

Parshas B'Haloscha

This week's parsha is B'Haloscha- the parsha we are introduced to the service of the Menorah. The Halacha from Maseches Shabbos (21a) is that you must kindle the light of the candle until it rises on its own.

Given the eternality of the service of lighting the menorah, as explained by Ramban, even though most of the services of the Beis Hamikdash ended with the destruction, the Chanuka lights, instituted by the Chashmonaim, remained in our service.

It is often explained, especially by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, that the Chanuka lights, where we have the obligation of "pisrumei nisa" (make known the miracle) can also be a metaphor for how we have to lift our neighbors. When spreading "light" and positivity, we can exude such behaviors, but it is also perhaps incumbent on us to lift another person, until they are able to be a light on their own, as the halacha in Shabbos 21a tells us about the lighting. The word B'haloscha, means when you "kindle" but the root of the word is Aliyah, when you "lift up" as opposed to "B'hadlicha" when you light (root word hadlaka).

As Rashi says, it is a lashon "Aliya" (rising), because a person must hold a fire to the receiving wick, until the flame rises itself. Our Chassidic masters teach us, that a flame has the power to give without diminishing from itself.

This week's haftora is read from Zecharia 2:14-4:7. Zecharia lived at the same time as Chaggai and Malachi, who were three members of the Anshei Kneses Hagedola. The great assembly that led the Jews in the early Second Beis Hamikdash. It would seem that Zacharia's prophecies start before the building of the Beis Hamikdash, as we was reprimanding the Jews for not building the Beis Hamikdash sooner, and with more enthusiasm, even though they had

permission from Daryavesh. This Haftora is read on B'Haloscha, as well as Shabbos Chanuka. Much of what Zecharia prophesied on is esoteric, and we expect Eliyahu Hanavi to clarify some of its meaning when Mashiach comes.

What is interesting of the passages is the picture he paints in Perek 3 of the confrontation between Yehoshua and Satan, which is a parable for their contemporary issues experienced between the Jews of the time and the local authorities who tried to 'red tape' and kibosh the Jewish rebuilding effort (as explained by Radak on 3:1).

Posuk 3:10 says "on that day the word of Hashem, master of legions, each man will invite his fellow beneath the vine and beneath the fig tree". What I like about this posuk is it mirrors the metaphor I stated earlier, that is drawn from Rashi- that when light the candles of our souls- we can ignite a flame in someone else and lift them up.

In Chapter 4 there was a vision of olive trees and production of oil- which Rashi explains on posuk 6 that Hashem created us to make oil- which is what Hashem wants for use in the Beis Hamikdash. And the path to building the second Beis Hamikdash with Daryavesh, was a miracle- bestowed by Hashem (especially for the supplies).

The oil example- as explained by Chassidus, is the journey of a Jew, we work "and crush" the pit to produce the resultant oil. The oil burns and produces the flame, which we can use to ignite the 'oil' in others. In other words, the parsha and the haftora have this beautiful connection- especially since the Haftora gives us a glimpse into the future, when Mashiach will come, and it will be completed by the generosity and miracle of Hashem.

Good Shabbos