

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's portion *Behaaloscha* Hashem commands Aharon through Moshe to light the large Menorah in the tabernacle. In commanding Aharon, Hashem uses the interesting word "*Behaaloscha*." Rashi explains that the word "*Behaaloscha*" contains the root meaning "*to go up*," (as in "*an aliyah to the Torah*.") Thus the Torah chose the term "*Beha'aloscha*," to indicate that when applying fire to light the Menorah, one should make sure that the flame on the Menorah goes up -- "*aliyah*," and burns on its own, before removing the source flame from the Menorah. If lighting a candle with a match, for example, one would leave the match burning on the candlewick until the flame of the candle burns high.

When we look deeper into the symbolic meaning of the verse, we begin to see a beautiful, spiritually uplifting meaning of "*Behaaloscha*..." We read in Proverbs that "*The soul of Man is the lamp of Hashem*." (Mishlei 20:27) We see that the soul is compared to a lamp. Similarly, the Talmud tells us that the soul of a man is called a candle. (Shabbos 30b) We can now begin to delve into a deeper mystical level of understanding of the verse "*Beha'aloscha Es Ha-Neros*..." -- "*when kindling the lamp*..."

Every Jew has a soul which is a spark of Hashem From On High. Hashem is the Origin of the Holy Fire, which is the Source of Life. Hashem keeps the pilot light of the soul alit as long as we are alive, however, we as individuals are responsible for making sure that the Holy Flame of the soul burns high. Let us now re-read the verse based on our new-found understanding... "*when kindling the soul, you shall make sure that the flame of the soul burns high*..."

Practically speaking, Hillel tells us in Pirke Avos "*Do not believe in yourself until the day you die*." (Avos 2:5) The meaning of this teaching is the following: One should never be satisfied with his level of spirituality; one should always seek to grow in Torah and mitzvahs. One must actively pursue spirituality, seeking out more Torah learning, more meaningful prayer and more refined observance of Kashrus and Shabbos, for example. The following amazing true story will inspire us to seek more meaning and spirituality in life.

In Eretz Yisroel, about four years ago, Binyamin Newman began to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah. For six months Binyamin practiced reading the words and the proper sounds of Parshas Yisro (the section of the Torah that was read the week he was born), so that on the Shabbos of his Bar Mitzvah he would be able to read it from the Sefer Torah perfectly. When those six months were up, not only did Binyamin know it, so did everyone else in his family!

On the bright and sunny morning of the Bar Mitzvah Shabbos, the Newman group - grandparents, great-grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends - gathered at the shul for davening (praying). Then Binyamin's big moment arrived. The Sefer Torah was taken out of the Aron HaKodesh (the holy Ark) and placed upon the Bimah, where the Torah is read. Binyamin and his father began to walk towards the Bimah from one side of the shul.

To everyone's surprise, at the same time, another Bar Mitzvah bochur Shlomo Pam and his father began walking to the Bimah from the opposite side of the shul. The Pams were new in the neighborhood, and Mr. Rutkin, the Gabbai charge of the shul's affairs, realized with a shock that he had completely forgotten Shlomo Pam's Bar Mitzvah was also that Shabbos.

The Gabbai stood between the two Bar Mitzvah boys. "I'm so sorry, I forgot that there are two happy occasions this Shabbos," he said. "You both have practiced many long hours in order to be able to read parsha. Let's divide the parsha between you." Binyamin saw the disappointment in the other Bar Mitzvah bochur Shlomo's eyes. "Mr. Rutkin," he said, "I would like Shlomo to read the whole parsha."

"Why?" asked the Gabbai, surprised. "After all...I won't be any less a 'Bar Mitzvah because I did not read," said Binyamin with a smile. Then he leaned over, shook his new friend's hand warmly and said, "Mazel Tov, Shlomy!" Upstairs in the women's section, one mother looked down, her heart filled with relief, while another mother's heart was filled with pride. "Baruch Hashem, Shlomo worked so hard..." whispered Shlomy's mother Mrs. Pam to her sister. "The move to the new neighborhood hasn't been easy for him."

And few feet away, Binyamin's mother Mrs. Newman whispered to her mother, "My 'tzaddik.' One who says 'What is mine is yours, and what is yours is yours, is called a 'righteous' person (a tzaddik). Thank you, Hashem, for helping us bring up our son Binyamin to be such a man..." After the Torah reading, Mrs. Pam rushed over to Mrs. Newman. "I can't thank you enough for your son's chessed (good deed). May Hashem repay you and your family many times over." Binyamin's practicing of his bar mitzvah parsha was not for nothing; it came to good use 4 years later. This we will read about next week, with Hashem's help...

Every day we are tested. We are faced with the choice of honoring ourselves or honoring others. By choosing to honor others, we will all grow spiritually. That way we will kindle the flames of our souls to burn higher and higher. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda "Anyone who brings merit to the masses, no wrongdoing will come into his hands."