

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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Though it occupies only three verses in the beginning of our Parshah, the mitzvah of lighting the menorah gives the whole of Behaalotecha ("When you raise light") its name.

The foundation of the menorah/people lamp/soul equation is King Solomon's declaration in the Book of Proverbs: "A lamp of G-d, the soul of man." The founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, delves into this metaphor, finding in the components of the physical lamp a detailed anatomy of the human soul. The following is based on Rabbi Schneur Zalman's analysis and subsequent discourses penned by the later rebbes of Chabad.

The flame surges upwards, as if to tear free from the wick and lose itself in the great expanses of energy that gird the heavens. But even as it strains heavenward, it is already pulling back, tightening its grip on the wick and drinking thirstily of the oil in the lamp -- oil that sustains its continued existence as an individual flame. And it is this tension of conflicting energies, this vacillation from being to dissolution and back again, that produces light.

The soul, too, yearns for transcendence, yearns to tear free of the entanglements of material life and achieve a self-nullifying reunion with its Creator and Source. At the same time, however, it is also driven by a will to be -- a will to live a physical life and make its mark upon a physical world. In the "lamp of G-d" that is man, these polar drives converge in a flame that illuminates its surroundings with a G-dly light.

The soul of man is a lamp of G-d whose purpose in life is to illuminate the world with divine light. G-d provided us with the "fuel" that generates His light -- the Torah and its commandments (mitzvot), which embody His wisdom and will and convey His luminous truth.

The divine oil requires a "wick" -- a physical body -- to channel its substance and convert it into an illuminating flame. The Torah is the divine wisdom; but for divine wisdom to be manifest in our world, there must be physical minds that study it and comprehend it, physical mouths that debate it and teach it, and physical media that publish it and disseminate it. The mitzvot are the divine will; but for the divine will to be manifest in our world, there must be physical hands that actualize it and physical materials (animal hide for tefillin, wool for tzitzit, money for charity) with which it is actualized.

And just as the divine oil cannot produce light without a material wick, neither can a wick without oil. A life without Torah and mitzvot, however aflame with the desire to come close to G-d, is incapable of sustaining its flame. It might generate flashes of ecstatic spiritual experience, but lacking oil of genuine divine substance, these quickly die out and fail to introduce any enduring light into the world.

To realize its role as a "lamp of G-d," a human life must be a lamp that combines a physical existence (the "wick") with the divine ideas and deeds of Torah (the "oil"). When the wick is saturated with oil and feeds its spiritual yearnings with a steady supply of the same, the resultant flame is both luminous and sustainable, preserving the existence and productivity of the wick and illuminating the corner of the world in which it has been placed.

So when divine command, physical body and human life come together as oil, wick and lamp, the result is a flame: a relationship with G-d that is characterized by two conflicting drives, by a yearning to come close coupled with a commitment to draw back. The materiality of life evokes in the soul a desire to tear free of it and fuse with the Divine. But the closer the soul is drawn to G-d, all the more does it recognize that it can fulfill His will only as a distinct and physical being. So while the corporeality of the wick triggers the flames upward surge, the divine will implicit in the oil sustains its commitment to existence and life.

Every mitzvah is oil for the soul: with every act that constitutes a fulfillment of the divine will, our lives are rendered into burning lamps, alight with flames that vacillate from heaven to earth and back again and illuminate the world in the process. (Based on the writings of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch (1773-1827), and the Lubavitcher Rebbe; adaptation by Yanki Tauber.)

When you raise light (8:2) This is to teach us that the lamplighter must hold the flame to the wick until a flame arises of its own accord. (Rashi)

The spiritual significance of the mitzvah of lighting the menorah is that one should be a "lamplighter" who ignites that latent potential within "the soul of man, a lamp of G-d" (Proverbs 20:27).

Here, too, the endeavor must be to kindle the lamp "so that a flame arises of its own accord." In teaching and influencing one's fellow, the objective should be to establish him or her as a self-sufficient luminary: to assist in developing his talents and abilities so that his lamp independently glows and, in turn, kindles the potential in others. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

The korban Pesach (Pascal sacrifice) was offered only once during the Jews' 40 years of wandering in the desert, one year after the Exodus, at the express command of G-d, as it states in this week's Torah portion, Beha'alotcha: "In the second year of their going out from the land of Egypt, in the first month...and the Children of Israel made the Passover offering in the proper season."

For the next 39 years there was no korban Pesach, as G-d stipulated that it could only be offered after the Jews entered Israel. In fact, the bringing of the Pesach sacrifice resumed only after the Jews had taken possession of the land, where upon it was sacrificed every year.

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, interprets the Jews' failure to bring the korban Pesach in the desert in a negative light, despite the fact that G-d had told them to wait. "This was to the disgrace of Israel, that all 40 years they were in the desert they offered only one Pascal sacrifice."

But how can Rashi fault them for following G-d's command? What could possibly be shameful about not offering a sacrifice when they were not required to do so?

The "disgrace," however, was in the Jews' meek acceptance of the prohibition. Had they begged and pleaded with G-d, surely He would have allowed them to offer it, even in the desert.

Rashi thus finds it shameful that 39 years elapsed during which the Jews were silent. Praiseworthy behavior, by contrast, would have been to repeatedly beseech G-d until He acquiesced to their demand.

In truth, had the Jewish people requested permission to offer the korban Pesach before reaching Israel, G-d would have allowed it, just as He gave the Jews who were ritually impure on Pesach a second chance to bring an offering on Pesach Sheini. For G-d listens to our requests. Had the Jewish people but asked, they would have merited to bring the korban Pesach even in the desert.

From this we learn just how important G-d considers a Jew's requests. Asking something of G-d is praiseworthy; not asking Him is "disgraceful."

This also teaches how important it is to repeatedly entreat G-d to bring the Final Redemption "speedily," as we say in our prayers, "Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish," and "May it be Your will...that the Holy Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days."

The initiative must come from us. We must continually beg G-d to bring Moshiach. For when Jews ask, G-d listens. (Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 23) -- lchaimweekly.org

PIRKEI AVOS

He Used To Enumerate Their Praiseworthy Qualities (Avos 2:9)

Each of these students possessed a quality in which he surpassed all others. As a teacher, Rabbi Yochanan did not push them all in a single direction. Instead, he appreciated their uniqueness and endeavored to give each the opportunity to develop his own potential.

This concept can be applied on a larger scale. Each person possesses a particular virtue in which he surpasses all others, even the leaders of the generation. He (and those who help him in his growth and development) should not seek universal conformity, but should strive to cultivate this unique gift. (Sichos Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei, 5743, From: In The Paths of Our Fathers by Eliyahu Touger)

The Alter Rebbe explains (in Tanya chapter 3) that the three faculties of intellect, chochma-bina-da'at, and the seven emotive powers, evolve from the ten supernal Sefirot. All this applies to nefesh, ruach, and neshama (three aspects of the soul) which are encl othed within the body of man. However, mesirat nefesh, the readiness for self-sacrifice for G-d (that a Jew neither desires nor is capable of being -G-d forbid - separated from G-dhood¹ comes from the Essence of the En Sof (the Infinite One, may He be blessed) which transcends the Sefirot, the first of which is the Sefira of chochma.² (From Rebbe's Hayom yom 21 sivan).

*And the man Moses was very humble, more so than all the men that were upon the face of the earth
— Numbers 12:3*

PARTICIPATE IN DAILY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Makos (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chassidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 8:05 PM

SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 7:50 PM
Friday Mincha: 8:05 PM
Early Minyan: 6:30 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:18 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tanya 8:45 AM**
- **Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen**
- **Pirkei Avos 6:50 PM**
- **Mincha 7:35 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit**
- **Shabbat ends 8:50 PM**

Kiddush this week is being sponsored by the Sussman family in memory of their family's yartzheit.

Happy Birthday to Dr. Michla Dauer, Lida Bracha Mahtaban & Avinoam Rav-Noy.

Happy Anniversary to Moshe and Lida Bracha Mahtaban.

GOOD SHABBOS!