

המוסד למען קדושת חיי אדם



TORAH READING:

Behaalotecha: Numbers 8:1 - 12:16

Sivan 19, 5776

June 25, 2016

This week's Torah portion, Behaalotecha: Numbers 8:1 - 12:16, contains further instructions from G-d to Moses and Aaron. It details the design and lighting of the menorah that is located in the Sanctuary that was built to house the Ark of the Covenant, which safeguards the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments during the 40 year desert journey. The menorah was fashioned miraculously without a goldsmith's handiwork, out of a single piece of gold, signifying the spiritual oneness of the Jewish people, because of and in spite of our many differences. It also signifies the Jewish people in covenant with G-d as a light of spiritual intelligence in the physical world.

In this portion G-d orders the Jews to commemorate the first anniversary of the Passover that took place before the Exodus from Egypt. Some members of the vast multitude were excused from the duty to offer Passover sacrifices because of their close proximity to the dead, representing an unclean or undesirable status. The second Passover, celebrated a month after the first, was instituted to accommodate these members, as well as future generations of Jews who generally strayed from the Divine commandments given at this time. The second Passover represents the power of Teshuvah, the yearning of a lost Jew to reconnect with HaShem and heal past errors through a spiritual transformation motivated by sincere regret and contrition. Through this process the integrated soul of the whole Jewish nation grows brighter, casting its light across the world.

Belief in, dependency on, and guidance from G-d are the spiritual underpinnings of the Divine Covenant established at Sinai. Our misguided attempts to change the world and to control ourselves separate from Torah results in all sorts of tragic consequences - loss of integrity, loss of self respect, loss of life - to name just a few. We can redeem ourselves and our world best by serving HaShem rather than ourselves.