand even better why the Torah portion of Beha'alotcha is always the first

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Summary and Practical Applications

portion read after the Giving of Our Torah, for it emphasizes the manner of service that began following the Giving of the Torah, namely, divine

service in a manner that 'the flame ascends on its own' - service performed with the person's own abilities and strengths.

Summary and Practical Applications

1. The Menorah of the Temple had two aspects: The body of the menorah, consisting of a central shaft and six branches, and the soul of the menorah, which are the candles, the flames of fire. Similarly, a Jew has a physical body and a soul, which is a divine part from above.

2. The soul of every Jew is called a 'lamp,' and specifically contains seven lamps corresponding to the seven branches of the menorah, which correspond to seven types of emotions in a person: love, severity, mercy, faith, simplicity, truth, and humility. Not only the individual soul is likened to the menorah, but rather the collective souls of the Jewish people too are called a menorah.

3. Just as in the menorah the role of the lamps was to illuminate, so too, the role of the soul is to illuminate the body, until 'it is seen openly, that the body is but a vessel to the light of the soul.'

Just as with the menorah the high priest did not leave the lamp until the flame ascended by itself, so too, the role of a Jew is to illuminate himself so much until he shines with his own light.

This reflects a main principle and foundation in the service of G-d - that a Jew toil with his own strength.

4. The way for a Jew to be 'like a flame that ascends by itself' is through 'a commandment is a candle and the Torah is light' - by studying Torah and fulfilling the commandments, and thus he draws upon himself the divine light of sanctity, and merits to illuminate his physicality.

5. At the time of the creation of the world, the souls of the Jewish people were created, and already then, received from G-d their specific and unique role that they need to perform.

Ever since that time, all the souls stand and wait for their time to descend to this world. For they know that the descent here is essential, important, and fateful. They know that their eternal fate depends entirely on their actions here in this world.

6. There is an advantage in this world, that one can achieve things that are impossible to achieve anywhere else.

Every soul waits impatiently for thousands of years by G-d's side -

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Summary and Practical Applications

when will it finally be its turn to descend to this world; down here where it is possible to fulfill Torah and good deeds and draw down an endless amount of spiritual pearls and gems.

With this bounty of pearls and gems that it managed to gather in this world, it returns after many years before its Father in Heaven.

7. The main innovation of the time of the Giving of the Torah, is that the decree that separated between divinity and the physical world was annulled, and it became possible for the divine light to penetrate the physical reality and unite with it.

In the commandments given at Mount Sinai, lies the power to infuse holiness into physical objects and to sanctify them.

Ever since then, the service of the children of Israel is to make for G-d a dwelling in the lower realms using their own powers and capabilities.

This explains why the Torah portion of Beha'alotcha is the first portion always read after the Giving of the Torah, because it emphasizes the manner of service that began following the Giving of the Torah - divine service through one's own strength and effort - that the flame ascend on its own - 'Beha'alotcha'.

Shabbat Shalom !



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**Shabbat Times
Beha'alotcha**

16th of Sivan, 5784

City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	8:13 pm	9:22 pm	9:43 pm
Miami	7:57 pm	8:54 pm	9:27 pm
Los Angeles	7:50 pm	8:52 pm	9:20 pm
Montreal	8:29 pm	9:45 pm	9:59 pm
Toronto	8:45 pm	9:58 pm	10:15 pm
London	9:03 pm	10:36 pm	10:34 pm
Jerusalem	7:33 pm	8:23 pm	9:19 pm
Tel Aviv	7:30 pm	8:20 pm	9:16 pm
Haifa	7:31 pm	8:21 pm	9:17 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:28 pm	8:18 pm	9:13 pm

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From the Words of

HaRav Yoran Abargel zt"l

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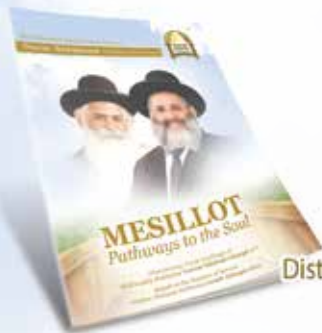
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