

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל

ד"ה וידבר וגו' בהעלותך תשכ"ו בלתי מוגה

Published for Shabbat Sedra Behaalotecha

22 Sivan 5783, 10 June 2023¹

THE SPECIAL SERVICE OF THE MENORAH

SEDRA BEHAALOTECHA BEGINS WITH G-D'S COMMAND TO MOSES TO TELL AARON ABOUT LIGHTING the Golden Menorah, and tells us that 'Aaron did so', he carried out the command. Why should it tell us that he obeyed the command, isn't that obvious?

Further, Rashi comments on the juxtaposition of this passage to the previous section, at the end of Naso, about the offerings brought by the Princes of the Tribes in a lengthy ceremony of Dedication of the Sanctuary². Aaron was upset that neither he personally, nor his Tribe of Levi, were represented in bringing offerings for the Dedication. G-d told him: Your lighting of the Menorah is greater than their Offerings.

In which way is it greater? This can be understood by considering what it says in Likkutei Torah³ explaining the distinction between the offerings of the Princes and the service of Aaron. The Princes were twelve in number, like the twelve tribes, and represent twelve different kinds of service among the Jewish people. The offering of each Prince was for his Tribe, in their own particular kind of service. By contrast Aaron's lighting of the Menorah was in order to elevate the entire Jewish people. There were seven lights, representing seven

¹ Maamar Vayedaber... Behaalotecha 5726 (1966). Printed in Dvar Malchut of Behaalotecha 5777. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Each day, for 12 days, a leader of one of the 12 tribes (including Ephraim and Menasheh) brought a lavish offering for the dedication of the Sanctuary.

³ by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi: See Behaalotecha, 31b and 32a-b, and see also the Tzemah Tzedek's *Or HaTorah* Beha'alotecha, 323, 325, 353.

different levels in Divine service. But this is the service of the entire Jewish people as they are unified together.

Further, the offerings of the Princes were brought to the outer Altar, in the Courtyard of the Sanctuary. They were physical animals, bulls and rams. By contrast Aaron's lighting of the Menorah took place in the Tent of the Sanctuary, and involved pure olive oil.

In terms of the Divine service of the individual, offering animals on the outer Altar is the service of spiritual elevation of the Animal Soul, and also of those aspects of the material world with which a person is involved. This is carried out by the Divine Soul as it descends into lower levels of existence: successively into the Worlds of Creation, Formation and Action. But the lighting of the Menorah is the service of the Divine Soul in itself, as it is in the World of Emanation.

This explains the significance of the number twelve in the offerings of the Princes. This hints at the twelve copper oxen in Solomon's Temple which carried a great round copper washbasin. The twelve oxen represent the World of Creation, while the washbasin represents Kingship of the higher World of Emanation.

The bringing of Offerings elevates the Animal Soul and the world to the level of the twelve oxen, Creation, and then to Kingship of Emanation, the level of the washbasin. But the lighting of the Menorah elevates the Divine Soul higher and higher in the exalted realm of Emanation, through a flow of Wisdom (Chochmah) which comes from above, expressed in a flow of olive oil. Wisdom is the source of the Divine Soul, and thus this flow elevates the Divine Soul to a higher level.

The seven lights are the Seven Attributes of the World of Emanation, and lighting them expresses their elevation higher and higher, till they reach beyond Emanation to the highest levels of holiness.

A further distinction between the Offerings and the Menorah, is that the elevation of the Animal Soul and of physical existence, achieved through the service of Offerings on the outer Altar, comes through an arousal from below. It was the decision of the Princes, the leaders of the Tribes, to bring their offerings. But the elevation of the Divine Soul comes from the flow of oil, flowing down from Wisdom: it is an arousal from above, commanded by G-d, as it says in the Sedra: 'And G-d said to Moses, speak to Aaron and say: when you light the Menorah...' The arousal from above has a more powerful effect, and elevates the Divine Soul to an exalted level.

Now we can understand the phrase ‘and Aaron did so’. The verb ‘did’ or ‘caused’ should be compared with the same verb in Sarah’s declaration that G-d caused her laughter through the miraculous birth of Isaac. The Midrash tells us that her joy had a tremendous effect⁴, including that it ‘added to the luminaries of Heaven’.

What does this last phrase mean? The Sages tell us that G-d created the sun and moon equally, but the moon complained at this and was therefore made smaller⁵. The sun represents the Tetragrammaton, and the moon the Name Elokim, which usually conceals the Tetragrammaton. But through Sarah, and now also through Aaron, additional radiance came to moon, through the fact that the Name Elokim ceased to conceal.

In the case of Sarah, this transforming power came about through her years of barrenness, when she longed to have a child; for Aaron, it came about through his being ‘upset’ that he did not have the opportunity to bring an offering to the Sanctuary. The pain is transformed to joy and to increased radiance in the cosmos. This expresses a profound transformation of the world.

But even more significant is the fact of simple intimacy with the Divine through the service of lighting the Menorah, the service of the Divine Soul in the inner Chamber⁶, uniting with the Infinite⁷.

[Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care](#)

⁴ ‘Many barren women ceased to be barren, many deaf began to hear, many blind began to see, many who were mad became sane.... Rabbi Levi said: she added to the luminaries..’ (Midrash Bereishit Rabbah 53:8).

⁵ See Rashi to Bereishit 1:16.

⁶ This relates to the interpretation of the verse ‘draw me after You, we will run, the King has brought me into His chamber’ (Song 1:4). First G-d drew the Divine Soul out of slavery in Egypt; then ‘we’, the Divine Soul together with the Animal Soul, will run, towards Sinai. But then at Sinai the King brings ‘me’, meaning the Divine Soul, into the inner chamber.

⁷ The discourse concludes with depiction of the Splitting of Sea into twelve channels (Midrash Mechilta Beshalach 14:16) as representing the service of the twelve Princes, our relationship with G-d now, while the future splitting of the River into seven streams (Isaiah 11:15), at the coming of the Messiah, expresses the service of lighting the Menorah.