

SHABBAT GUIDE

BEHA'ALOTCHA

ABOUT THE STORY OF BEHA'ALOTCHA

The beginning of this story connects to what is really the thirteenth tribe—the Levites—and gives us the opportunity to elevate our consciousness. Although each of us is born under an astrological sign, we do not have to remain controlled by that sign's influence, and although most of the time we are under the influence of the stars, we don't have to succumb to them. This reading gives us the opportunity to transcend our astrological destiny.

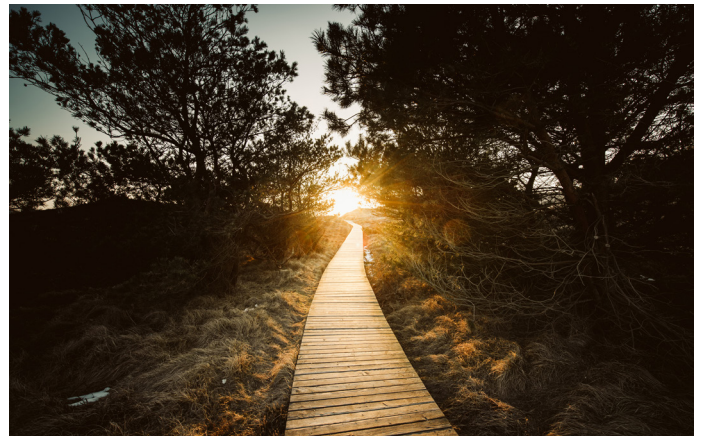
MICHAEL BERG ON BEHA'ALOTCHA

There's a connection that was called the *Pesach Sacrifice*, which a person could not partake of if they were impure; meaning, they cannot have been around a dead body, for instance, or do other certain things that cause a person to be impure. In the portion of *Beha'alotcha*, there's a discussion of the people who were carrying the body of Joseph through the desert. They came to Moses and asked him, even though they knew they were impure, because they carried the body of Joseph, why they had to lose out on the opportunity and spiritual elevation that comes with connecting to *Pesach*.

Many of the commentators say the question is a strange one, because these people knew the rules. Yet, we learn a very important understanding from what they are asking Moses. They knew the power of desire, that when a person truly has a desire to connect to the Light of the Creator, even if the rules say they shouldn't be able to or they can't, that desire opens a new pathway. Which means, they understood that above all else, when a person is able to awaken a true and deep desire, they can find a new pathway that never existed before.

We want to know how we can go beyond the rules. If the natural pathway takes 10 years, for example, we want to create a new pathway that's a shortcut, and takes one year or six months; desire for connection to the Light of the Creator has the power to create shortcuts and new pathways to achieve that connection.

That's what this Shabbat is about; we don't want the long pathway, the pathway that is held up by some of the negative things we've done. We want a new pathway, quickly. That thought of yearning and desire, or as Rav Ashlag calls it, the yearning for our soul's connection to the Light of the Creator, creates a new pathway from wherever we are directly and more quickly to the Light of the Creator. It's a tremendously inspiring and necessary thought.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Shlach Lecha connects us to the 'Land of Israel', the energy center of the world from a kabbalistic perspective. The energy is plentiful, yet we must take it. If we can dedicate ourselves to 'grabbing' the Light through hard work, we enter the Land of Israel in a spiritual sense. Look for opportunities to share beyond the usual.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.