

The Book of Secrets and Foundations (2025)

(Behaalotecha)

35. Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, “Arise, God! May Your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate You flee from You.”	להיותי בנסע הארון ויאמר משה קומה יהוה ויפצו אויביו וינסו משנאיו מפניו
36. When the ark came to rest, he would say, “Repose, God, among the myriads and thousands of Israel.”	לויבנה יאמר שובה יהוה רבבות אלפי ישראל

(Bamidbar 10:35-36)

Chazal explains that the above passage is considered a separate book of Torah. That would mean that there are actually seven books of Torah and the complaints that come right after, are the beginning of the 6th book. The main body of the Sefhira ends with Lag B’omer and the completion of the 5th sephira. The mourning period ends and it is a time of joy as the body of the Sefhira is almost complete and we begin preparations for Shavuot. Although this 6th book connected to Yesod begins with complaints and covers the tragic stories of the Meraglim and Korach, preceding this book at the beginning of the Parsha are the instructions regarding the shaping of the body of the Menorah and the candle lighting.

Rashi explains that one must raise up the candles and Chabad Chasidut explains that there is an analogy here that teaches us that a child must be taught in a way that he can bring out his own light and stand on his own. The hammering and shaping and struggle involved in shaping this body (the golden Menorah) is also a part of the process in creating this light. It is a light that will contain self-sufficient original lights aimed in a unified direction towards the center. It is not by coincidence that when a child becomes bar mitzvah and begins to shine his unique independent light that he also struggles with many passions and desires of adolescence that he did not have before. Sometimes a bar mitzvah instead of being the entrance to a Jewish faith based life becomes the exit and last time one visits the Bet Knesset.

1. The people sought a pretext that would be evil in God’s ears. God heard this and became angry. A fire from God broke out among them, consuming those at the extremity of the camp.	אויביו העם כמתאננים רע באזני יהוה וישמע יהוה ויחר אפו ותבער-בם אש יהוה ותאכל בקצה המחנה:
2. The people cried out to Moses. Moses prayed to God, and the fire subsided.	בויצעק העם אל-משה ויתפלל משה אל-יהוה ותשקע האש:

(Bamidbar 11:1-2)

Complaints

The complaints had to do with meat and desire. What is our desire? As we left Sinai we had all the tools and experiences to go into the unknown desert with our new found faith but still had fears and this is connected to the desire for meat. The test of our independent light is connected to our test of physical pleasures and comforts. As we have mentioned before, the fire that burned against the complainers according to conflicting opinions came from either the Erev Rav or the leadership (the elders). Was it an influence from the bottom to the top, or top to bottom? Maybe when the desires of the lowest elements are allowed to influence more and more it affects leadership. Maybe when the leadership is affected by an exile mentality to a small degree it seeps down to a larger degree below? I am not sure who influences who but it seems that the influence is there in various degrees in each segment.

Meat

Chazal tells us that even Itzhak, who was a great Tzadik and one of our forefathers, was influenced by the 'game' (meat) that Esav brought to him. Even though he was a great Tzadik that did not prevent his son from going off the 'derech' and in fact manipulating his father. There are many holy and frum Jews today whose enjoyment of the 'good life' in the Galut prevent them from following a spiritual desire to make aliyah. The 'meat' affects their perception and coerces them to justify the abandonment of higher spiritual pursuits.

There is a story I heard from Rabbi Goldstein of the Diaspora Yeshiva that all the sons of a Talmud Chacham went off the 'derech' and he could not understand why. When he asked his Rebbe, his Rebbe asked one of his sons directly. His son answered that his father loves cholent more than Torah. That is his essence. A child is generally influenced by the father. He explained that when he had a question he could interrupt his father when he was learning Torah. But he could never interrupt him when he was eating his cholent or he would get mad. Therefore he concluded that this was his essence.

Pesach Sheni

The desire for meat and all the material things in life is not black and white. There are many nuances to this and it affects all layers of society from the most refined to the most primitive. Coming of age and understanding our physical and spiritual desires is a process that requires effort like shaping the Menorah of our soul. A wonderful explanation I heard about Pesach Sheni by Rav Kroizer (the Rosh Yeshiva of Rabbi Kahane's Yeshiva) was that it was precisely the desire coming from the impure that endeared Hashem to create a new mitzvah for them. It is this desire that not only will create a Pesach Sheni, but will rebuild our Temple. Those considered 'impure' will desire their father to the degree that Hashem will cause purification (on their account) to take place and He will grant their desire. We see this idea reflected also in the

Haftarah. Yehoshua the Cohen Gadol has soiled clothes but this is on the surface. His desire is for the golden Menorah and the Satan who seeks to denounce him is himself denounced.

Iran

I thought about this idea as our fighter planes set out to destroy the great Satan in Iran. I was thinking about Yetziat Mitzrayim and Yum Suf. Chazal says We needed a mitzvah in order for Hashem to save us. Yum Suf did not recognize us. The prosecutor said. What's the difference between these people and the Egyptians? They're both idol worshipers? Until Nachson walked into the sea. And that was the merit that Hashem needed in order to convince the sea to open up and recognize the Jewish people.

Now that was long ago, and we had more merits then, than maybe we do today, so what has Hashem done? I suggest that Hashem has handed us that merit on a golden plate. Not because we deserved it but because of His chesed He has given us that merit. It wasn't even our intention, but technically because of our action it seals the deal. What do I mean?

The Unintentional Merit

On the day that he is saving us and the prosecutor says. Why are you saving them? How are they any different from anybody else? They even prepared a gay parade today! I would like to believe that our Merciful Judge replied no, my people canceled it and the prosecutor may have argued that yes they did, but that wasn't their intention, they were forced into cancelling it. In my imagination the Judge then responds I don't look at intention. I'm looking at the books and my people officially technically cancelled the gay parade while I am saving them. It's good enough for me. Now piss off.

After the many miracles in Mitzrayim and many more at the sea, and having received the Torah anew we are ready with the tools we need to go out alone in the desert and stop complaining. It's time to trust in Hashem and the collective good of our people. Like the denouncer in the Haftarah who sees our filthy clothes, the Ayatollah proclaims in the news 'the Zionist regime raised its filthy, blood-stained hand to commit a crime against our beloved country.' May Hashem denounce him as He denounced Satan and see beneath the surface sins. May He see the Golden Menorah with its beautiful independent lights as we run to the many Ir Miklats where we will be safe from danger until the danger passes and the accuser is no more. May the generation of heroes overshadow any blemishes we may have acquired and may we overcome our desires and channel them into new ones.

The 6th Book

Yesod means secret as well as foundation. Maybe one of the secrets is that in the very same place where the complaints originate from, will come a renewal and a teshuva. Whether from the Erev Rav below or the Judges above, (maybe they are one and the same) whether they are rejected or they are transformed, a maturity will take place. The foundation of the world, that was created

even before the world, is Teshuva. The foundation stone from which the world was created is buried on the Har Habayit in the place where all of Israel comes to do Teshuva.

Har Habayit

A few months after Hebrew prayer and prostration was allowed on the Har Habayit, Syria fell like a house of cards. Two weeks ago a new allowance was made by Minister Ben Gvir. The freedom not only to pray but to dance. I have yet to go up and share in the dancing but (b'H) I look forward to it. I hope we won't need to wait too long until our greatest enemy completely falls and the dancing on Har Habayit spreads across the whole nation as we celebrate a new modern day Purim. May we pass through this book that may have begun with the complaints and pains of adolescence to be reborn as a mature, wise, and bold Jewish people.

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