

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's portion *Beha'aloscha* Hashem commands Aharon through Moshe to light the large Menorah in the tabernacle. In commanding Aharon, Hashem uses the interesting word "*Beha'aloscha*." Rashi explains that the word "*Beha'aloscha*" 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 "*Beha'aloscha*..." 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*..." The following true story will inspire us to kindle our souls.

Yaffa quickly ran back into the mini-market in Moshav Ohr Yehudah to grab a few more items for supper. She really wanted to make a special supper for her family. Her daughter Chana seemed so content playing by the mound of dirt that Yaffa figured she could walk away for a moment and keep an eye on her from afar. After all, what could happen already? A minute later, she walked outside and called for her daughter, "Come on, Chana, let's go ..." She looked up and realized that Chana was not there. Not one to panic, she ran over to the mound Chana had been playing on. Yaffa figured that the child had probably walked over to the other side. But when she was not there either, she began to scream, "Chaaaannnnnaaaa!"

When they heard Yaffa shrieking, many people ran over and began to search for the young child. It did not take long to discover that the toddler had fallen into the open well in front of the store. Why it had been open was not important; they needed help now!

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, a rescue crew came. They immediately sent a man down into the well. Within moments he confirmed that Chana was down there, but she was no longer conscious. He picked her up and very carefully brought her back up to the surface. They began to try to pump the water from her small frail body and bring it back to life. Yaffa looked on anxiously, crying softly to the Ribbono Shel Olam to grant her daughter a second lease on life.

The men worked on her, feverishly performing CPR. As the child's life hung in the balance, the crowd that had gathered whispered Tehillim softly. Even those who were irreligious on Moshav Ohr Yehudah quickly rediscovered their faith, if only for a moment, and prayed for the young girl's life.

Suddenly, Chana spit out some water and blood. Although she was alive, she still did not open her eyes. Yaffa clutched her daughter tightly and kissed her with all her might. "Please, sweetie-pie. Please, Chana, open your eyes for mommy ... Please ..."

The medics placed the girl in an ambulance and headed to the nearest medical center, located 20 minutes away. As he sped along, the ambulance driver knew that every additional second could spell the difference between life and death.

Finally, the ambulance pulled up to the medical center and the child was wheeled into the emergency room. The doctors and nurses had been called ahead of time, and were aware of the severity of the girl's injury. Within seconds, the team hovered around her tiny body, searching for signs of life and awareness. They checked her and ran tests, as Yaffa sat with some of her friends in the waiting room, anxious for some word of encouragement. After an hour or so, the head doctor walked out and spoke softly with Yaffa. He explained that they would continue to try, but in his estimation there was no way the girl would ever regain consciousness. He also told her that even with the minuscule chance that she would come out of the coma, she would most certainly never recover enough to live a meaningful life. Her brain had been deprived of oxygen for too long. He said it was only a matter of days before the end.

Yaffa looked at him. Her mouth opened wide as she emitted something that sounded like an awful groan. She tried to scream but she couldn't catch her breath. Her Chanale. No, it couldn't be. "Please ..." And then she began to scream. "Ani lo mekabelet — I don't accept it! It's not true. It will not be like that." Her friends tried to calm her, to get her to stop her hysterical crying. Finally, Yaffa declared, "I promise you that my Chana is going to live!" Her friends and the medical staff of the hospital looked at her with compassion and pity. It was tragic that this had happened, but it was even more heartrending that this mother was unable to accept the reality of the situation.

No matter how hard they tried, they were unable to remove Yaffa from her bedside vigil as she looked at her toddler with love and hope. The poignant scene was repeated over and over, day after day. Doctors and nurses alike would nod their heads in sadness as they passed by. There was no progress whatsoever! But one day, after a week of waiting, Yaffa came running through the halls. "She opened her eyes!" The hospital staff did not know if they should believe her. This was the woman who refused to accept reality. There was no reason to assume that she was telling the truth now. One of the nurses went to check it out and she witnessed the same thing. Within moments, word had spread throughout the hospital that the young girl had opened her eyes. Still, that did not mean she was out of the woods. Who was to say that her brain would be back to normal? That seemed to be impossible. Nevertheless, they witnessed a miraculous recovery over the next few weeks. Within a month, the little girl was wheeled out in a wheelchair, to the amazement of the entire hospital staff. As Yaffa was walking out, one of the nurses who had become very close to her over the past few weeks asked her, "How did you know? That very first day, you promised us. How did you know?" She shook her head incredulously, wondering how the mother could possibly have known that her child would recover. Yaffa looked around at the small crowd that had gathered to escort the woman and her child back to their own world. "I have a job that does not provide me with any real money; the few shekels I get paid don't even cover the cost of my traveling expenses. But there is a mikveh in a moshav that is a 15-minute drive from our home, and I go there to help with the upkeep. I thought to myself that there is no way Hashem would allow my child to die through water when I show so much self-sacrifice for a mitzvah that involves water. I knew that it just could not be." When pressed further as to how she knew this, she mentioned that she had been working in the kitchen one night recently and had overheard her husband explaining a Gemara in Bava Kamma (50a). It tells the story of Nechunya the ditch-digger who would dig cisterns along the roads so there should be water for the travelers who were going up to Yerushalayim for Yom Tov. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was told that Nechunya's daughter had fallen into a large pit filled with water; he reassured everyone that she would emerge safely. When the girl was indeed saved, they asked her what had happened. The girl told a remarkable story: A ram (the ram from Akeidas Yitzchak — according to Rashi) who was led by an old man (Avraham Avinu) had saved her. When they asked Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa how he had known that she would be saved — was he a prophet — he answered that he is no prophet. Rather he knew that the Almighty would not punish Nechunya's daughter with something for which her father was moser nefesh (exhibited self-sacrifice) to do a mitzvah. And since he dug cisterns to provide water for people, Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa knew that Nechunya's daughter could not die by drowning in a cistern.

The crowd nodded and watched in amazement as the mother, a true baalas bitachon - a person with true faith in Hashem, headed home with her toddler, who was now Boruch Hashem healthy. (A Touch of Warmth, P. 131, Reb Yechiel Spero) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**