


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

**Friday 24 May 2013 - 15 Sivan 5773**  
**Sedra Beha'alotecha**

### THE NEED OF THE TIME

**A** PATHY, LACK OF DIRECTION, LOSS OF MEANING.... THESE ARE SOME of the ills of society today, in general. “What is the point?” a person asks, wearily. Or, he or she goes chasing after some kind of phantom, with great excitement, a dream of something which will solve everything. Then comes reality, with a bump, disappointment and regret at all the time that was wasted.

What is the need of the time? A form of inspiration, an ideal, into which you can put your heart and soul - and it is *genuine*. The real article. Something that lasts.... As usual, the Sedra<sup>1</sup> will provide a useful clue. Let us see.

The Sedra opens with the beautiful golden Menorah which was in the Sanctuary and later in the Temple. The Haftorah, from the Prophet Zacharia, also includes a vision of a Menorah<sup>2</sup>.

The Menorah symbolises the Jewish people. The act of *lighting* the Menorah is the input of inspiration. When the flames of the lamps of the Menorah shine brightly, the Jewish people are alert, aware, connected with each other and with Infinite G-d. According to ancient Jewish teaching, the flame of inspiration in the Jewish people



**In Loving Memory of Mrs Jeanne Gewolb-Sostrin**  
 (Yenta bas Devora) ה'ע"ה - 15 Tevet 5772  
 Dedicated by her Son Dr Roger Gewolb 'שי'

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ultimately has an effect on the entire world. All humanity has the capacity to link together for good, with wholesomeness and healing.

Now, how do the flames of the Menorah get lit? Who lights the Menorah?

The Sedra speaks about Aaron the High Priest lighting the Menorah. However, the Sages add an interesting point. “The Menorah can be lit by an ordinary person”<sup>3</sup>. True, a Priest has to carry out the delicate work of preparing the wick and pouring the oil. But the final touch, lighting the wick, can be done by anyone.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains what this means in terms of the need of the time<sup>4</sup>. Each individual can see himself or herself as entrusted with the responsibility to inspire others. A parent should inspire his or her children, and, quite often, a child can illuminate their parents’ view of life. Each individual can help to bring goodness and illumination to his or her neighbour.

What is the illumination? It is defined by Torah teachings, in terms of the central Mitzvot of Judaism. Love of one’s fellow, Torah Study, Tefilin, Shabbat candles, other Mitzvot. These are genuine expressions of the deep bonds which connect us with each other and with G-d.

The Mitzvot are genuine. They are transmitted by a chain of teachers, like the Priest who prepares the lamp, the oil and the wick. We inherit them, we do not make them up. But then, given the reality of the Mitzvot, each one of us has the power to help our neighbour discover his or her inner illumination, and that very act helps kindle our own flame.

In this way, acting together as a people, we come to life, and with us, ultimately, so does all humanity. The lamps of the Menorah shine, changing darkness to light. And, meanwhile, at every step, the ideal of lighting the Menorah gives a sense of purpose in the ups and downs, and twists and turns, of *life*.

1. Numbers chs.8-12. 2. Zahariah 2:14-4:7; see 4:2. 3. See Yoma 24b, Rambam Mishneh Torah, Laws of Entering the Temple 9:7. 4. See *Likkutei Sichot*, vol.2, pp.317-8.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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*SEDRA BEHA'ALOTCHA*

### **SECOND CHANCES**

Ella came home from school on Thursday, feeling very stressed. Her English teacher, Mrs Blau, had given the class an essay to write and hand in the following week, after the half-term holiday. Ella was troubled about this because her family was driving from London up to Manchester for Ella's cousin's wedding and they were staying until Tuesday.

Ella was very excited, but she felt upset that she would have the pressure of the essay during the whole half-term. She was worried that she wouldn't have time to write it up, with all the excitement of the wedding!

Ella tried to push these thoughts to the back of her head, and instead focused on packing her suitcase. She told herself that while they were away she must give herself time to sit down and write the essay.

The days whizzed by in a flurry of excitement. The wedding was beautiful. Yael, the bride, looked very pretty and regal in her white dress and the dancing was lively. Ella enjoyed every minute, meeting relatives and old friends. She was in her element!

Soon it was time to return home. The journey back to London lasted through the evening and the family came home feeling very tired, but happy. Ella got ready for bed, and then she suddenly remembered about the essay due for tomorrow. Ella had forgotten to do it while she was away! She was too caught up in the excitement! It was too late. She would get into trouble from her teacher. Ella felt very upset. She went downstairs to find her mother, and poured out the whole story to her.

“Oh Ella, dear,” Mrs Levy said, “That is a big shame. Well, it’s very late right now and you need to go to bed, but make sure to explain to your teacher tomorrow. Maybe she will give you a second chance.”

“Maybe... I guess...” Ella shrugged her shoulders.

The next day, during English, Mrs Blau went around collecting all the essays. Ella held her breath. When Mrs Blau came to her desk, Ella’s face turned red. “I-I’m sorry Mrs Blau!” she stammered, “I was away f-f-for my cousins wedding...and I meant to do it..but I forgot.. I’m so sorry! I really wanted to have it done in time...but I guess I was too caught up in the excitement of the wedding...”

Mrs Blau listened patiently to Ella. “Well, Ella, I see you truly feel sorry. I understand that all the wedding excitement got to you and you didn’t have a chance to write the essay. But, I will give you a second chance, this time. It’s actually quite a coincidence that this happened this week.”

“Why...?” Ella asked, hesitantly.

“Because in this week’s Sedra, Beha’alotcha, it tells us about the commandment of the second Pesach offering. G-d told the Jews that if someone could not manage to make it up to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer the Pesach offering on the eve of Pesach, then he gets a second chance a month later to do it. This teaches us that it’s never too late – in some way. Sometimes we actually get a real second chance! So I’ve decided that I will give you until next Wednesday to finish it.”

Ella breathed a sigh of relief. “Oh, thank you so much Mrs Blau! Really, thank you! You can be sure that I will definitely have it ready...”

She was thankful for the second chance, and also for the idea that the Torah itself cares about people who don’t always manage to do things on time!

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