

Parshas Beha'aloscha

For the week ending 14 Sivan 5756 (21 Sivan 5756)*
31 May & 1 June 1996 (7 & 8 June 1996)*
*week ending dates for locations outside of Israel

Summary

Aaron is taught the method for kindling the *Menorah*. Moshe sanctifies the *Levi'im* to work in the *Mishkan*. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning with the golden calf. After five years of training, the *Levi'im* serve in the *Mishkan* from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, Hashem commands Moshe concerning the *Korban Pesach*. Those ineligible for the *Korban Pesach* request a remedy, and thus is given the *mitzvah* of *Pesach Sheini*, which allows a "second chance" to offer the *Korban Pesach* one month later. Miraculous clouds, that hover near the *Mishkan*, signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the Tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yisro, to join the *Bnei Yisrael*, but Yisro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the *Eruv Rav* (the mixed multitude of Egyptians who joined the *Bnei Yisrael* in the Exodus) some of the people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. Hashem tells him to select 70 elders, the first *Sanhedrin*, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become Prophets. Hashem sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam makes a constructive remark to Aaron which also implies that Moshe is only like other Prophets. Hashem explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other Prophet, and punishes Miriam with *tzara'as*, as if she had gossiped about her brother. Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

Commentaries

TERMINAL ON

"And Aaron did thus." (8:3)

What is a mitzvah?

A mitzvah is a container, a vessel that receives light from above. Our job in this world is only to create these containers, to prepare them and make them ready to receive the light. This light from above, this spiritual energy, is already being broadcast constantly from Hashem. We have no idea what this spiritual light is, or how it reaches this world. Indeed, it is not for us to know. Our only job is to make the vessel to contain it, to prepare and make ready the spiritual 'terminal' to receive the light. This we do by performing and fulfilling the *mitzvos*.

The Rambam writes that if a non-Kohen took the Menorah out of the Sanctuary and the lamps were lit there, the mitzvah is still valid even though the lamps were lit by a non-Kohen. However, **the cleaning and the preparation of the lamps of the Menorah can only be done by a Kohen**, and if anyone else performs this service, the mitzvah is void. Thus, it must be that the cleaning and the preparation of the lamps is **the essential part of the mitzvah**.

Ostensibly, this is hard to understand: How can it be that what seems like a glorified cleaning job is the essence of the mitzvah, and the actual lighting itself - secondary?

The essence of all mitzvos is to prepare and create the vessel to receive the celestial light from Hashem. To make sure that the 'terminal' is turned on and ready to receive. That's our job in this world. We cannot create the light ourselves, but we can make ready the vessel that holds the light so that it will radiate to the world.

(Adapted from L'Torah U'IMoadim -
Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin)

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ANYONE FOR KUGEL?

"And the man Moshe was extremely humble, more so than any man on the face of the earth." (12:3)

One cold Russian morning, the Chafetz Chaim arrived in Moscow. He was met at the station by a solitary colleague. There were no crowds thronging the platform, no sea of well-wishers eager to get a glimpse of one of the greatest human beings to walk the planet. There he was. Just a solitary Jew in a cloth cap carrying a modest travel case. The reason that the station was deserted was because the Chafetz Chaim had written to his colleague and asked him not to reveal the exact time of his arrival. As they were leaving the station, the colleague turned to him and asked him why he had wanted to keep his arrival a secret? For this had deprived the masses from giving him the honor that a *talmid chacham* of his stature demanded. The Chafetz Chaim replied "I have no doubt that you eat *kugel* on Shabbos. If, however, on Friday you suddenly had a strong desire for *kugel*, and you went into your kitchen, the *rebbetzin* would certainly suggest that you eat something else. *Kugel* is very delectable — but it's only for Shabbos. That's why I asked you to keep my arrival a secret — the honor that I would receive from all these people is like *kugel*, it's only for the next world — 'the day that is totally Shabbos.' Our Sages warn us in the strongest possible terms against status-seeking and honor. We are told to be **extremely** humble. Why should it be that this character trait is emphasized over all others? There can be no reward for a mitzvah in this world. A mitzvah is a spiritual entity. This world is a physical world. **So, necessarily, the only reward a person can receive here is a physical reward. But a mitzvah, being totally spiritual, can never be adequately recompensed in this world. The currency just doesn't exist here.** However, if a person derives status and honor from doing a mitzvah, even though this honor is illusory, he has nevertheless received a kind of recompense, *because status and honor are felt as spiritual entities*. Thus, by deriving a surrogate benefit from the counterfeit currency of honor in this world a person can arrive at the First National Bank of *Olam Haba*, and find that he exchanged his priceless diamonds — the eternal reward for his mitzvos — for Monopoly money. *Kugel* may be sweeter than sweet, but if you eat it here, you won't be able to eat in it the next world, in the world that is 'completely Shabbos.'

THE HIDDEN LIGHT

"And Aaron did so" (8:3)

"This teaches the praise of Aaron — that he didn't change." (Rashi)

Why was it so praiseworthy that Aaron didn't change? That he *'did so.'* But surely everyone is supposed to do the *mitzvos* just *'so.'* What special quality did Aaron bring to his lighting of the Menorah that made it *'so'*?

In Sefer Bereishis (Genesis), after each creation, the Torah records 'And it was *so*' — exactly as it should be — complete and perfect. However, when the Torah speaks of the creation of light — "Let there be light!" — it doesn't say afterwards "And it was *so*." And in reality, it wasn't *'so,'* because that special light — *the Ohr Haganuz* — that shone in the six days of Creation had to be hidden away so evil-doers would have no benefit from it. Thus, its creation was not *'so'* — it lacked a completeness.

However, during the long darkness between the Creation and the final denouement of history, there was one moment when that Hidden Light shone in the world: When Aaron kindled the Menorah, he did it with certain *kavanos* (spiritual intentions) that drew down the Hidden Light into the Beis Hamikdash. *The Ohr Haganuz* — the hidden light shone for a brief moment in time in the *Beis Hamikdash* through Aaron lighting the lamps.

When Aaron "did so" it means that he fulfilled the purpose of the creation of light itself. As Rashi says, 'he didn't change,' meaning the light was the unchanged light of the Creation, not the substitute we see today. When Aaron did *'so'* he gave the light the quality of 'And it was *so*.' It was as complete and radiant as it was in the beginning.

(Adapted from Chanukas Hatorah)

Haftorah: Zecharia 2:14 - 4:7

Why is the *Mashiach* referred to as the "flourishing *Wone*"? Even though today it seems that all remnant of the majesty of the Royal House of David has been uprooted and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is still living, hidden and dormant. At the appropriate

moment, the *Mashiach* will appear, like a majestic tree flourishing from barren ground, laden with fruit, revealed to all.

(Malbim)



Insights into the *Zemiros* sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Yam Zeh Mechubad - scifn vz oib

"This is the most precious of days..."

"It is the first of the holidays." ראשון הוא למקראי קודש

In *Parshas Emor* (*Vayikra* 23:2,3) the Torah records the command of Hashem to Moshe to teach the people about all the "mikraei kodesh" - the holidays - which He begins with the command to observe Shabbos.

What does Shabbos have to do with the holidays?

The explanation which Rashi quotes from the Sages is that one who violates the holidays is considered as if he violated the Sabbaths as well, and one who observes the holidays is considered as if he had observed the Sabbaths.

This concept of the holidays as an extension of Shabbos sanctity is expressed in our musical tribute to Shabbos as the first of the holidays.

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