

LAMPLIGHTER

18 Sivan
Parshas
Beha'aloscha
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24 June
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading, Behaalotcha, begins with the command to Aaron to kindle the Menora, the candelabrum in the Sanctuary. The Menora symbolizes the Jewish people, for the purpose of every Jew's existence is to spread Divine light throughout the world, as it is written: "The soul of man is the lamp of G-d." With "the light of the Torah, and the candle of mitzvot (commandments)," our people illuminate our surrounding environment.

The Menora extends upward in seven branches, which symbolizes seven different paths of Divine service. And yet it was made of a single piece of gold. This shows that the various different qualities that characterize the Jewish people do not detract from their fundamental unity. Diversity need not lead to division, and the development of true unity comes from a synthesis of different thrusts, every person expressing his own unique talents and personality.

Not only does the Menora point to the importance of every individual, the manner in which it was kindled underscores the need for independent effort. This concept is reflected in the literal meaning of the phrase the Torah uses when relaying G-d's command to kindle the Menora: "When you raise up the lamps." The foremost commentator Rashi explains that this means the priest should apply the flame to the wick "until the flame rises on its own," and shines independently.

Interpreting this concept allegorically, each of the expressions Rashi uses reflects a fundamental concept.

"The flame" - Every person is potentially a "lamp." This, however, is not enough. He must realize his potential and become a flame, producing radiant light.

"Rises" - A person should not remain content with his current level, no matter how refined. Instead, he should seek to proceed further, searching for a higher and more complete degree of Divine service.

"On its own" - A person must internalize the influence of his teachers until their light becomes his own. The knowledge he learns should endow him with the power to "shine" independently.

Moreover, he should "rise on his own," i.e., the desire to proceed should become his own nature. Even without the encouragement of others, he should continually seek to advance.

These concepts apply not only to our personal strivings for spiritual growth, but also to the manner in which we reach out to others. We should not encourage dependency. Instead, our intent should be that the people with whom we share Judaism should also become "flame[s] which rise on [their] own" - independent lamps that spread the "light of Torah" throughout their surroundings.

[From Keeping in Touch adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Rabbi E Touger, published by Sichos in English.]

The Manna Eaters

By Yanki Tauber

Some facts about the manna: it looked like a small, round, white seed. It descended at night, sandwiched between two layers of dew. It tasted like your favourite food. It produced no waste, encapsulating its eater's nutritional needs so precisely that after the body absorbed what it needed there was nothing left. (This last fact make some of the Israelites a bit queasy about their "bread from heaven.")

Shortly after the manna started coming down, we received the Torah at Mount Sinai. For the next four decades we traversed the desert, eating the manna and learning Torah. That's basically all we did (when we weren't getting into trouble). The Midrash sees a direct connection between our diet and our occupation, stating that "The Torah could be given only to eaters of manna."

After forty years of manna and Torah, we crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Torah study remained a full-time occupation for only the tribe of Levi (and for select individuals from other tribes). Everyone else got down to the business of earning a living as farmers and merchants. The manna stopped, and we switched to "bread from earth" -- dusky, bulky, square bread -- the kind whose nutrients and vitamins are packaged in disposable filler. The kind that gets digested rather than absorbed.

Life is mostly waste.

We spend all day working for the money, an hour shopping, another hour cooking, a few minutes eating. And where does the food go? Most of it passes right through our bodies and into the city's sewer system.

We're given 24 hours per day, the overwhelming majority of which is spent sleeping, commuting, looking for parking, waiting on line, sifting through the mail, listening to speeches, making excuses, making small talk, making a deposit, making a withdrawal... And then, in those five minutes that we're actually doing something, half the time it comes out all wrong!

In fact, we're so used to dealing with waste, that even when we're handed something that's 100% pure gold, we start taking it apart, looking for some dross to get rid of. We look for faults in the soul of a loved one, for hidden agendas in the most beautiful friendships, for the "other side" in the most righteous of causes. Even goodness itself is judged too good to be true.

This is why, says the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "The Torah could be given only to eaters of manna." A nation of bread eaters would have immediately embarked on a "digestion" process. "Love your fellow as yourself" -- they would have said -- that's clean, nutritious stuff; but "Keep the Shabbat"? not practical in this day and age. They would have separated the PC parts from the "primitive" parts, the feel-good parts from the I'm-not-comfortable-with-those parts, the "historical facts" from the "folklore," the "scientifically corroborated" parts from the esoteric, the "rituals" from the "restrictions", etc. etc.

Our world needs its bread-eaters. We need to know to discern, to embrace the good and reject the bad, to make moral choices. But we also need to know when to get out of digestion mode. To recognize when, in a rare moment of grace, G-d bestows upon us a gift of unadulterated goodness and perfection. To open ourselves to His Torah, and allow its totality to nourish us like the manna that it is.

Slice of LIFE

Itzik was one of the outstanding scholars of Mezhibuzh and his pleasant demeanour endeared him to everyone. One day, Itzik became sick. His illness worsened day by day. He tossed in bed, writhing in pain. His teachers went to visit him in fulfilment of the mitzva (commandment) to visit the sick. At one point he moaned, "Oy, if only the Baal Shem would could visit me ..."

They knew he was referring to the famous Baal Shem who had come to Mezhibuzh not long ago and was known as a healer and wonder worker. Itzik's teachers were not pleased with this sentiment. They believed in the power of prayer and a chapter of Psalms said wholeheartedly, not in amulets by a Baal Shem who may or may not have been legitimate.

Itzik tried to convince them otherwise. Only when they saw how much it meant to him, and when they heard that the doctor was very concerned about his condition, did they reluctantly agree to a meeting between their sick student and the Baal Shem.

"However," they said, setting this condition, "whatever he tells you, you must tell us."

The Baal Shem Tov's noble appearance immediately impressed Itzik when he entered the house. The Baal Shem Tov entered the room and began speaking to him. A few moments earlier, one of the boys in the house had hidden under the bed in order to hear what would be said.

As they spoke, Itzik understood that his days were numbered and that the Baal Shem Tov could not intercede Above on his behalf. The Baal Shem Tov did not speak of death but about rectifying his life. "Although you have many fine qualities, this matter (and the Baal Shem Tov specified what it was) has not yet been corrected."

Itzik turned pale for only he knew about that matter that needed correction. He realized that his life history was known to the Baal Shem Tov and nothing was a secret. "For a long time, I sought an

opportunity to rectify the matter," said Itzik, "and now, as I am on the threshold of the world to come, what should I do?"

The Baal Shem Tov thought for a moment and then said, "Don't worry Itzik'l. I will see to it that this matter won't hold you up. I promise you that you will enter the Garden of Eden."

The Baal Shem Tov said this in a confident tone and Itzik looked pleased. He accepted the judgment lovingly. Before the Baal Shem Tov left the room, he ordered him not to tell anyone what they had spoken about.

A few hours later, his teachers visited him in order to hear about the visit. They wanted to hear firsthand whether the rumours about his segulos were true. Itzik did as he had been told and did not say a word. "I promised to keep it a secret," he said. This made them even more suspicious.

At that moment, the boy who had hidden under the bed made an appearance. He told them what had transpired, leaving out nothing of the conversation. The rabbis looked at Itzik in astonishment. They had never heard a conversation like that in their lives!

"Is what he says correct?" Itzik nodded.

In case they thought the boy had fabricated a story, now they knew that the wondrous conversation had, indeed, taken place. On the one hand, they were impressed by the Baal Shem Tov's confidence, with his promise uttered like someone before whom the pathways of heaven are visible. What person has knowledge of who will live and who will die, who will enter Gan Eden and who will not?

What could they say? They decided to ask Itzik to swear that he would come after his death and tell them what had happened to him, so they would know whether the Baal Shem Tov's words had materialized.

Not long afterward, the Jews of Mezhibuzh followed Itzik's casket, as the young man was laid to rest. A few days went by before Itzik came in a dream to each of his teachers. His face was shining. He told them that he had risen to the supernal chambers and his fate was quickly determined to be Garden of Eden, for he had spent all his life on Torah,

prayer and fear of heaven. Two angels escorted him into the Garden of Eden with great respect.

"Since the angels did not show me to my place, I began to wander here and there, from place to place within the Garden of Eden. I looked for and found an empty place to sit but I was quickly moved from there, because it was reserved for one of the righteous. I kept wandering and as time passed I became bothered and ill at ease.

"Then, I saw that everyone was heading to a different heavenly chamber. I joined them. Since I was feeling upset, as soon as I entered the new chamber I went ahead and sat down next to a large table, but even here, I was pushed out of my seat. I was greatly distressed.

"Suddenly, I saw the Baal Shem Tov sitting there and teaching deep concepts in Torah. He asked a difficult question to the heavenly yeshiva who tried to answer it but were unable to do so. He finally gave an amazing answer himself," and Itzik repeated the question that had been posed in Garden of Eden and the answer.

"Then everybody returned to their original places and I remained alone with the Baal Shem Tov. I bitterly asked him why I had been brought into the Garden of Eden and not given a place. He said, 'Because you gave your word and did not keep it.' I immediately remembered that I had promised you that I would come and tell you what happened to me up above. So I have come to you in a dream."

That Shabbat, two new guests attended the Shabbat meal in the Baal Shem Tov's study hall. The Baal Shem Tov sat and his face shone with holiness. Around him sat the leading members of the holy brotherhood. There were also ordinary residents of the town.

The Baal Shem Tov asked a difficult, scholarly question. Since the two guests were familiar with the question, the same one that had been asked in the Garden of Eden, as Itzik had related to them, they knew the answer and they said it out loud.

The Tzaddik looked at them and said, "I know that the deceased Itzik told you what happened." From that point on, Reb Zev Wolf Kitzes and Reb Dovid Furkas - who had previously opposed the Baal Shem Tov - became two of the Baal Shem Tov's closest disciples.

Told by Menachem Zeiglebaum

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ISSUE 1249

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The teachings of the Baal Shem Tov are the vessel for the light of the revelation of Moshiach. These teachings, and the pure task of refining and cultivating our emotional qualities, will ultimately spread to people on the periphery and all will realize the truth. We must all clearly know that each and every activity and each and every effort made to spread the wellsprings of Chassidus outward illuminates the darkness of the exile and hastens the coming and revelation of Moshiach. There are no words to describe how difficult it is to remain even one extra moment in exile and how precious one extra moment of the revelation of Moshiach is. *(The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)*



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The date of this letter was unavailable

You asked me to explain the following problem:

Having been brought up to believe that G-d is Master of the world, Whose omnipotent power is not limited in time and place, and Who, moreover, is the Source of goodness and desires His human creatures to live a life based on justice and morality, and insofar as Jews are concerned - a life fully in accord with the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments]-

I find it difficult to understand why such a life is often burdened with difficulties, sometimes even seemingly insurmountable obstacles?

I wish to add that I raise this question not as a sceptic, but because I believe in Divine Providence. Indeed, the more deeply I feel about G-d's benevolent, and at the same time unlimited, Providence, the more difficult I find it to reconcile this seeming anomaly.

This problem is, of course, not new. It is as old as humanity itself. The question has been asked and discussed in many a religious-philosophical work throughout the ages. But the question is still being asked, because the average contemporary thinking individual no longer has direct access to Jewish religious philosophy, either by reason of a language barrier, or for lack of time or knowledge to find the sources. So an attempt will be made here to give at least one explanation, and this, too, necessarily in a limited way, within the limitations of a letter. Obviously, the subject matter could fully be dealt with only in a book or lengthy treatise. Nevertheless, I believe that the salient points raised below hold the key to the problem.

Starting from the same basic premises that G-d is the Essence of Goodness, and that "It is in the nature of the Good to do good," it follows that G-d not only desires the true good, but also that this good be enjoyed in the fullest measure. If such good were given to man by Divine grace, in other words, if it were to be achieved without effort, it would have an intrinsic flaw, for it would be, what our Sages call "bread of shame."

To be sure, G-d could have established a world order wherein morality and ethics would reign supreme, with little or no effort on the part of man. However, obviously there is no comparison between something received as a gift and the same thing attained through hard personal efforts, after overcoming difficult obstacles both within and without, both material and spiritual, and sometimes even obstacles which appear insurmountable. Yet, knowing that there is a Divine command to follow a certain path in life, the person is resolved to fulfill his Divine mission, no matter what the difficulties may be. Indeed, the very difficulties and obstacles which he encounters are regarded by him as a challenge to be faced unflinchingly and to be surmounted: and far from being stymied by such obstacles, they evoke in him untapped powers which reinforce his determination and stimulate his effort to the maximum degree.

Coupled with this is the feeling of satisfaction which is commensurate only with the amount of effort exerted in the struggle, which makes the fruits of victory so much more delicious.

And from the above to a still further point and deeper insight:

The true and perfect way of fulfilling G-d's Will, which is embodied in the Torah and Mitzvos, is not when it is prompted by a desire to discharge an obligation towards G-d and fellowman; nor is it the gratifying feeling of having contributed something towards the world at large that matters, a world that is apart from and outside himself. For so long as the Jew's compliance with the Will of G-d is externally motivated - however commendable such motivation is in itself - it is not yet quite complete. The perfect fulfilment of the Torah and Mitzvos is achieved when such fulfilment is an integral part of one's life, to the extent of being completely identified with the individual, that is to say when the Torah and Mitzvos permeate his very essence and being and become inseparable from him in his daily living.

This is the deeper meaning of the words which we declare daily in our prayer, "For they (the Torah and Mitzvos) are our life" - meaning that just as a person and his life are one, making him a living person - so are the Torah and Mitzvos and the Jew one and inseparable. Such real identification with a thing cannot be achieved and experienced if the thing is come by without effort, or with little effort. Only that thing becomes an integral part of one's life which entails extraordinary effort in striving for it, even to the extent of staking one's life in obtaining and holding it.

Conversely, only a matter which is regarded as an indispensable and integral part of one's life can evoke one's innermost powers, even self-sacrifice.

Continued in next issue

CUSTOMS CORNER

Processed fruits and vegetables

If one grinds a vegetable or fruit, whether or not one cooks it, if the vegetable is still recognizable in the product then the Bracha is the same the vegetable, however if it's ground and unrecognizable then the Bracha is Shehakol. According to Sephardic practice, the Bracha does not change, even if the fruit is unrecognizable.

A WORD

from the Director

This week we read Parshas Behaalos'cha. In this Parsha we find the two verses beginning, "Whenever the ark set out..." These verses are unique in that they are set aside from the verses before and after by upside down "Nun"s [Hebrew letter].

According to several commentaries, these two verses are considered as a separate book of the Torah. Thus, the Book of Bamidbar is divided into three books, and the entire Torah into seven.

The number seven also features in the beginning of this week's Torah portion which mentions the seven branches of the Menorah. Although the Menorah had many different component parts, it was fashioned from a single block of metal.

The Menorah can be interpreted as a symbol for the Torah. Thus, its oneness can be interpreted as an allusion to the unity which pervades the Torah as a whole.

Both the Torah and Menorah are analogous to the entirety of the Jewish people. Just as the Torah and Menorah are made of different details; books and branches, they are nonetheless one entity.

As always, things spoken about in the Parsha must not only be read, but we must also take a lesson from them. Thus, we must find a practical application of the lessons of the Parsha.

One obvious feature to progress in and reinforce is the above-mentioned aspect of unity, which is personified through and through. The manner of going about this though, is not like many think, to merely add in the feeling to care about others, but rather in action as well. Like the Menora a priest in the temple would need to go and light it to shine. So to with a fellow, one is required to go and inspire, to "light up" his friend that he too should shine.

This is the message of the Parsha, do not suffice with just "feeling" connected to your friend but do something. Go out and inspire someone else today.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Some one hundred and fifty years ago in Russia, in one of the forests near the town of Polotzk, worked a Chabad Chassid whom we will call Reb Shlomo.

Reb Shlomo was an accomplished Talmudic scholar but he was also a businessman. He bought sections of forests, brought workers to chop them down, and then sold the logs to lumberyards for a large profit. It was hard work being an overseer. The trees had to be felled properly, taken to the nearby river, and tied and readied for the coming thaw when they would be directed to the lumberyards far away.

His difficult job meant being away from home for a few months till the work was done, but just before sunset he returned every day to the city of Polotzk. There he had rented modest lodgings and spent most of every evening learning Talmud into the night in one of the local synagogues with some twenty other Jews who all learned in pairs.

Reb Shlomo, being a newcomer, didn't have a partner but it didn't bother him. He was an accomplished scholar and was well able to learn alone. But there was also another scholar in the synagogue who also learned alone: Reb Zundel. He was an impressive-looking Jew--tall and stately with a long white beard and was known as the town genius. He must have been in his sixties and was thoroughly familiar with all the texts. In fact, his understanding was on such a different level from the others that he couldn't find a learning partner.

But as serious as he was, he was a good-hearted man and was always available to help others in their learning if they had questions, so it was inevitable that when he saw Shlomo sitting alone he concluded that possibly he needed help and he approached him.

But when he discovered, to his pleasant surprise, that Shlomo was in fact very capable in the complicated labyrinths of the Talmud, he suggested that they learn together. The partnership worked well. Shlomo added a new life and enjoyment to the learning while Reb Zundel contributed deep scholarly insights.

But when the Talmud got around to anything dealing with G-d, as it occasionally did, something happened: Reb Zundel would always fall strangely silent while Reb Shlomo would do all the talking. At first Reb Shlomo didn't think much of it but as the nights rolled by, it became noticeable. Nevertheless, Shlomo acted as though he didn't notice the change.

Until late one night when the topic again came up and Reb Zundel really began to act strangely. He started mumbling and moaning and moving his head as though he wanted to say something but couldn't.

"What is it?" Shlomo asked. "Is everything okay? Are you feeling all right?"

Reb Zundel was strangely pale and sad and was looking silently at the floor.

Suddenly, he looked up and said, "I have doubts about G-d." His eyes filled with tears and he continued in an almost pleading tone. "I have been reading books of philosophy and, to tell you the truth, I have questions that I can't answer.... Many terrible questions about G-d - I mean, How can we

really be sure that He exists? Maybe, G-d forbid, it's our imagination. Or maybe He isn't infinite? I mean....if He exists and is infinite then what does He care what we do? How can it be that He was before the world? What did he make the world from? And more, many more. Sometimes I feel I'm going crazy from these doubts! Can you help?"

Reb Shlomo told him that the teachings of Chassidus deal with these things and said he would do his best.

From that evening on, after everyone else was gone, Reb Zundel would ask one of his questions and they would discuss it. Finally Reb Zundel felt he found some solace in his confusion. Although each answer brought more questions, he finally had someone that he felt understood him and he could talk to.

But then the spring approached, the river thawed, the logs were floated to their destination, and it was time for Shlomo to return home for Passover.

"But what will I do now?!" Reb Zundel asked. "Since you came I feel I finally have someone to confide in, besides the fact that you were a friend in learning Talmud. What will I do when you are gone? I'm already an old man. I can't leave here and follow you." And he wept.

"My suggestion to you," replied Shlomo, "is that you travel to the city of Lubavitch to speak to my Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Rebbe of Chabad. He will answer all your questions."

Reb Zundel had heard of this Rebbe and his Chassidim but he had never been even the least interested. Although he definitely wasn't opposed to Chassidim, he simply was totally devoted to the Talmud.

After a tearful farewell, Reb Shlomo promised to write and they parted ways.

That should have been the end of it but it wasn't.

Some two months after Passover, Reb Shlomo got permission from his wife to visit the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, in Lubavitch for the holiday of Shavuot. It was a journey of several days but it passed like moments and before he knew it he was walking the streets of Lubavitch again, saying hello to other Chassidim he hadn't seen for years.

Suddenly someone came from behind him, put his hands over his eyes, and said, "Guess who?" Shlomo turned around to see none other than the serious, stately Reb Zundel with open arms and a genuine smile on his face.

They embraced and Reb Zundel told his story.

"The Rebbe answered all my questions. For the first time in years I have no doubts or confusion. And he did it in just seconds!"

"What happened? What did the Rebbe say?" asked Shlomo.

"Well, after you left I thought about it and decided to take your advice. After Pesach I left Polotzk and arrived here in Lubavitch. It took a few days of waiting but finally I was given an appointment to be alone with the Rebbe. I went in and told him that I have a lot of questions about G-d that make me confused and sad. The Rebbe looked at me and asked if I knew who Abaye and Rava were. What a question! If anyone else asked me I would have considered him to be an ignoramus, everyone who ever opened a Talmud knows who they are. But something about the Rebbe overwhelmed me.

"I told him that Abaye and Rava were two of the greatest, wisest, and holiest Jews in history and their names are mentioned hundreds of times in the Talmud. The Rebbe looked deep into my soul and said, 'So if they didn't have any doubts, then why do you?'"

"Suddenly all my questions fell away as though a big veil had been lifted from my heart and . . . well . . . I feel like a totally new man! Since then I have been learning Chassidus day and night!"

CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 JUNE 2016

BEGINS	ENDS
4.51MELBOURNE	5.53
4.54ADELAIDE	5.54
4.45BRISBANE	5.41
6.13DARWIN	7.05
4.42GOLD COAST	5.38
5.03PERTH	6.01
4.37SYDNEY	5.36
4.41CANBERRA	5.41
4.31LAUNCESTON	5.36
4.54AUCKLAND	5.55
4.41WELLINGTON	5.46
4.26HOBART	5.32
4.40BYRON BAY	5.36



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA • 18 SIVAN • 24 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:51 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:25 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:57 AM
	MINCHA:	4:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:53 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	MAARIV:	5.45 PM