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Parsha Behaalotecha
by Julie Zhuk on 2024-06-29

The Parsha begins with G-d telling Aaron who was a High Priest at the time to light the Menorah inside the Tabernacle. It was at this time that Aaron saw every tribe had presented an offering, but his own tribe had not done so. Aaron's tribe didn't give a sacrifice to G-d when they were supposed to. This was known as the "Paschal Lamb." At the time many of them had not had a Bris yet. This stressed him out. The tribe of the Levites was especially designed for the holy services within the Tabernacle. Aaron felt upset that he and his tribe didn't take part in giving the services to G-d. G-d told Aaron, that he was to create he would be the one to create the light of the Tabernacle. The function of the Tabernacle's light was not meant to illuminate the Tabernacle itself. Instead, it was intended to bring the light of G-d into the world. Aaron was to be the custodian of the light of the world, he was to be responsible for bringing Divine, spiritual light into it. There was a deeper level that we were to understand about Aaron. He was to bring light to the world by lighting the lamp the menorah that is. There was the essence of every one of the Jews. A long time ago there was a king named Solomon who lived and he said, "Man's soul is the lamp of the Lord." Rebbe Shneerson who was the founder of Chabad, once said that the "The Jewish people are called 'lamps.' It means that a lamp comprises a vessel, wick, oil, and most of all it represents a flame.

One must kindle the flame, and then it will shed light." What this is saying is that every Jewish soul is a lamp. Some of these lamps have to be kindled or rekindled. In the Mishnah, there is a book called Ethics of the Fathers and it famously states that Aaron's life mission was to love people and to draw them close to the Torah. Aaron would seek out every Jew and get them to light their lamps. Aaron was a lamplighter. When describing how Aaron would light the Menorah's lamps, the verse uses a term that is the name of this week's Parsha. It means "when you raise up." According to Rashi, Aaron had to coax the flame until it burned on its own. All of the Jewish people are lamplighters. We need to be students of Aaron, the Mishnah instructs us to be like this. Each of us is asked to do the mission to seek out and kindle the spark within the soul of every Jew. We should not just simply kindle the lamp and then walk away. We have to do this in the manner of rising up.

We have to coax the flame until it burns on its own and then it will become a lamplighter. We need to learn how to be a lamplighter as well. We need to do it out of unconditional love for every person we meet and that way we can draw them close to the Torah. Aaron didn't change the Torah. He didn't compromise and he never offered people any kind of watered-down version of the Torah. He told other Jews that he would bring them the Torah. It would be undiluted and he would bring them one mitzvah at a time, if need be, he would do this by bringing them closer to the Torah. The last thing to take away from this week's Parsha is, by being lamplighters we are being ambassador of G-d's light.

Haftara of the Behaalotecha

We see a vision of the Golden Temple of the Menorah. A daily kindling was discussed in this week's Parsha. The prophet, Zecharia communicated to the Jewish people about the building of

the Second Temple and this Haftara opens up about how beautiful the return of Jerusalem will be because G-d will come back! Zecharia told the Jewish people to sing and rejoice. G-d reminded the Jewish people that He would come and be around them. In this week's Haftara, the Jewish people are called the Daughters of Zion. In the Haftara it mentions lighting the menorah, it explains that doing so means shining the light of G-d throughout the whole world. In this week's Haftara, Jewish people are referred to as in the feminine way. It's talking about, "daughter, sister, or mother." Being called a "daughter" when we do a mitzva then we are in the mode of being a servant towards G-d.

At this point, we accept the task that He has given us. Women are called "Sisters" when they study Torah or create a connection with G-d. It means they are trying to get to know G-d. Lastly, women are called "Mother" when they are reaching out and pray towards Him. When mothers have some kind of influence on their children. We get our compassion and kindness from that connection we have with G-d. This connection will help bring Moshiach to the Jewish people. It is in this week's Haftara that G-d describes a scene where G-d is in the Heavenly Court.

Satan was trying to make Joshua look bad, Joshua was the first High Priest. Satan wanted to make Joshua serve in the Second Temple because of the "dirty clothes" he was wearing. G-d didn't see it that way, G-d defended Joshua in this case. G-d decided to reprimand Satan. Instead, G-d said to Satan, "G-d who chose Jerusalem." G-d asked Satan, how dare you persecute an individual like Joshua? Joshua went through such hardships as going into an exile. G-d raised His voice at Satan saying, take the filthy garments off Joshua. G-d said to Satan, I have removed you from being extremely unfair to him. Don't worry I have clean clothes for you.