

KOL MEBASSER

Rabbi's Message

Beha'alotekha et hanerot, el mul pene hamenora ya'iru shib'at hanerot.

"When you set up the lamps of the Menorah, they should shine towards its face."



The literal meaning of the first commandment in Parashat Beha'alotekha is not immediately clear. The Torah teaches that the Menorah was constructed as a single, solid-cast piece (Ex. 25:31 and Num. 8:4), so how could there be any change in the direction that the lamps shine? Even if we assume that this could be altered, how is Aaron supposed to arrange things physically? And what is the significance of this arrangement, both back then and to modern Jews?

A sensible answer to most of these problems is supplied by Rashi (Ex. 25:37), who infers that each of the Menorah branches housed a removable, pointed cup into which the wicks and oil were placed. Hence, each cup could be "tilted" towards any direction on the compass, and God must be prescribing a specific orientation for the cups.

To determine what that is, Rashi cites the Talmudic explanation of the verse in our Parashah (Menahot 98b on Deut. 8:2), which says that the "face" of the Menorah was the middle branch, the only one that extends from the base all the way to the top. If we accept this analysis, we can conclude that the literal meaning of the verse is that Aaron should point the external wicks towards the center wick, which becomes the only one to directly face the Holy of Holies.

Based on a Midrashic explanation from the Tanhuma anthologies, Rashi argues that this arrangement is preferable because it makes the least amount of light shine at night. This forestalls any potential criticism that we made the Menorah because God physically needs the light, and underscores that the Menorah's true purpose is to be our humble, human tribute to the Source of All Earthly Light.

A quick glance around Kahal Joseph shows just how deeply this approach has penetrated Sephardic Jewry. Mounted in stained glass above the Ekhal, on framed posters around the building, and in many of our prayer books are so-called "Shiviti plaques," which display the text of Psalm 67 in the shape of the Biblical Menorah. Take a good look at the wicks on top: in some it is subtler than in others, but the outer wicks always face the middle, which alone points out to the reader.

Since the 14th century, the "Shiviti plaque" has developed into its own sub-genre of Jewish art, introducing Psalm 67 with the first half of Ps. 16:8. Designed to evoke contemplation of God's glory through the number 7 and the beauty of the Menorah, it is said to bring the modern worshipper as close as possible to the Temple experience.

Thus, what began as a cryptic sentence about a defunct ritual has now brought us into personal, face-to-face contact with one of the most sacred parts of the Temple! Just as our Shiviti plaques give pride of place to the glorious past in our present, so too may all of the outwardly closed passages of the Torah help us touch the rich spiritual world that lies just beneath the surface.

Parashat Beha'alotekha

Torah: Num. 8:1–12:16 (§) , 136 Pesukim
Hertz 605–619; Stone 774–797
Haftarah: Zach. 2:14–4:7
Hertz 620–622; Stone 1182–1184
Tefillot: Morid Hatal

KJ Schedule

Ereb Shabbat

Friday, June 24th

Shaharit 6:25 am
Shabbat Candle Lighting 7:50 pm
Minha 6:30 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, June 25th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am
Musaf 11:30 am

Women's Tehillim 5:45 pm
Minha 7:15 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet 8:00 pm
Arbit 8:40 pm
Habdala 8:53 pm

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Women's Tehillim is Back!

Shabbat, June 25
5:45 pm, before Mincha



Thanks to our member Miriam Shadi, the women's tehillim group is getting new life, starting this very Shabbat! Join your fellow Kahal Joseph sisters for coffee, community, and reciting the holy Book of Psalms.

All women are welcome to participate, and whoever arrives first is invited to say the Yehi Ratson and begin reading. When more arrive, we can share the text together until we have finished all 150 Psalms. What a great spiritual lift on Shabbat afternoon!

Condolences

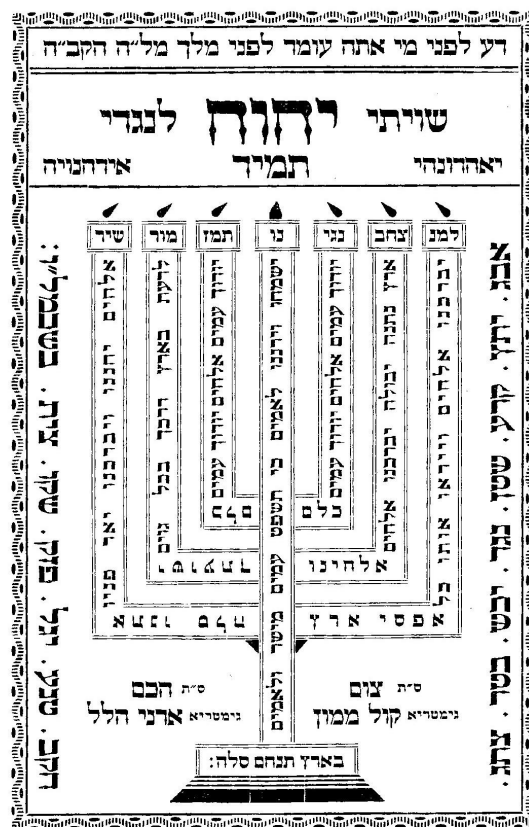
We offer our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Daisy Saddick, z"l especially to her sons, Shaul Saddick and Sassy Saddick, her daughter, Gilda Nehouraoff, and her grandchildren. We also send our fond support to our member, Viva Rabbie, Daisy's niece. May Hashem comfort them together with all the mourners of Tzion.

Refuah Shelemah

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron
Sylvia Cohen • Maurice Ovadia
Sally Amron • Tilda Levy • Esther Duke
Mordechai Cohen • Lev Hakak
Gracie Tizabi • Florice Newberry
Katie bat Farha • Miriam bat Yetta
Sassoon Ezra • Aliza bat Victoria
Doris Moshi

Seuda Shelisheet

Is sponsored in memory of
Ezat bat Avraham, z"l
by the Partiyeli Family



Shiviti plaque (altered to resolve shemot) from Saleh Mansour's 1938 *Siddur Tefilat Yesharim Im Sharah fil-Arabi*, p.88. For an excellent article on Shiviti plaques, see Juhasz, Esther. "The Making of a Jewish Votive Object." In *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*, Vol. 2006-2007, pp. 349-382.

In Memoriam

We remember yearzeit anniversaries from June 25 to July 2, 2016. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

22 Sivan / Tuesday, June 28th
Rebecca Litvac Rivka bat Esther

23 Sivan / Wednesday, June 29th
Lily Judah Lulu bat Toba
Salim Kamara Salim ben Ezra

24 Sivan / Thursday, June 30th
Joseph Meir Hakimpour Yosef ben Meir
Edith Judah Esther bat Chana

26 Sivan / Shabbat, July 2nd
Daniel Rojhani
George Sassoon Khadoory Hai ben Ezra
Samha Zelkha

KJ Schedule

(continued)

Weekdays

Sunday, June 26th

Shaharit..... 7:30 am

Monday to Friday, June 27th-July 1st

Shaharit 6:25 am

Ereb Shabbat

Friday, July 1st

Shaharit 6:25 am

Shabbat Candle Lighting 7:50 pm

Mincha 6:30 pm

Shabbat Shalom U'Meborakh