

## *Parasha Beha'Alotcha*

וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: דבר אל-אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלתך את-הנרת אל-מול פני  
המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות:

The prophetic reading this Shabbat, begins with an invitation to shout for joy because God will dwell in the midst of Zion and once again choose Jerusalem. In that day many nations will join themselves to the Lord. Zechariah's vision confirms how deeply Adonai cares about the cleansing of His people. The Prophet Zechariah sees the high priest Yehoshua, son of Yehozadak, standing before the angel of the Lord in the Heavenly Court. Satan is also there accusing Yehoshua, who is clothed in filthy rags, a metaphor for sin. According to Rashi, the sin Yehoshua was guilty of was allowing his sons to marry foreign women, which is not allowed for Levites (see Ezra 10:18). The Angel of the Lord identifies Yehoshua as a brand plucked from the fire, which Chabad interprets as the "hardships of exile." Indeed, Yehoshua has returned from the Babylonian exile along with Zerubbabel and the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem where they will rebuild the city and the Jewish Temple. The Lord rebukes Satan and says to Yehoshua, *"See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in [priestly] robes."* (Zechariah 3:4) Zechariah then describes his vision of a seven-branched Menorah, which is kindled in this week's Torah reading. Rebuilding Jerusalem and the Second Temple is a huge task. And through the Prophet Zechariah, God reassures both Yehoshua and Zerubbabel that He is behind the initiative. Immediately after Zechariah sees the Menorah, the symbol of purity and the light of truth reaching the nations, the Lord gives a word to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, saying, *"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit—said the Lord of Hosts."* (Zechariah 4:6) Of course, pursuing spiritual goals is too difficult if we are left to our own devices.

Both the Parasha reading and the Haftarah reading reveal that we have supernatural help. We see that even Moshe had his limits. No one could do the work of Moshe without being anointed with the Spirit of God. To ease Moshe's burden, God spread some of Moshe's anointing—the Holy Spirit Himself—giving it to 70 respected elders who would share in the task of leadership. The Scriptures say that these elders immediately prophesied. When the Spirit of God is working in someone, spiritual gifts manifest. These gifts were only available to a select few until the Ruach (Spirit) descended on Shavuot upon the first Believers 50 days after Yeshua's resurrection. Through Yeshua, our garments of iniquity have been removed and we, like Yehoshua, are clothed in garments of purity and righteousness. This is a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, which foretells a time when the Messiah will remove all iniquity in a single day. *"I am going to bring My servant the Branch [a future king from the line of David] ... and I will remove that country's guilt in a single day."* (Zechariah 3:8–10) This righteous Branch from the line of David has appeared, and in one day, He paid the penalty for our sin and clothed us with His righteousness.

Each of us need God's Ruach in our lives empowering us to obey His word, manifest His love, joy and peace, and exercise spiritual gifts He has bestowed. Filled with that Spirit, each of us are beacons of light that show the way to a lost and dying world. One practical way we can shine as lights in the midst of the darkness is by refusing to complain and, instead, express gratitude in all things, rejoicing in the Lord always.

Let's examine *Zechariah 4:1-10* a bit more, *"Then the angel who had been speaking with me returned and woke me—like a man who is wakened from his sleep. He asked me, 'What do you see?' I replied, 'Behold, I see a solid gold menorah with its bowl at the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven pipes for the lamps that are on the top of it. Also, two olive trees are by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on the left side of it.' Then I responded by saying to the angel speaking with me, 'What are these, my lord?' The angel who spoke with me responded by asking me, 'You do not know what these are?' I replied, 'No, my lord.' Then he responded to me by saying, 'This is the word of Adonai to Zerubbabel saying: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach!" says Adonai-Tzva'ot."* The Holy Spirit is the perpetual power source for God's People, enabling them to conquer insurmountable obstacles! One New Year's Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company. With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas! Wouldn't it be nice to have "cheap" gas again? I am one that will fill up our vehicles even if it is only a quarter low... I don't ever want to be the guy on the side of the road because I failed to plan. What taught me this lesson was when I failed to put gas in my car, and it gave that familiar sputter that says, "you're almost out of gas you idiot!" The glowing "E" glared at me, mocking me for my lack of planning. I scrambled through my pockets for what money and change I had. After counting what I had, I knew could get almost a gallon, and my Chevy chevette would be able to do 18 or 19 miles on that! My energy crisis was solved!

Today I want to speak to you about our source of energy for life-your spiritual energy. Are you in crisis? Is your "E" light on-have you forgotten to fill up along the way? Men have dreamed for centuries of perpetual motion machines-devices which could continuously tap bottomless energy resources which will never run dry and be continuously replenished. Leonardo Da Vinci argued against yet dreamed of it, classical music has been written about it. Even today engineers dream of the theory and scam artists peddle stock in a free energy company across the Internet. But the sad truth of reality is that we are all experiencing an energy crisis. We're all running slower and slower. We rebound and rebuild at a decreasing rate. The entire universe is subject to the law of maximum entropy. We're expanding at a decreasing rate. Even the speed of light is slowing measurably. Perpetual motion and free energy in the physical world that we know, is not going to happen.

Ultimately, it means that all history is Holy History, we are not cycling through or working out our karma as Eastern religion would tell us. We are proceeding to a culmination of history. God's timer on His creation is winding down, and His purpose is being accomplished! I want to look at Zechariah Chapter 4, the prophetic vision shows us an unlimited supply of energy available to God's People, as they face the tests and trials of accomplishing His Holy Purpose! If we are tapped into the power source, the Lord will empower us to face the impossible, the insurmountable! The true and never-failing source of limitless power is the Holy Spirit! The only way that we can accomplish God's will in our lives and in the earth is to plug into this infinite, perpetual, continuously renewing resource! As we approach Zechariah chapter 4, we find the Prophet experiencing the fifth of eight very special visions that an angelic messenger took him to in the night. Zechariah has been called the "prophet of the long-range vision." Taken together, the visions that he was shown some four hundred years before Yeshua are simply amazing - Zechariah by the Spirit saw clear and detailed visions of Messiah, the Cross, the end of the age and the Millennial Kingdom. The name Zechariah means "The Lord Remembers." It was a prophetic name, given to a baby born among prophetic people. He was a third-generation prophet of Israel, and God was raising up a young man who would encourage His people and their leaders in a time of great crisis. Around 538 BC, King Cyrus of Persia obeyed the voice of the Lord, as prophesied by both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. He decreed for God's People to leave captivity in Babylon and to return to their homeland to rebuild the Holy City. Not only did he decree for them to leave their captivity, but he financed the journey! They left Babylon in the Spring, and towards the end of the seventh month (late September) the returning exiles were determined to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, complete with burnt offerings and all the ceremony, all upon the new altar which had been constructed.

The altar was the first order of business. These exiles wanted to re-connect with their God on an intimate level most of all. At the Great Feast, there were shouts of joy from many, yet cries of lament from the older people who had seen the former Temple in all its glory. This new altar of sacrifice, constructed hurriedly and with crude resources, paled in comparison to Solomon's grand Temple, one of the most lavish edifices ever constructed in the time! Discouragement set in and began to take a dastardly toll. It became a mountain that seemed insurmountable. I want to ask you today; have you ever been discouraged? Have you ever seen something that you just don't think you can conquer? The second step began when jealous kings from surrounding territories began to notice the work that was going on. These people were serious! The Jews had returned to Israel! Jerusalem had been capital of the known world just seventy years ago, as Adonai himself resided among His people, with His presence and favor resting upon them. The rebuilding of the Temple would certainly be the death knell for the sinister heathen rule of all of the region. The enemies put on a ruse and offered to "help" in order to infiltrate the workers. They hired hecklers to discourage and frustrate the building process.

Still, the work continued. Finally, they turned to politics and wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes who had now replaced Cyrus as the Persian monarch in Babylon. The surrounding kings played upon Artaxerxes' emotions, and he ordered the returned exiles to stop their work. It was political leverage at its finest. Things had never looked so dismal. Fifty thousand people are discouraged and downtrodden; they are on a journey from nowhere to nowhere. There is no sense of destiny, there is no sense of productivity or encouragement. Should they simply return to Babylon? For sixteen years, they languished in failure. The Jewish people concentrated on building themselves beautiful homes instead of rebuilding God's House. But the God Remembers and will be faithful to His promise! Enter the prophetic priest whom God raised up as a lad from Babylon... Zechariah!

On the heels of his in-your-face friend Haggai's short and powerful prophetic word against the enemies of the Temple, Zechariah began to deliver powerful visions that literally swept all through Holy History! God began revealing things to him that were not only warnings for the present, but Zechariah also began to see God's plan for the ages unfold in front of him like a scroll! Ezra, along with Nehemiah and Haggai tell the story of that trying time. Ezra, the "pastor" and resident theologian of the times summed up the climax of the sixteen years; *Ezra 5:1-2* tells us, *"Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. So, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jehozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them."* And the visions came! Zechariah spoke the visions of the Lord over the lives of Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest, and over the people of God, and after sixteen years of malaise they *"rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem."* As we read of Zechariah's fifth vision of eight, we see timeless, eternal principles from the Word of God that will demonstrate His power in our lives! It's a vision and a message for... TODAY!

First and today, we find a perpetual power source. Zechariah's angelic host introduced him to a lampstand, and he had no idea why. The lamp looked very much like the golden lampstand, the Menorah from Solomon's Temple. Zechariah had probably seen pictures and replicas of it while receiving priestly training from his father and grandfather in Babylon. The temple menorah was of solid gold and had numerous bowls to hold oil and feed the lamps. But something was very different about this lamp; two olive trees stood beside it and continuously fed the seven lamps with fresh oil. Zechariah confesses to his host that he has no idea what this system is about. And as if to say, "let me give you the answer, and then I'll explain the questions." *"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts."* The Word of the Living God went forth like a holy flame!

Suddenly Zechariah began to get his mind and spirit wrapped around what was happening here, his priestly and prophetic training told him that the lampstand was truly a symbol of God's people and the oil, the energy source was provided by God to his people for service, it was pretty common knowledge among those trained in the Torah. Today from this side of the cross we know that oil is symbolic of the Blessed Holy Spirit, and the lamp itself is a picture and type of the Fellowship of the Living God. *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last", and "Write what you see in a scroll, and send it to Messiah's seven communities—to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."* Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden menorot. In the midst of the menorot, I saw One like a Son of Man, clothed in a robe down to His feet, with a golden belt wrapped around His chest (Revelation 1:8, 11-13) Also Revelation 1:20, *"As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden menorot—the seven stars are the angels of Messiah's seven communities, and the seven menorahs are the seven communities."* Today we are the lampstands of God in this dark world! Yeshua haMashiach Himself stands among the lampstands at the very center of His Kehillot. But what were those olive trees? There seemed to be a pipe running directly from the trees to the lamp. In the Tabernacle and in Solomon's temple, the flames of the menorah burned continuously, and there was a never-ending processional of priests refilling the bowls. An entire family of priests, the Kohathites were in charge of keeping the lamps burning brightly with fresh olive oil. It's also interesting to note that in the Temple menorah, the solid gold lamps were fed by multiple bowls which fed olive oil to the flame, and they required constant, intense human effort and attention to fill the bowls so that God's ministry could be served. This system was quite different! The olive oil was being produced by living trees, and directly piped into the brightly burning menorah! It was a never-ending supply, a living and self-maintaining system which operated independent of human effort! My friends, this self-perpetuating system speaks to us of the Living, ever-present, ever-full source of power that comes from the Holy Spirit of the Living God! It is a picture, some four hundred years before, of the coming Baptism in the Holy Spirit, where fresh oil would be poured out from on high upon God's people to empower them for life and service! This new and fresh oil would be poured out upon God's people in a never ending self-regenerating supply! Isaiah saw it prophetically in Chapter 61, and Yeshua proclaimed the year of the Lord's Favor as fulfilled in Him! *"The Ruach of Adonai Elohim is on me, because Adonai has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor and the day of our God's vengeance, to comfort all who mourn to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Adonai, that He may be glorified."* (Isaiah 61:1-3)

The "oil of joy for mourning" is that same fresh oil that Zechariah saw teeming through that odd lampstand with olive trees piped to it. It's the joy of the Holy Spirit flowing through the fellowships of Yeshua! It shows us plugged into a perpetual source of power! Rav Sha'ul understood this infilling with a fresh, endless supply of oil when he quoted the prophetic Psalm and explained its relation to Yeshua in *Hebrews 1:7-9*, *"And regarding the angels He says, 'He makes His angels winds, and His servants a flame of fire.' But regarding the Son He says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions."* And Yeshua, the Anointed One who was the fulfillment of the Year of God's favor, and who was anointed above all with the oil of gladness, told His Disciples as He departed this earth that not many days hence, this infusion of Power, would be upon them. We read in *Acts 1:8*, *"But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* He has infused His people with power from on high, a limitless source of anointing and gladness, an inexhaustible power source with a living, dynamic source. It's no longer by the efforts of human priests and human hands, continuously refilling the bowls of oil - It's by my Spirit, says the Lord! It's all about the OIL!

Yeshua is the Baptizer of His Holy Spirit! It is His Holy Spirit that indwells and guides us. Yeshua was the manifestation of God, the Head of the Body of Messiah walks among his people today, and the Holy Spirit fills His chosen with a supernatural perpetual source of limitless power! And when one hundred and nine people were gathered with eleven disciples in an upper room that Shavuot (Pentecost) following Yeshua's promise that perpetual power source became a living reality! But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel: *'And it shall be in the last days,' says God, 'that I will pour out My Ruach on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even on My slaves, male and female, I will pour out My Ruach in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will give wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth beneath— blood, and fire, and smoky vapor. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious Day of Adonai comes. And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of Adonai shall be saved.'*" (*Acts 2:16-21*) Picture, if you will, a refinery tank full of petroleum. That tank may provide fuel to run an engine for what seems like unlimited hours. It can run day and night for weeks, or months. But at the end of some period of time, the energy absorbed by the engine from the tank will be dissipated. The system will need to be replenished. The tank will need to be refilled by some outside, human intervention. At some point the work done by the engine will be less profitable and will not justify the cost of the energy input to run it.

The system that the angel showed Zechariah that night, was self-renewing; it was a Living, dynamic, perpetual power source, it is the power of the Holy Spirit operating in and through God's people! The believer who seeks to live the life of a Believer through self-effort is like the man who, in attempting to sail across the Atlantic Ocean, found his boat becalmed for days. Finally, frustrated by his lack of progress, he tried to make his stalled boat move by pushing against the mast. Through strenuous efforts, he succeeded in making the boat rock and so created a few small waves on the otherwise smooth sea. Seeing the waves and feeling the rocking of the boat, he assumed that he was making progress and so continued his efforts. Of course, although he exerted himself a great deal, he actually got nowhere! Have you ever worn yourself out or pulled a muscle trying to start a small engine with a pull cord? I've done that too many times. Somehow, we believe the extra effort will wake up an engine. Any mechanic will tell you "Fuel, fire and air" are the three steps to getting an engine to start. Have you ever pulled and pulled only to think, "hmmm, I wonder if this thing has gas in it?" You take off the cap, have a look and you feel foolish! Or have you ever pulled and pulled, and then stopped to realize that you haven't cranked this motor in two years, the gas is old and stale? You flush it out, drain your carburetor, put in some "hot gas" and the thing... starts the first time? It doesn't take a mechanic or an engineer. It's all about the power source. It's all about the fuel. No one gets anywhere without energy or power. The fuel for our lives, for our daily walk, the process of becoming like Yeshua and our journey through this life; is the limitless, boundless power of the Holy Spirit of God! Without it we will stall, and we will ultimately be defeated. Yet, when you do things not by your own fleshly, nature, but when you do things by the Spirit of God, He takes notice. You could do some great deed but if done in the flesh it would not be considered by God as anything. But those seemingly insignificant things when done in the Spirit become significant things to God. Seek a relationship with the branch, with Yeshua, and let the Holy Spirit flow through you and you will shine to a world in darkness. Yes, it is easier to do things in the flesh, and yes, spiritual things are harder. You meet more resistance because you have battled the flesh and Satan to do something in the Spirit, be it even coming to services in the Spirit versus coming in the flesh. But as you develop spiritual strength and perseverance (power) you can experience God removing the obstacles, the mountains to your doing great things for Him.

As I close, I want to invite you to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. You need power. You are desperate for it. I haven't run near empty in my vehicle for years now, but I have in my life. I am going out on a limb and say that many of you here have too. We're all going through something in our lives and at times find our source seems to be growing lean. First of all, let's check, is there fuel? And... Are you plugged into the Source?

b'Shem Yeshua, haMelech v'haMashiach Shelanu! Amein.  
*("in the name of Yeshua, our King and the Messiah! Amein.")*