

BEHAALOTHECHA 1981

In the Torah portion Behaalotthecha we have many different things. They do not all seem to fit together. At the end of the Torah portion we learn how Moshe Rabbeinu becomes exasperated with the people. He wants to quit. The people had come to him asking for meat. They had manna. They were well fed. The manna, the Rabbis teach us, would taste like anything they wanted it to taste like. However, the people were not satisfied. Moshe loses patience entirely with them and he said to G-d, "Why did You do evil to Your servant to put the burden of all this people on me? Am I a nursemaid that I should carry them in my bosom?" This is hard to understand. Why was Moshe so angry? This was the same Moshe who had interceded with G-d for the Jewish people asking that G-d forgive them for the Golden Calf and for the incident of the spies and yet here he loses complete confidence in them. Why should this be so? Moshe was an intellectual man. He could understand the sin of the Golden Calf. After all, idolatry has a philosophical background. You can disagree with it and fight it but it is still a logical position. Not going into the land of Israel could also be understood. The people there were well fortified but Moshe could not understand why the people were clamoring for meat when they were well fed. This was beyond him. The people were obviously making an emotional appeal. Many things bothered them and this became their rallying cry. Moshe could not deal with the people. They were acting like children. He complained to G-d, I gave them ideas and they are acting illogically. What should I do, Moshe says, take them to my breast, nurse them? G-d said, yes, this is what you are supposed to do. This reminds me of the time in class when a little girl raised her hand and said, "Rabbi, is it true that the children of Israel received the Torah?" I said, "Yes". "Is it also true that the children of Israel fought the Philistines?" I said, "Yes". "Is it true that the children of Israel entered the land of Israel?" I said, "Yes, it's true, but what are you getting at, what is your question?" "My question is, if the children of Israel did all these things, what were the grownups doing?" All of us are

really 99% children. To be an effective leader you have to understand people's emotions, too. Intellect and ideas are not enough. Moshe lived many times apart from the people. It was his brother, Aaron, who was close to the people. We learn that three items had to be made Mikshah, which means out of one piece. The menorah which symbolizes intellect, the trumpets which symbolizes emotion, and the cherubs which symbolizes children and interpersonal relationships. A leader must appeal not only to the people's intellect, but also to the emotions and be able to bring them together. In this Torah portion, too, we learned how when the cloud lifted over the Ark the people were to travel, but we also learned that Jethro was needed to lead them. How was this possible? The lifting of the cloud just showed they had to travel. Where they would go depended on the leader. Moshe needed his father-in-law because he needed his heart. The mind and the heart must go together. We all know that people are not just influenced by the mind but by their emotions and their friends. I would say probably more people join a Synagogue because their friends are there than for any ideological reason. Also, many join a reform congregation because they want to be more acculturated, an emotional response, while many join a traditional synagogue because they want to feel more Jewish, also an emotional response. It is the job of a leader to bring together the heart, the mind of the people, and to unify them as one. Ideas are not enough. Let us hope that all our leaders in the state of Israel and everywhere will realize this and that they will lead the people with ideas, with emotion, and will unify them as one.

Many times people come to me and say, "Rabbi, I just cannot stand it. I have explained this problem over and over again and the person just does not seem to understand it. He or she is an intelligent person, but I just cannot get through to him." I have heard this many times from parents complaining about their children and children complaining about their parents and spouses complaining about each other. Reason seems to have failed. These people are at the end of their rope. They have reached a dead end in their relationships. What's going on here? Why have these people failed to communicate?

In the Torah portion, Behaaloscha^{echa}, we have something similar happening. Moshe Rabbeinu becomes exasperated. The people, who are well fed by the manna which comes down from heaven, scream and yell at him, "Give us meat, we want meat". Moshe cannot stand it anymore and says, "Did I give birth to this people? Was I pregnant with them that they should say to me, "carry me in your breast" like a nursemaid carries a suckling child?" Moshe was even so upset that he asks G-d to "kill me rather than I should see my own wretchedness". He is at his wits end. He just cannot stand it anymore. The Rabbis ask what's going on here? Why should Moshe be so upset? Just because the people want meat, why should he scream and yell "I am not a wetnurse? Do I have to hold these people in my arms?" Is this the same Moshe who defended the people when they worshipped the golden calf and defended them when they would not go into the land of Israel? Is this the same Moshe who argued with G-d and told G-d to spare the people even though they committed the terrible sin of worshipping the golden calf and the even worse sin of not having the courage to go up to the land of Israel. What was so bad about their asking for meat? Why did Moshe get so upset?

I believe that the answer to these questions lies in the way Moshe approached all problems. Moshe approached all problems from an intellectual perspective. He failed to understand that human beings are not composed of just a mind, an intellect. People are not just ideas. People just do not respond to ideas or concepts. People are emotional beings. You have to know what they mean, not just what they say. Moshe could understand the sin of the golden calf. He never lost confidence in them because of that sin. Moshe was

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an intellectual man. He could understand the sin of the golden calf. After all, idolatry has a philosophical base. You can disagree with it and fight it, but it is still a logical position. With the proper leadership and the marshalling of the proper arguments, you could convince the people to overcome idolatry. The same, too, could be said of the people's sin of not going up into the land of Israel. This, too, he could understand. After all, the land of Canaan was well fortified. It would take training and the knowledge of proper military tactics in order to conquer the land. Moshe could understand their problem. He could intercede with G-d on their behalf.

G-d got angry with the Jewish people when they lost hope, when they thought that nothing was worthwhile, when they thought that since nothing was worthwhile, everything was rotten and that the only thing to do in life was to lessen the heartache, to get as much pleasure as you can with the least pain. A people who thinks this way cannot be G-d's instrument for perfecting the world. It cannot be a chosen people. It will not be able to sacrifice to raise children or to be dedicated. Moshe, though, told G-d not to worry. "I will provide the right leadership. I will show them that they can have a better future. I will convince them that this world is not rotten." He would advance the ideas of Judaism against the ideas of idolatry and he would also deal with their failure to enter the land of Israel because he would give them the proper facts, the proper training, etc.

Moshe could deal with the sin of the golden calf and the sin of not entering the land of Israel, but he could not deal at all with this clamoring for meat. It did not make any sense to him. How could a people who were well fed, who had the manna which would taste like anything they wanted it to taste like, clamor for meat? The people were not being logical. It did not make any sense. Of course, in life many things do not make any sense. Most people do not say what they mean. You have to know what people really mean, not what they say. Moshe did not understand this. He did not understand that there is an important emotional component in people and that you have to deal with it. Moshe did not understand that intellectual guidance is not sufficient alone. In order to lead people, you have to get involved with them on an emotional and existential level as well.

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G-d tells Moshe, "Yes indeed, you are a wetnurse. You have to figuratively hold the people in your arms." The Jewish people, all people, have basic needs. We all have to deal with people as total persons, as people who have emotions as well as intellect. Moshe could not deal with people who were crying for meat when they were well fed. He had to understand that something deeper was going on here. He complained to G-d, "I give them ideas and they act illogically. What should I do?" G-d tells him, "Be a nursemaid. The mind and the heart must go together."

There were three things that G-d told Moshe had to be built out of one piece when they were to be built for the Tabernacle. The menorah had to be built out of one piece. The menorah, which stands for spiritual light and the mind; the trumpets, which stand for emotion; and the cherubs on top of the Ten Commandments, which stand for interpersonal relationships. A leader must appeal not only to the people's intellect, but also to their emotions and he must be able to unify them. The mind and the heart must go together. People are not just influenced by ideas but they are influenced by their emotions and by their friends. I would say more people join a particular synagogue because of their friends rather than for any ideological reasons. A leader must recognize not just rational intellectual factors but also people's emotions and their need for friends.

This, of course, applies in a one to one relationship as well. So many times I have told parents or children or spouses to not just listen to other person's words, but listen to what the other person really means. Look at the emotions involved and look at the other people involved. It is not enough just to deal with people as if they are *mere* only ideas. Most times people do not give you their real reasons anyway. They only give you what they think are good reasons. Know what people mean not what they say and you will be able to solve your problems much better. Look at the emotions involved. Look at the friends involved. You will get through. Learn to listen not only to words but to the whole situation.

Yes, G-d told Moshe, sometimes you have to be a wetnurse. A baby cries and you have to

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know what he means. All of us, many times, just cry. We use words but we are really just crying. We have to know what each of us means. If we do, then we will be able to solve our problems and we will get through, and our relationships will remain meaningful.

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In the Torah portion, Behaaloscho, we learn how Moshe Rabbeinu cannot take it anymore and asks to be relieved of the leadership of the Jewish people. He says, "Have I conceived this people? Have I brought them forth that You should say unto me 'Carry them in thy bosom as a nursemaid carries a sucking child'?" Moshe was so disgusted that he even said, "It is better that You kill me than I go on this way". Why did Moshe get so discouraged? Is this the same Moshe who pleaded for the Jewish people when they sinned with the golden calf? Is this the same Moshe who interceded for the people when they listened to the spies' evil report about the Land of Israel and G-d wanted to do away with them? How come Moshe did not get discouraged in those instances, but he became discouraged now, and what is Moshe complaining about being a nursemaid and carrying the people in his bosom? Moshe could understand how the Jewish people sinned at the golden calf. After all, a belief in idolatry is an intellectual position. He could refute this position. He could show them intellectually how idolatry was wrong. He could also understand how come they did not want to go into the Land of Israel. After all, they had never been there before. They did not have all the facts. Once he would give them all the facts he could show them the error of their ways. But this sin here of screaming and yelling for meat when they were well fed Moshe could not understand. Here the people had been given the manna from heaven. It could taste any way they wanted it to taste. Why were the people so upset? This was totally illogical. Moshe erred because he did not realize that people are just not disembodied minds. People have emotions and Moshe could not deal with an illogical problem. G-d tells him, "Yes, Moshe, you have to be a nursemaid to them. You have to deal with them on an emotional level as well." Unfortunately, today many people make this same mistake. They fail to realize that we human beings are much more than just a mind. Many people today feel that if they understand the dynamics of a situation then they are immune from any consequences of their actions. Understanding a process allows you to be free from its consequences. Many people especially in interpersonal relations will say, "I will not get jealous, I know what is going on" or "I understand everything involved so I will not get angry". This, of course, is foolishness. Just because they understand the principles of gravity does not mean that if they jump

off a cliff they will not be hurt. Understanding all the reasons for religious observance will also not make us exempt from keeping them. In the beginning of this Torah portion we learn about the menorah. We refer to the menorah as a seven-branched candlebra, but actually it is only a six-branched candlebra. The middle shaft is just the main shaft upon which the menorah rests. Why should this be referred to as a seven-branched candlebra? The Rabbis explain that all the other six branches had to be illuminated by the central shaft which stood for the Torah, that all aspects of man must be illuminated by the Torah not just his mind but also his emotions and all his drives. Unfortunately, today in our educational system we stress many times just the mind and forget about the emotions so, therefore, there are many brilliant people who act in an infantile way. Their emotions have never been trained. We have to know when to cry and when to laugh, when to sing and when to mourn. It is wrong to go into a house of mourning and play dance music. It is also wrong to go to a wedding and mourn. We have to know how to deal with people on an emotional level as well as an intellectual level. G-d tells Moshe that He is going to give him 70 elders to help him with the Jewish people. What, though, happened to the original elders? The Rabbis say that these original elders lacked certain qualities which are necessary in order to teach us how to use our emotions. The Rabbis say that when Moshe first came to Egypt all the elders were enthusiastic about his mission to free the Jewish people. They offered to go with Moshe to speak to Pharaoh, but as Moshe and Aaron came closer to the palace each one of them dropped off one by one until only Moshe and Aaron were left. Their resolve and courage had vanished. Later on at Mount Sinai when the Torah was given it mentions that they ate and they drank. These leaders were interested only in the Kiddush not in the davening and religion. They had no reverence. They used religion for their own purposes. Shortly afterwards they perished. Finally the new leaders were chosen because in Egypt these were the people who refused to punish their fellow Jews for not making their quota of bricks when Pharaoh would not give them straw and they, themselves, were beaten. In order to affect people on an emotional level a person needs courage, resolve, reverence, dedication, and

self-sacrifice. You just cannot appeal to people's reason. You must set an example. It is a slow process, but it is the only one that really works. There are no shortcuts. These same qualities are essential to be successful in life. Moshe wanted just to appeal to the mind. Although Moshe had these other qualities as well, he did not realize that they are as important as reason. In life we many times have to take the slow road of hard work and dedicated example in order to be successful. Shortcuts do not work. I am reminded of the story of a fellow who offered \$1,000,000 to a labor union representative who would win a gold tournament. One of the carpenters in the union called the union and said, "You know, Jack Nicklaus used to be a carpenter when he was in college". The other fellow said, "Oh, how can we use him? He doesn't have a union card or anything". The carpenter said, "But, it's a \$1,000,000". The union representative said, "O.K., we'll see what we can do". The next day the carpenter called the head of the union again and said, "Jack Nicklaus did go. He birdied the first four holes and birdied the last four holes". The union representative said, "Well, did he win?" The carpenter replied, "No, some plumber named Arnold Palmer won". Shortcuts never work. Reason together with dedicated leadership is the only way to eventually change people.

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In the Torah portion Behaloscho we have many things which do not seem to go together. The Torah portion begins by telling us about the Menorah, how it was to blaze with one light. Even though it had seven branches it was to blaze together as one light. Later we learn about the dedication of the Levites when we learn about the second Passover, that Jews who were ritually unclean and were not able to celebrate the first Passover were permitted to observe. We also learn about the cloud which covered them by day and the pillar of fire which hovered over them by night. We also learn about the trumpets of silver which were blown to call the Jewish people together and we learn about the order of march and how the Ark was taken out and returned and then we learn about the complaints the Jewish people had against Moshe. In fact, we learn how when the Jewish people complained about meat he wanted to throw in the towel and give up. He said, "Should I carry them as a nursemaid carries a sucking child?" He had enough. He even said, "If you deal with me this way so you will deal with me, kill me so I will not see in my wretchedness." This Torah portion seems to contain many unrelated things. It seems strange that this Torah portion starts by teaching us about the menorah when we already learned about it in Vayikra, the Book of Leviticus. What did the Torah have to tell us about the menorah here? It seems to me that by placing the details of the menorah here the Torah was telling us what this Sedra is all about. We all know that it is not the material things which cement together relationships. It is the spiritual things. Marriages, synagogues, and communities stay together when they share certain values. When they no longer share these values they split. The individuals must appear together as one blaze of light. There were seven branches of the menorah but they all appeared as one. The light merged into one another. How, though, can we maintain this spiritual unity? How can we assure that marriages and communities and institutions stay together? The rest of the Torah portion, I believe, is telling us how they can. First of all, there must be faithfulness, devotion to one another. I am surprised many times when young people come to me and say, "I can't see what is wrong about getting married and still having a girlfriend." Maybe they can't see it, but I am sure their spouse can. They must be faithful to the institution that they belong

to. Secondly, they must not try to get out of things that they could get out of. They must be willing to help each other. The Jewish people who did not celebrate the first Passover did not have to ask to celebrate a second Passover. They were exempt from the first Passover because they were doing a Mitzvah, burying the dead. This ritually defiles but it is not a moral sin. They could have said, "We are engaged in a Mitzvah and can, therefore, forget about celebrating Pesach", but they did not. Just because a person is away on a birthday or anniversary does not mean they cannot celebrate it when they come back. Just because a person serves on an important committee does not mean that he cannot make a nice contribution. Even we we can get out of doing things legally we should not do it. Thirdly, we have to let everybody blow his own horn. Moshe's trumpets were his own. It was only the Shofar that was passed from generation to generation. Every leader had their own trumpets. Everybody must be allowed to do their own thing but in faithfulness. Today many young people want to do their own thing but not in faithfulness, and I am not just speaking about sexual faithfulness. The person who stays out late and is not concerned with eating with his family or being with their family is not doing their own thing with faithfulness. They must make sure they have time for their family and institution. Also, a person must be a cloud during the day and a fire at night. During the periods of depression they must offer hope. During periods of success the person must counsel moderation and not let success go to their head. They must shield them from getting a big head. Finally, in every relationship you must deal with complaints. Some complaints are valid and some are not. You have to know what people mean and not what they say. Moshe was an intellectual. He could not understand why his people were complaining about meat. He wanted to give up. He did not understand that they were not complaining about meat but their lives in general, about the difficulty of living by the Torah. Just like in the army people are always complaining about the food, but that is not really what they are complaining about. They do not want to die. It is the same in a hospital.

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People are complaining because they are frightened of the operation, of what is happening to them. A person must understand what the person is really complaining about. In order to have a true relationship, in order for spiritual values to cement a relationship a person must be faithful, must allow the other person to do his things within faithfulness. He must do things that he or she could legally get out of. He must be an inspiration in dark times and a source of caution in times of success, and know what a person really means and not what he says. If he does these things then his relationships will shine bright as a symbol of spiritual relationships in Judaism. I am reminded of the story a little kid told me the other day. He said, "Rabbi, what happens when a group of ducks fly upsidedown?" I said, "I don't know." He told me, "They quack up." Unfortunately, in life if people do not enhance their spiritual relationships they crack up, too.

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In Behaloscho we learn how some people came to Moshe Rabbeinu and said, "It is not fair that we could not celebrate Pesach. We were ritually unclean, but we want to take part in this mitzvah." The rabbis in the Talmud discuss who these people were. Some say they were the uncles of Nodov and Avihu, and they became ritually unclean when they pulled their bodies out of the Sanctuary. Others say they were other people. The question is asked, why is the Talmud interested in who they were? The answer is that these people could have gotten out of doing a mitzvah. They had a good reason not to celebrate Pesach, but, yet, they chose not to. Many times in a relationship you can get out of doing a certain things with a good reason. If the relationship is meaningful to you you will not want to do it. This same lesson is brought home when we learn about the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin had to meet in the "Leeshcat HaGazeet - in the chamber of huge stones." If it did not meet there many of its powers were abrogated. They could not impose a death penalty, etc. This chamber of huge stones is unique because half of of it was holy, a part of the Temple, and half of it was "Chol" or on secular ground. The judges sat on the secular ground and the defendant would stand on the holy ground. The judges would always remember that that human being was holy and not just decide laws in a cut and dried way. They should always realize the holiness of every human being, that they should understand a human being and not just take advantage of the letter of the law. The same thing is true of the priests. They would always come into this chamber of huge stones to say the Shma. They would remind themselves that when they offered the sacrifice of the people they should remember that even though the people are not perfect, they still are holy. There may have been ways to disqualify a person's sacrifice, but they should not do it. It is important to always remember that we should not try to get out of things even when we have a good excuse, and we should always judge everybody favorably.

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The Torah portion, Behaloscho, starts out by describing the Menorah. This seems to be a very strange place to put a description of the Menorah. We learn how it was to be made of one piece of gold, etc., how Aaron had to prepare the candles, etc. It does not seem to fit in with the rest of the Parsha. The rest of the Parsha is composed of many subjects: the deciation of the Levites; we learn about the second Passover; we learn about how the Jewish people traveled based upon the pillar of cloud; we learn about the trumpets that were used to assemble them; we learn about many of the complaints which the Jewish people had against Moshe and G-d and the complaints Miriam had against her brother. In this Torah we do not seem to have anything which indicates that the Menorah belongs here.

However, if we look at this Parsha more carefully, I think we can see why a redescription of the Menorah was found here. After all, the Menorah was described in other portions with the building of the Tabernacle. It was repeated here because this Torah portion, basically, speaks about relationships, and the Menorah is a symbol of the Jewish people's relationship to G-d. The Menorah is a symbol of the warmth and light which must emanate from relationships. It is a symbol of the dedication and devotion which we need in order to maintain relationships.

Every item that is mentioned in this Torah portion can really be related to this theme. I will not go into all of the items because it would take too long. However, I would like to point out three. In this Torah portion we learn how Moshe Rabbeinu loses patience with the people. He has had enough. He wants to quit. The people have come to him with a complaint for meat. They want meat. They are tired of the manna. Here we have the great Moshe who always interceded for his people. When G-d wanted to destroy the people after the sin of the golden calf and after the sin of the spies, he saved the people by his pleadings, but here he has had enough. Why should he be so upset? In fact, he screams at G-d, "Did I conceive this people? Did I give it birth so You should say to me, 'Bear them in your bosom'? Am I a nursemaid to them?" Moshe could understand the people's sin of the golden calf. After all, paganism has a

philosophical base. It is wrong, but Moshe could understand why people would believe in it. He could understand the sin of the people not going into the land. They were afraid and not militarily prepared. Moshe could not understand how people who are well fed could make such a fuss because they did not have meat. The manna would taste like anything they wanted.

Moshe said, "Am I a nursemaid? These people are not logical. I cannot deal with them." G-d, in effect, tells Moshe, "Be a nursemaid." In any relationship we have to remember that people do not just have intellects. They also have emotions. The complaint of meat was, of course, just a pretext. Moshe should have been more sympathetic to the people. He should have looked at what really was bothering them. People, when they are emotional, say a lot of things they do not mean. In order to preserve any relationship you have to know how to discount what people say in anger or when they are hurt. In order for any relationship to blaze bright, the people in the relationship have to be a nurse to each other. After all, people have emotions and, many times, they are only taking out aggravation and frustration and do not mean what they say.

The second element is to always think the best of people. So many times in relationships spouses or others always think the worst of the other. Everything they do they construe it in a wrong light. G-d gave Moshe a council of 70 to help him rule the Jewish people. Originally, 72 people were chosen but two were left off. These two later prophesized in the camp that Moshe would die and Joshua would be the leader. When Joshua heard about this he wanted to have them shut up, arrest them, put them in jail. Moshe would not hear of it. He understood they were prophesizing the truth. They did not mean anything bad by it. He knew that in any relationship you have to give the other party the benefit of a doubt and look at what they do in the best light, not the worst light.

Finally, the third point I want to make is found in the section which deals with the Levites. It says that they were "given, given" which means that they were doubly given to help the priests in the Temple. The rabbis say, why was the word "Nesuneem - given"

mentioned twice, and their answer was the Levites had two duties. They were to physically bear the Tabernacle in the desert, and they were to sing in the Temple. Without the burden they could not have the song. A Levite could not decide he was going to only sing and not bear the burden. In any type of relationship each party has to bear the burdens. They just cannot sing the songs. In fact, the songs will be sweeter because each of them has borne the burdens.

This Torah portion teaches us how to make our relationships burn bright in the hearts of each party in the relationship, how to keep relationships fresh and warm. They require us to understand each other emotionally, to bear the burdens as well as the songs, and to look at each party in the relationship in the best light, not the worst light.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a couple who were always bickering and fighting, but somehow they managed to make it to their 50th wedding anniversary. After they came home from the anniversary party, the man turned to the woman and said, "I am proud of you." She cupped her ear and said, "What's that? What's that?" He said, "I am proud of you." She cupped her ear again and said, "What did you say? What did you say?" He said, "I admire you. I admire you." She swiftly replied, "And I am tired of you, too." That is not putting the best light on things.

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In the Torah portion Behaloscho we learn about the menorah, that the menorah has always been the prime symbol of Jewish life, not the Mogen David. The Mogen David is a symbol of late origin, but the menorah is the major symbol of the Jewish people. We are called upon to shed light in the world without doing violence. Just as a menorah shed light in a dark room without doing any violence, so should Jews serve as role models to clarify situations without doing violence. Light is the symbol of our faith. We know that scientifically light, in order to be light, must have two properties: it must always move; and it must bear a message. Light is a peculiar phenomenon. In fact, because of the latest discoveries of what light is, we now can believe in G-d. Light is both a particle and a wave. When this proposition, which is known as quantum mechanics, was first proposed by Nils Boer and accepted by Einstein, they got into a dispute, these two Jews. Nils Boer said that is all we will ever know about light, that it is both a wave and a particle, which is, of course, a logical impossibility, but this is what it is. It was then that Einstein made the famous comment, "I don't believe that G-d plays dice with the universe." He thought our minds should be able to comprehend light and not have to be satisfied with an explanation which, on the surface, seems to be an illogical explanation. How can something be both a wave and particle at the same time? But it is. We now know, because of modern science, that on a sub-atomic level, most things are just probabilities, that things are not as clear and mechanistic as we thought before. We Jews were swept up with the idea of Newtonian physics where everything was pre-determined and where there seemed to be no place for G-d to work, but now we know that G-d can work in the universe, that most scientific laws are probabilities, and that G-d can seem to work in

the universe without seeming to act. There is a certain amount of play in these scientific laws, that there are many things we do not understand that in a certain realm look all mechanistic but if we probe deeper we see they are not mechanistic at all, that cause and effect is not as clear cut as we once thought. This is, of course, what light teaches us. It teaches us that when we look at the universe we must realize there is a certain play in it, that light can be both a particle and a wave, that G-d can exist. We intellectuals now can believe in G-d and still hold our head up high unlike a few years ago no self-respecting intellectual could believe in G-d because this seemed to fly in the face of all logical principles.

We Jews have chosen light to be our symbol because light is something which must bear a message. In order to be a Jew you must bear a message. The message is that we can perfect this world and make it a better place, and we can begin with ourselves. For a long time people thought that when something burns it burns because it has a certain property called flougistine, that it was the flougistine which made something burn. This theory had many holes in it but was not replaced until LeVosier discovered oxygen. He discovered that it was not flougistine in material which made it burn but it was when an object combines with oxygen that it burns. That is the same thing with us. We learn we spread light in the world when we combine with others, when we empathize with others, when we understand others. That is when the glow and warmth and enthusiasm and light of Judaism comes to the fore. That is, of course, what we always must do. We must always make sure that the light of Judaism comes to the fore because we bear a message.

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The Torah portion Behaloscho opens with the words, "And G-d spoke to Moshe saying, 'Speak to Aaron and you will say to him, "When you will light the lamps toward the face of the menorah, seven lamps they shall cast light.'"

The word Behaloscho is very strange. That is not the normal word for lighting the lamps or candles. Every Shabbat when the Shabbat candles are lit, we say, "L'Hadleek," not "L'Haalos." The word Behaloscho really means when you elevate. It really does not have the full connotation of lighting. What's more, we know that the menorah was barely five feet tall, yet Aaron was commanded to stand on a stool when he was to light the menorah. Actually, anyone could light the menorah. Aaron just had to clean the lamps and prepare the wicks. The menorah was a symbol of spiritual things.

We know that especially because the number seven is used. There are seven lamps to the menorah. We all live in six physical dimensions: up, down, east, west, south, north, but we also live in a seventh dimension, a spiritual dimension. That's why the seventh day is holy and the seventh month contains so many Jewish holiday: Rosh Hashonna, Yom Kippur, Succot, Shmini Atzeres, and Simchat Torah. Aaron was to prepare the wicks so that others could find their true spiritual potential.

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Light is also a symbol of spirituality because from one candle you can light thousands of candles, and the light of the first candle is in no way diminished. Spiritual things are different than material things, because material things, once you give them away, are gone. It is true that we say that when a person gives charity, G-d will make it up tenfold, but the fact of the matter is, once you give something away, it is gone. This is different from spiritual things. The more you give away, the more you get. The more that you teach others, the more you learn yourself.

Aaron had a spiritual character. He was constantly bringing out the best in others. That is the mark of a true teacher. Can he bring out the best in others? Usually, the best coaches in sports were never superstars. The best coaches are those who can bring out the best in those who they coach. Superstars usually are too egotistical and do not have the patience to bring out the best in others.

Aaron was commanded to have a stool before the menorah so the children could light the menorah, so he could elevate them.

We all have spiritual potential, but the potential has to be elevated, has to be

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brought out. Also, as Rashi explains by using the word Behaloscho, it means that the flame had to be lit so well that it would continue to burn by itself. We have to increase the spiritual content of our lives so that this spiritual content will be self-sustaining. We have to inspire especially our youngsters to realize that they can be better than they are now, that they can reach great things morally and spiritually, that they can do this even without our aid.

There are two ways of looking at spirituality as personified by the schools of Shammai and the school of Hillel. Shammai was a perfectionist. That's why he said, in referring to the Chanukah menorah, that on the first night we had to light eight candles, on the second night seven candles, on the third night six candles, etc., while Hillel said the exact opposite. On the first night we light one candle, on the second night two candles, on the third night three candles, etc. We must constantly rise in spirituality. Shammai demanded perfection immediately. After all, he said the oil was diminishing. Hillel, on the other hand, said that human nature was different. If you demand perfection, you may end up with nothing. We do not stand at the bottom of a ladder; we stand at the middle of a ladder. Unless you encourage people to do better, they could even

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do worse.

I am reminded of the story of a mother whose child always got B's and C's, but the child made Herculean efforts and came home one semester with a report card with all A's. The mother looked at the child and said, "Why didn't you get A+'s?" That child was crestfallen, and never again did that child get more than one A. All his grades reverted to B's and C's. We must encourage people. We cannot push them down.

In fact, that is how the rabbis look at history. They look at all the religions that have come out of Judaism, and they are favorably disposed toward them because they are an advance on what was before. True, they have changed different things in our religion, but they have made progress in the world. We know that Christianity, Islam, even socialism all sprang out of Judaism. In fact, the modern world is based on a great deal of Jewish input. Three of the four greatest shapers of the modern world were Jews: Einstein, Freud, and Marx. Darwin was not Jewish. His idea, though, of continuous evolution has been supplanted by the idea of catastrophic evolution. After catastrophes, creatures

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must adapt very quickly or die. We all need to elevate ourselves. We all need to help each other elevate each other. We have to do as Aaron: bring out the best in each other. We must understand each other and especially what makes us each cry so that we can overcome the impediments to our spiritual elevation. We must lift each other up. This we can only do if we are sensitive to each other, and if we are willing, so to speak, to clean the lamps and prepare the wicks.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a man who was visiting a zoo when he heard a 5000 pound elephant died. He noticed a man sobbing uncontrollably. He asked him, "Were you the caretaker of the elephant?" The man said he wasn't. He asked, "Were you the trainer of the elephant?" The man said he wasn't. He asked, "Were you a fan of the elephant?" The man said he wasn't. The man then asked, "Why are you crying?" The man replied, "Because I am the gravedigger for the zoo." We all have to lift up each other, add to each other's spirituality. We cannot do this by knocking each other and demanding perfection, but we have to understand each other's pain so we can help each other overcome that pain and rise spiritually. Let us hope and pray

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that we will do this so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.

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In the Torah portion, Behaloscho, we learn how Moshe Rabbeinu loses heart, how he is ready to give up, to throw in the towel. The people have come to him demanding meat. They tell him, "We remember the fist that we ate in Egypt free, and the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, and now our souls are all dried up. There is nothing. We have nothing to anticipate except for the manna." Moshe said to G-d, "Why did You do evil to Your servant, and why have I not found favor in Your eyes, to put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive them? Did I give birth to them that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom like a nursemaid carries a suckling child.' I am not able alone to carry all these people because they are too heavy for me. If this is how You deal with me, kill me, for I shall not see my hard times."

Why did Moshe give up now? This was the same Moshe who, when G-d wanted to destroy the Jewish people and start a new people from Moshe after they worshipped the golden calf, stood before G-d and said, "No, no, don't do that. I can change the people. I can make it so they will not do this again."

This was also the same Moshe who also stood before G-d after the people had listened to the evil counsel of the spies and after G-d again wanted to destroy

them, who said, "No, no, I can get them to change their ways." How come in those two instances Moshe was willing to stand up for the people and even challenge G-d for their sake, but here he gave up. After all, all they did here was to ask for meat.

Perhaps we can understand this if we understand that Moshe was an intellectual. Moshe could understand things that were logical, but he could not deal with things that were illogical. We say that the manna fell because of Moshe, because "man" means, "What is it?" Moshe was able to delineate beliefs and practices and give people direction. We say that the clouds of glory covered the Jewish people because of the merit of Aaron. They stood for ethics. Aaron was a pursuer of peace and a lover of peace, and knew that religion did not just give people goals and explanation for life, as Moshe propounded, but also had to deal with interpersonal relationships. The rabbis say that the well of water accompanied the people in the desert due to the merits of Miriam. Religion has to give people hope when they are afflicted with disease and poverty and when they, themselves, have brought hopelessness upon themselves and the loss of self-esteem because of their sins. Moshe stood for the mind. Religion must fill our minds and must give us concepts and beliefs to live by. Moshe could

understand how the Jewish people could have worshipped the golden calf. After all, paganism is an intellectual position. He could wean them from that intellectual position by showing its faults, and through logic and reason, he could bring them once again to monotheism. He could understand how a slave people would be afraid to enter the land of Israel where they would have to battle giants, but, again, through training and logic, he could give them the will to enter the land, but to ask for meat when you are well fed? Moshe could not understand that at all. After all, the manna would taste like anything they wanted. Why were the people complaining? It did not make any sense. They had food. They had manna, which could taste like meat. Moshe could not accept the fact that people are illogical, that people are also emotional beings, and many times people complain about one thing when really they are mad about something else. The rabbis say that the people were complaining about the meat because they did not like the new restrictions the Torah had placed upon them, especially the sexual restrictions. A human being has a soul, which is composed of two parts: the intellectual and the emotional, and it is not just enough to feed our minds; we also have to feed the emotional part of our soul.

That's why the rabbis teach us that feelings are so important. Unless we give

people positive feelings, they will fill their need for feelings with negative feelings. That's why there is so much sadism and sex and violence on television, because unless we give our youngsters positive feelings, they will have to fill their need for feelings with all sorts of negative feelings. Moshe did not understand that people need positive feelings as well as intellectual, mental stimulation. He begged for help, and, therefore, G-d said, "Gather together for Me 70 men from the elders of Israel." They would help Moshe. They would help him understand that people do not always mean what they say.

We know, too, that there are three things that had to be made out of one piece, two of which are mentioned in this Torah portion. One was the trumpets which called the people together. They stood for the emotions. The menorah also had to be made out of one piece. It stood for the mental, intellectual concepts we all need. The third item was the ark cover, which held two cherubim who faced each other in a warm embrace. The rabbis tell us when the Jewish people did well, they faced each other; when the Jewish people sinned, they turned away from each other. We human beings need intellectual stimulation, we need positive feelings, and we also need friends, interpersonal relationships. All these must be made whole. You just cannot stick them onto a way of life which

is inimicable to Torah beliefs or positive feelings or positive interpersonal relationships. We know that people are not just minds, and they are not just emotions, and they are not just members of a peer group. They are a combination of all three things. We know that a religion which just appeals to the mind and not to the heart and does not allow a person to have a social life will not endure, and a religion which is only emotional will not endure, and a religion which is only based on peer pressure will not endure. We need all three. A religion which is dry and has no emotion, which is doom and gloom cannot capture the hearts and minds of our young people. We need singing. We need dancing. We need feelings. Without feelings, a religion will die. Unfortunately, many people do not realize this, and they think a religion must be only of the mind, but that is wrong. Also, I dare say that most people join a synagogue because that is where their friends are rather than because of any ideological position. We need ideas, we need feelings, and we need friendships. If we have these things, then a religion will survive.

That is one of the reasons why a synagogue has three names. It is called a Beis Medrash, which means a house of learning. It must appeal to our mind. It is also called Beis Tefilah, a house of prayer, and prayer appeals to our emotions.

We must have the ability to express ourselves when we pray, to sing, etc. It is called Beis Kenesis, a house of assembly, where our friends gather. Moshe did not understand this. He thought all religion was composed of ideas and ideals, but it is not. It is also composed of feelings and friendships. It is meant to teach us, too, that we have to look at what people mean and not just what they say. Moshe could not do that until now. A baby cries, and that cry can have many meanings. It can mean the baby wants to be changed, the baby wants to play, etc. A mother knows what the cry means, even though to us it seems the same sound. Many times adults also cry, although they use words. We have to understand what the words really mean, not what they say.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a woman who called up her husband and said, "Honey, the car will not start. There is water in the carburetor."

Her husband said, "Darling, you don't know anything about cars. How do you know there is water in the carburetor?" She said, "Honey, believe me, there is water in the carburetor." He said, "Okay, okay, tell me where the car is." His wife replied, "It's in the swimming pool." We have to understand what people mean, not just what they say. Let us all hope that we will all understand that people need ideas, like Moshe knew, but we also need emotions and friendships

and the ability to understand each other. Let us hope that we will have all these things so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.