

Weekly Parsha Pekudei 5782

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The basic lesson in this week's Torah reading is accountability. God demands from Moshe and the others who formulated and created the Tabernacle in the desert, to account for all the material that was donated by the Jewish people for that purpose. The last piece of silver that was donated had to be accounted for, but Moshe was distressed that he could not account for 1000 measures of the silver. He finally remembered that this donation of silver was used for constructing hooks that bound the tapestries of the Tabernacle together.

The hooks must "shout" to remind us of their presence, and to make Moshe's accounting complete and accurate. Accounting is a very painstaking project. Most people view it as bordering on boring. Nevertheless, there is no commercial enterprise that can successfully exist without good and accurate accounting practices.

The financial accounting in our Parsha regarding the materials that were used in the construction of the Tabernacle is a template for proper human behavior concerning the use of resources in all areas of life. This is especially true in matters that border on religious institutions that are held to the highest of all standards and are to be above any suspicion of corruption. The Priest of the Temple wore garments that had no pockets and could not conceal any hidden items of value that might be removed from the Temple.

This overriding meticulous standard and value of accountability is not limited to financial matters. Judaism teaches us that we are all accountable for our actions - behavior, speech, attitudes and even thoughts. We were created as being responsible creatures - responsible to the creator and to the other creatures that exist with us on this planet. We are given talents that are unique to each one of us. The challenge that is put before us is how those talents and abilities can be used for good and noble causes.

There are many who think that the gifts that they have been given are for their exclusive use, and that there is no need or obligation to share them with others. They are sadly mistaken in this view. People are accountable for what they have, as they were for the supposedly insignificant amount of silver that was

used to construct hooks that kept the tapestries together.

King Solomon states in Kohelet that one should realize that all actions and behavior will eventually be weighed on the scales of heavenly justice. We live in a time when accountability, to a great extent, has been replaced by excuses, social engineering, economic and psychological theories. All of these are used only to avoid the issue of accountability. To be human is to be responsible, and that is the message not only of this week's Parsha, but of everything in Judaism.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

Covenant & Conversation

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

PEKUDEI - Integrity in Public Life

Golden coins money wealth rich finance savings

There is a verse so familiar that we don't often stop to reflect on what it means. It is the line from the first paragraph of the Shema, Deut. 6:5

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your me'od."

That last word is usually translated as "strength" or "might". But Rashi, following the Midrash and Targum, translates it as with all your "wealth".

If so, the verse seems unintelligible, at least in the order in which it is written. "With all your soul" was understood by the Sages to mean, "with your life" if need be. There are times, thankfully very rare indeed, when we are commanded to give up life itself rather than commit a sin or a crime. If that is the case then it should go without saying that we should love God with all our wealth, meaning even if it demands great financial sacrifice. Yet Rashi and the Sages say that this phrase applies to those "to whom wealth means more than life itself."

Of course, life is more important than wealth. Yet the Sages also knew that, in their words, Adam bahul al mammon, meaning: people do strange, hasty, ill-considered and irrational things when money is at stake (Shabbat 117b). Financial gain can be a huge temptation, leading us to acts that harm others and ultimately ourselves. So when it comes to financial matters, especially when public funds are involved, there must be no room for temptation, no space for

doubt as to whether it has been used for the purpose for which it was donated. There must be scrupulous auditing and transparency. Without this there is moral hazard: the maximum of temptation combined with the maximum of opportunity.

Hence the parsha of Pekudei, with its detailed account of how the donations to the building of the Mishkan were used: Ex. 38:21

“These are the amounts of the materials used for the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses’ command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the Priest.”

The passage goes on to list the exact amounts of gold, silver, and bronze collected, and the purposes to which it was put. Why did Moses do this? A Midrash suggests an answer: Tanchuma, Buber, Pekudei, 4.

“They gazed after Moses” (Ex. 33:8) – People criticised Moses. They used to say to one another, “Look at that neck. Look at those legs. Moses is eating and drinking what belongs to us. All that he has belongs to us.” The other would reply: “A man who is in charge of the work of the Sanctuary – what do you expect? That he should not get rich?” As soon as he heard this, Moses replied, “By your life, as soon as the Sanctuary is complete, I will make a full reckoning with you.”

Moses issued a detailed reckoning to avoid coming under suspicion that he had personally appropriated some of the donated money. Note the emphasis that the accounting was undertaken not by Moses himself but “by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar,” in other words, by independent auditors.

There is no hint of these accusations in the text itself, but the Midrash may be based on the remark Moses made during the Korach rebellion: Num. 16:1

“I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them.”

Accusations of corruption and personal enrichment have often been levelled against leaders, with or without justification. We might think that since God sees all we do, this is enough to safeguard against wrongdoing. Yet Judaism does not say this. The Talmud records a scene at the deathbed of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, as the master lay surrounded by his disciples: Brachot 28b

They said to him, “Our master, bless us.”

He said to them, “May it be God’s will that the fear of heaven shall be as much upon you as the fear of flesh and blood.”

His disciples asked, “Is that all?”

He replied, “Would that you obtained no less than such fear! You can see for yourselves the truth of what I say: when a man is about to commit a transgression, he says, ‘I hope no man will see me.’”

When humans commit a sin they worry that other people might see them. They forget that God certainly sees them. Temptation befuddles the brain, and no one should believe they are immune to it.

A later passage in Tanach seems to indicate that Moses’ account was not strictly necessary. The Book of Kings relates an episode in which, during the reign of King Yehoash, money was raised for the restoration of the Temple: II Kings 12:16

“They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty.”

Moses, a man of complete honesty, may thus have acted “beyond the strict requirement of the law.”[1]

It is precisely the fact that Moses did not need to do what he did that gives the passage its force. There must be transparency and accountability when it comes to public funds even if the people involved have impeccable reputations. People in positions of trust must be, and be seen to be, individuals of moral integrity. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, had already said this when he told Moses to appoint subordinates to help him in the task of leading the people. They should be, he said, Ex. 18:21

“Men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain.”

Without a reputation for honesty and incorruptibility, judges cannot ensure that justice is seen to be done. This general principle was derived by the Sages from the episode in the Book of Numbers when the Reubenites and Gadites expressed their wish to settle on the far side of the Jordan where the land provided good grazing ground for their cattle (Numbers 32:1-33). Moses told them that if they did so, they would demoralise the rest of the nation. They would give the impression that they were unwilling to cross the Jordan and fight with their brothers in their battles to conquer the land.

The Reubenites and Gadites made it clear that they were willing to be in the front line of the troops, and would not return to the far side of the Jordan until the land had been fully conquered. Moses accepted the proposal, saying that if they kept their word, they would be “clear [veheyitem neki'im] before the Lord and before Israel” (Num. 32:22). This phrase entered

Jewish law as the principle that “one must acquit oneself before one’s fellow human beings as well as before God.”[2] It is not enough to do right. We must be seen to do right, especially when there is room for rumour and suspicion.

There are several instances in the early rabbinic literature of applications of this rule. So, for example, when people came to take coins for sacrifices from the Shekel Chamber in the Temple, where the money was kept:

They did not enter the chamber wearing either a bordered cloak or shoes or sandals or tefillin or an amulet, lest if he became poor people might say that he became poor because of an iniquity committed in the chamber, or if he became rich people might say that he became rich from the appropriation in the chamber. For it is a person’s duty to be free of blame before men as before God, as it is said: “and be clear before the Lord and before Israel,” (Num. 32:22), and it also says: “So shall thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Prov. 3:4).

Mishnah, Shekalim 3:2.

Those who entered the chamber were forbidden to wear any item of clothing in which they could hide and steal coins. Similarly, when charity overseers had funds left over, they were not permitted to change copper for silver coins of their own money: they had to make the exchange with a third party. Overseers in charge of a soup kitchen were not allowed to purchase surplus food when there were no poor people to whom to distribute it. Surpluses had to be sold to others so as not to arouse suspicion that the charity overseers were profiting from public funds. (Pesachim 13a.)

The Shulchan Aruch rules that charity collection must always be done by a minimum of two individuals so that each can see what the other is doing.[3] There is a difference of opinion between Rabbi Yosef Karo and Rabbi Moshe Isserles on the need to provide detailed accounts. Rabbi Yosef Karo rules on the basis on the passage in II Kings – “They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty” (II Kings 12:16) – that no formal accounting is required from people of unimpeachable honesty. Rabbi Moshe Isserles however says that it is right to do so because of the principle, “Be clear before the Lord and before Israel.”[4]

Trust is of the essence in public life. A nation that suspects its leaders of corruption cannot function

effectively as a free, just, and open society. It is the mark of a good society that public leadership is seen as a form of service rather than a means to power, which is all too easily abused. Tanach is a sustained tutorial in the importance of high standards in public life. The Prophets were the world’s first social critics, mandated by God to speak truth to power and to challenge corrupt leaders. Elijah’s challenge to King Ahab, and the protests of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah against the unethical practices of their day, are classic texts in this tradition, establishing for all time the ideals of equity, justice, honesty and integrity.

A free society is built on moral foundations, and those must be unshakeable. Moses’ personal example, in giving an accounting of the funds that had been collected for the first collective project of the Jewish people, set a vital precedent for all time.

[1] A key concept in Jewish law (see, e.g., Brachot 7a, Brachot 45b, Bava Kamma 99b) of supererogation, meaning doing more, in a positive sense, than the law requires.

[2] Mishnah, Shekalim 3:2.

[3] Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 257:1.

[4] Ibid., 257:2.

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Pekudei (Exodus 38:21-40:38)

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – “The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of God filled the Tabernacle... When the cloud was raised up from the Tabernacle, the Children of Israel would embark on all their journeys... For the cloud of God was on the Tabernacle by days and fire would be on it by night, before the eyes of all of the children of Israel throughout their journeys” (Exodus 40:34-38)

Apparently, the cloud (ha’anan) and the “glory of God” come together as the ultimate symbol of God’s protective presence. With reference to Mount Sinai, the mountain of the two Revelations surrounding the twice-gifted Tablets of the Covenant, the Bible similarly records, “Moses ascended the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of God rested upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for a six-day period. [God] called to Moses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud... And Moses arrived into the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain;

Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights [receiving God's Torah] (Exodus 24:15-18). God's "glory," the Presence of God in this world (as explained by Maimonides in his Guide for the Perplexed), is what Moses is desperately seeking to understand and to effectuate when Moses says, "Show me now Your Glory" (Exodus 33:19).

Whatever that "glory" is, it is somehow to be found in our two Revelations from the mountain. The cloud as the symbol of God's presence seems to hark back to the Divine admonition to Moses, "You will not see My face, for no human can see My face and live." For as long as we are limited mortals in this physical world of temporariness and imperfection, our glimpse of God, and His Presence, can only be nebulous, ambiguous, "through a cloud darkly."

Herein lies the tremendous tension within the portion of Ki Tisa, and the dialogue therein between God and Moses. Moses desperately wants the nation of Israel and God to come together (as it were) as one, with God's ineffable Presence to be palpably felt within Israel and within the world.

If that were to happen, presumably Israel would not sin and Jewish history could assume its natural course towards redemption.

God informs Moses: "I will send an angel [messenger] ahead of you... but I shall not ascend into your midst; you are a stiff-necked people, and I may be forced to annihilate you on the way" (Exodus 33:3-5).

God is explaining to the Israelites that His presence within their midst in a palpable and apparent way would very likely be to their detriment; if the God of Truth and Judgment were too close, He might have to destroy Israel completely before they had a chance to properly repent! His distance from them and the world may be seen as an advantage.

After the second Revelation, however, of the God of unconditional love and forgiveness (Exodus 34:6,7), Moses repeats his earlier requests; Moses now feels empowered to ask God to enter into the midst of Israel: "And Moses said, If I have now found favor in your eyes, let my Lord walk in our midst, [precisely because Israel] is a stiff-necked nation, for You will forgive our iniquity and error and make us Your heritage" (ibid. 9). After all, that is exactly how You, God, defined Yourself to us in the Second Revelation. This is indeed the message that God gives Moses. Israel is the nation of Covenant and permanence within a world of flux and change (Exodus 34:10); God will always dwell within His people and

guarantee their survival no matter what, to the amazement (and jealousy) of all the nations. Israel will bear witness to the world about the evils of idolatry and the glories of our festivals, our Sabbaths and our righteous laws until we are ready for the ultimate redemption. In effect, God is "incarnate" within the Jewish nation (see the writings of Michael Wyschogrod).

This too, is the message at the conclusion of the Book of Exodus. In the immortal words of the Ramban (Nachmanides) in his introduction to the Book of Exodus:

Behold the exile has not ended until [Israel] returns to their place and to the exalted status of their ancestors... only when they came to Mount Sinai and constructed the Sanctuary, only when the Holy one Blessed be He returned and rested His Divine Presence amongst them... so that they rose to the status of the chariot [merkava], could they be considered redeemed. Therefore, this Book concludes with the Sanctuary filled with the glory of the Divine in the midst of Israel.

The Sanctuary is the ultimate symbol of God's presence in Israel and the world, our promise of ultimate redemption. From this perspective, the sukkah which we build five days after the Yom Kippur of the Second Revelation represents the clouds of glory, the ultimate Sukkah-Sanctuary of world redemption. And the sukkot which likewise remind us of the huts in which we survived during our desert wanderings teach us that God remains in our midst – albeit as through a cloud darkly – even as we wander towards redemption, always forgiving and always protecting.

Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Sarah bas Mazal.

"May her Neshama have an Aliya!"

Forgive or Forget?

This is the accounting of (all the things of) the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony [...] (38:21).

Rashi (ad loc) explains why it is called the Mishkan of Testimony: "It's a testimony to the Jewish people that Hashem overlooked the incident of the Golden Calf, for he rested his Shechina among them (in the Mishkan)." This teaching is based on a Midrash Tanchuma (Pekudei 6) that says that the Mishkan was

a “testimony to all of mankind that Hashem forgave them for the sin of the Golden Calf.”

Many achronim (Maharal, Taz) are bothered by this. Why is the Mishkan the proof that Hashem forgave them? Wasn’t the actual proof that Hashem gave them a second set of luchos? Rashi, it seems, was bothered by the very same question. Perhaps it is for this reason that he changes the language of the Midrash from “Hashem forgave them for the sin” to “Hashem overlooked the sin.”

Rashi is teaching us a remarkable life lesson in managing relationships. There is a well-known maxim “women can forgive, but they will never forget that they forgave.” When someone hurts another person, even if forgiveness is granted, there is always some degree of discomfort. The reason for this is understandable; not only did they hurt them but the injured party then freely gave the kindness of forgiveness – giving the perpetrator the feeling of indebtedness to the magnanimous injured party. Therefore, all interactions between the two become, at best, a little uncomfortable. In such a situation, the guilty party often feels like he’s walking on eggshells and basically avoids interaction whenever possible.

In life, we often find ourselves in situations where we have been hurt or otherwise mistreated. By far and away, the best way to deal with the offending party who is asking for forgiveness (particularly when we are dealing with close family members) is to make them feel that it didn’t really bother us. After all, they already feel bad enough and understand their transgression. Introducing the debt of forgiveness into the relationship will only serve to make them more uncomfortable in the future and avoid interaction.

Hashem is bringing his presence to reside within the Jewish people. The only way to get past the sin of the Golden Calf and the subsequent forgiveness is for Hashem to give Bnei Yisroel the feeling that he is “overlooking” the sin. In other words, he wants to be close to us and wants us to feel close to him. The fact that Hashem is coming to stay in “our house” is a sign that he overlooked the sin because he wants us to be comfortable in his presence.

Give or Get?

All the gold that was used for the work [...] was twenty nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels [...] (38:24).

Ibn Ezra, quoting Rav Saadia Gaon, points out that while we have an exact accounting of how much gold was given to the Mishkan, the Torah omits what

exactly, it was used for. However, by the accounting of both the silver and the copper the Torah gives us both an exact accounting of how much was given and a detailed description of how the silver and copper were used. Why did the Torah not give a complete accounting for the different uses of all the gold?

There is a fascinating Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 51:6) that explains why Moshe wanted a complete audit for everything given. The Midrash explains the reasoning based on the possuk, “And it would be, when Moshe went out to the tent, that all the people rose up and stood, every man at his tent door, and gazed after Moshe [...].”

The Midrash explains that there were three schools of thought on the trustworthiness of Moshe: 1) The group that didn’t suspect him at all and simply thought, how fortunate is a human to have such a close relationship with Hashem; 2) The group who suspected him of stealing from the donations; 3) The group that felt that he was taking money from the donations but that it wasn’t stealing because he deserved it since he had undertaken the massive responsibility of building the Mishkan. When Moshe heard of these groups he insisted that at the end a full accounting of everything be made.

Da’as Zekanim in Parshas Terumah explains that gold, silver, and copper represent the three different types of givers. Gold represents people who give when they are healthy. In other words, they give purely and are not expecting anything in return; they give because they believe in the cause. Silver represents those who give while sick, hoping that in return they will get healed. However, even if he isn’t healed he doesn’t regret giving the charity (see Tosfos Pesachim 8b). Copper represents those who only gives after death; their giving is only in a situation where they won’t be negatively affected by the giving.

The Talmud (Kiddushin 70a) teaches the following rule: One who suspects another of wrongdoing is basing his suspicions on what he himself would do in such a situation. Based on this, we can now understand the three groups of givers. The group who gave the gold looked up to Moshe and didn’t suspect him of any wrongdoing. The group who gave the copper suspected Moshe of stealing because they are incapable of giving freely. They could not understand why anyone would do what Moshe had undertaken; therefore he must be stealing from the donations. The group who gave the silver understood that while there is some element of giving, it isn’t purely altruistic. In

other words, Moshe could work hard for the Mishkan, but should rightfully be compensated.

Now we can understand why the Torah didn't account for how the gold was used, yet had to still account for the uses of the copper and the silver. The silver and copper came from those without complete altruism and they suspected Moshe. The gold came from those who believed in the cause and trusted Moshe, therefore they never suspected him of taking any of it.

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***Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair -
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Parshat Pekudei

A World of Kindness

"Betzael ben Uri ben Hur of the tribe of Yehuda did everything that Hashem commanded Moshe. With him was Oholiav ben Achisamach of the tribe of Dan." (38:22-23)

Imagine a world where everyone looked the same.

Same eyes. Same expressions.

Same height. Everything the same. Wouldn't that be a great world? We'd all get along so well!

And yet, Hashem created the exact opposite: a world where everyone is different from everyone else.

We're all different heights. We all have different interests. We all have different personalities, different character traits, different strengths and different weaknesses. Plus, we all have different opinions.

But all these differences can (and sometimes do) lead to discord, harmful speech and hatred for the other. So why did Hashem create so many differences? The Chafetz Chaim said that the blessing of "borei nefashot rabbot v'chesronon" means that Hashem created a myriad of different people, and each one of us has our own strengths — but, more importantly, our own weaknesses.

The doctor can't farm, so the farmer will help make his food. The farmer never went to medical school. So the doctor will help the farmer. Hashem desired a world of kindness, so He created a giant tapestry of different people who all need each other. That's the meaning of "Olam Chesed Yiboneh" — "The world will be built on kindness."

"Betzael ben Uri ben Hur of the tribe of Yehuda did everything that Hashem commanded Moshe."

The tribe of Yehuda was the most elevated of the tribes. From Yehuda came the kings of the Jewish People. In spite of the fact that Betzael "did everything that Hashem commanded Moshe," nevertheless, Betzael needed a partner — Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan. Dan was the lowest of the tribes, and despite this, or maybe because of this, Betzael needed him. The Mishkan was a microcosm of the world. And just as the world is built on kindness, so too the Mishkan needed to be built on kindness. Maybe we can find a hint to this in Oholiav's name: For he is called Oholiav ben Achisamach. "Achisamach" could be read as, "My brother depended." In other words, even though Oholiav came from the lowest of the tribes, without him Betzael could not create the microcosm of the world of kindness that was the Mishkan.

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Dvar Torah - A late Purim teaches us an important lesson

Why is Purim celebrated in the second month of Adar and not the first?

In this Jewish leap year we are now commencing the second month of Adar and fascinatingly, in the Gemara (Megillah 6b), there is a debate as to which Adar Purim should be in. Rav Eliezer's view, which many of us can identify with, is, "Ein ma'avirim al hamitzvot," — "We shouldn't delay a mitzvah," particularly the celebration of a happy mitzvah. Don't put it off — once you've got the chance, go for it! Therefore he advocates that Purim should be celebrated in the first month of Adar.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel however differs and we follow his view in halacha. What's his rationale? He says that Purim should be in the second Adar in order not to separate one geula from the next, one celebration of redemption from the next celebration, that is to say that Purim and Pesach should be as close as possible on our calendar. Every year they're just one month apart and so too, that should be the case in a leap year. Now I might have thought that the opposite would be the case. If we've got two, major happy festivals, let's separate them. Why cluster them together?

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel here identifies something which we as Jews are passionate about.

Having endured so much tragedy, hardship and sorrow over the ages, to be able to celebrate redemption is something very special for us and we don't just want it to be a one-off celebration. We want to be on a roll. We want to go from happiness to happiness and have none-stop happiness at long last for our people! That's why the joy of Purim is always linked on our calendar to the joy of Pesach.

We are exceptionally privileged and fortunate in our age to be able to celebrate yet other festivals of redemption: from Adar we go to Nissan and from Nissan we go to Iyar, during which we have the new festivals of Yom Ha'Atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim. Therefore on our calendar today thanks to the inspiration we've received from our rabbis, we guarantee that indeed when it comes to celebrations we are on a roll. And in this spirit may Hashem bless our people with continuous joy, not to suffer great tragedies as we have in the past but to only go from one simcha through to the next.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

***Drasha Parshas Pekudei - Unlimited Partnership
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky***

The Mishkan was finally complete. The nation looked at the magnificent work with great joy, and Moshe was proud. So proud, in fact, that he did something that he only did once more— just before his death: he blessed the entire nation.

Actually, the erection of a Mishkan was the greatest blessing in itself. Hashem had promised the Jewish nation in Parshas Terumah, "Build me a Mishkan — and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). But Moshe felt that he, too, would add a blessing.

Rashi tells us what Moshe told the people: "May Hashem rest His presence in your handiwork."

At first it seems that Moshe is reiterating the promise that Hashem Himself made. Hashem had promised to dwell in the midst of the Sanctuary that the Jewish nation would build. Why, then did Moshe repeat G-d's promise as a blessing? Is he blessing them that Hashem should keep His word? Or is he perhaps bestowing a more powerful message?

A man once approached Rabbi Yehuda Assad for advice. "There is an old, run-down store in the downtown area of the city. I can get it a very reasonable price. I think that with my marketing skills

I may be able to turn that location into a profitable venture. Do you think I should buy it?"

Rav Assad made a face. "I don't think that it would be prudent to enter that part of the city for a business venture." The man left somewhat dejected.

A few days later another man entered the Rabbi's study with the identical question about the same property. "There is an old, run-down store in the downtown area of the city. I can get it a very reasonable price. I think that with my marketing skills, and of course with Hashem's help, I may be able to turn that location into a profitable venture. Do you think I should buy it?"

This time Rabbi Assad nodded in approval. "I think you should make a go of it. I have no doubts that it will be a success."

When word got out that the Rabbi was behind this new endeavor, the first man stormed into his study quite upset. "Why did the you tell me not to buy the property and then tell my friend just the opposite?" he demanded.

"My dear student," answered the Rabbi, "there is a great difference. Your friend took in a partner. He said that with the help of Hashem he could make a go of it. When someone includes Hashem in his plans, I am sure that he will succeed!"

For the first time since the exodus the Jews had become accomplished craftsman, artisans, tailors, and contractors. They built a magnificent edifice in the wilderness. Moshe knew that a feeling of self-gratification might accompany their accomplishments. Perhaps they may begin to think that it was their wisdom, their skills and only their abilities that made this beautiful Mishkan possible. So he blessed them with words that were meant to dissuade any such delusion.

"May Hashem's presence rest in your handiwork." Of course Hashem promised that he would dwell in the Mishkan. Moshe's question was, "would the Jews let him in?" Would they make him a partner? Would they recognize Hashem as a significant factor even in the physical handiwork that they themselves had wrought? To that end, Moshe's blessing incorporated the standard for every action, accomplishment, and success that anyone achieves. May Hashem be a part of your success. May the Shechina rest upon your handiwork.

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***Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Pekudei
We Toil and Receive Reward — For the Toil!***

Parshas Pikudei concludes the construction of the Mishkan. After the construction of all the individual components of the Mishkan, the parts were brought to Moshe. Rashi quotes the Medrash Tanchuma which explains that the reason why the Mishkan was brought to Moshe was because everyone else was unable to assemble it. The Mishkan was simply too heavy for anyone to lift. Since Moshe had not been personally involved in any part of the construction of the Mishkan, HaShem [G-d] reserved the privilege of final assembly for him.

When HaShem told Moshe to assemble the Mishkan, Moshe protested that it was too heavy for him to lift as well. HaShem told Moshe to make the effort. "Make it look like you are trying to erect it." Moshe made the effort and miraculously, it was assembled by itself. Since Moshe made the effort, he received the credit for having put it up.

Rav Meir Rubman explains that we can learn a very important insight regarding spirituality from this Medrash. The Medrash teaches us that regardless of the difficulty of the task, we must make the effort. In other areas of endeavor, a person is only given credit for producing. However, when it comes to Judaism, HaShem is not necessarily interested in results; He is interested in the effort.

The concept that a person receives an "A" for effort is usually a backhanded compliment. In actuality, you received a "D", a near failing grade, but at least you received an "A" for effort. That is the way it is in other areas of life. But regarding Mitzvos, Hashem merely asks that we make the effort. Whether the task is actually accomplished or not is often out of our control and up to Hashem.

When we conclude a Mesechta (tractate of the Talmud), we say the prayer "We toil and they toil. We toil and receive reward and they toil and do not receive reward." What does it mean "they toil and do not receive reward"? This does not seem to be a true statement. People do not work without receiving payment!

The answer is that when we work (at religious tasks), we are paid for the effort, regardless of whether or not we produce. But 'they' are only paid for the bottom

line. In all other areas of endeavor, toil that does not produce results does not receive reward.

Not long ago (1992), I was in Atlanta for a Torah retreat. Atlanta is an amazing community. Thirty years ago, they did not have a minyan of Sabbath observers. Not so many years later, over 300 people were coming to shul on Shabbos—all of them are in some stage of having intensified, and intensifying, their observance of mitzvos.

I asked Rabbi Emanuel Feldman (Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Beth Jacob in Atlanta), "What is the key to your success?" Rabbi Feldman told me that the key is to try to plant seeds. That is all a Rabbi can do. He can try to nurture and water the seeds, but really all he can do is try. He never knows for sure whether or not it will work.

For example, one individual who recently returned to intensive Jewish involvement and observance told Rabbi Feldman that he made his decision because of a Yom Kippur sermon that Rabbi Feldman delivered fifteen years earlier. A comment in that sermon had struck home. He did not act upon it then, but fifteen years later he decided to become religious.

Success is not what it's all about. Kiruv Rechokim is about effort. Whether or not the Mishkan is actually erected is HaShem's worry. We toil and we receive reward—for the effort.

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https://www.torahweb.org/torah/2022/parsha/ryud_pikudei.html

Rabbi Benjamin Yudin

Revere, Then Hold Dear

In Parshas Pekudei we learn of the actualization of the Divine project to build a sanctuary to G-d. The Ramban teaches that the Mishkan was a continuation of Mount Sinai; at Sinai we received some of the 613 commandments and the process of receiving the rest of Torah was to be through Hashem's communication with Moshe at the Mishkan. As we are taught (Shemos 25:22), "It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the Cover, everything that I shall command you to the children of Israel." Now that this most holy endeavor of creating an Abode for the Divine, one would imagine that the book of Shemos would

conclude with the actualization of the Divine promise. We would expect that we would read of Moshe's entering the Sanctuary and receiving communication from Hashem.

To our surprise, this is not the way the book ends. Instead, almost to our dismay, the Torah teaches us at the very end of Pekudei (40:34) that, "The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Hashem filled the Tabernacle." Yet the very next verse tells us, "Moshe could not enter the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it and the glory of Hashem filled the Tabernacle." How strange and difficult to understand. The whole purpose of the Mishkan was for Moshe to enter; and indeed in next week's parsha, Hashem summons Moshe to the Mishkan and gives him the detailed laws of korbanot. Why then could not Moshe immediately enter the Mishkan upon its completion? Moreover, we find the identical situation at the completion of the first Beis HaMikdash by Shlomo Hamelech. On the day of its dedication, right before the very lengthy prayer of the king, we find the very similar language in (Melachim 1, 8:10-11). "And it was as the Kohanim left the Sanctuary that the cloud filled the Temple of Hashem. The Kohanim could not stand and minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Hashem filled the Temple of Hashem." Once again, the very purpose of the Beis HaMikdash, which is, among other privileges, the place for man to offer sacrifices to Hashem, why could the Kohanim not actualize their function and potential?

Rav Nevenzal shlit"a suggests a most profound response. The Sanctuary is clearly the manifestation and outpouring of love between Hashem and the Jewish people. We are taught that the donations came from those who were "nediv lev - generous of heart", meaning that the majority of the donations were voluntary in nature, and the Torah describes that the response to the appeal for the construction of the Sanctuary was so overwhelming that Moshe had to stop the collection because it exceeded the needs. This is a manifestation of man's love for Hashem. The very building of a Sanctuary ordained by G-d is truly a manifestation of His love for the Jewish nation, as we find in (Shir HaShirim 3:10) "Tocho rotzef ahava - its foundation was overlaid with love." The Mishkan was a fulfillment of G-d's desire to have an abode in this world demonstrating again His great love for the Jewish people.

However, ahava - love by itself, unbridled, unchecked, without limitations, can be most detrimental. Proof,

the tragic sin of Nadav and Avihu is characterized by the Torah (Vayikra 16:1) as "Vikarvasam lifnai Hashem - they approached Hashem", motivated by their abundant love which led them to offer an offering that was not commanded by Hashem. Rav Nevenzal suggests that it is for this reason that together with the love there had to be a commensurate measure of yirah for the Sanctuary which in effect kept the love in check, and together reverence and love provide the perfect atmosphere and environment for the Divine.

The purpose of the Mishkan, as stated above, was a continuation of Sinai. Note that at the giving of the Torah at Sinai, we find (Shemos 19:10-15) several laws that needed to be implemented to ensure and maintain the reverence of the occasion. Among these enactments include: the need for all to go to mikvah, to abstain from relations with their spouse for three days prior to the Revelation and, finally, to set boundaries surrounding the mountain lest anyone, motivated by their incredible love for the Shechinah, would attempt to ascend the mountain. The giving of the Torah is a manifestation of His great love for the Jewish people, as we recite daily in our prayers in the second blessing before the recitation of the Shemah, "With an abundant love have You loved us Hashem... You taught the decrees of life." Your giving of the Torah reflects Your faith and trust in us. But this needed to be preceded and safeguarded by the infusion of the decrees reflecting reverence for the occasion. Similarly, regarding both the Mishkan and the first Beis HaMikdash, even Moshe, the most modest man, was unable to enter, teaching us man's inadequacy and lack of true worthiness to enter His holy abode. Only when man appreciates this sense of the incredible divide that exists between Hashem and man can he enter and communicate with Hashem.

We are familiar with the practice of taking three steps backwards before we begin the recitation of the Shemoneh Esrei, and then taking three steps forward and beginning to pray. The commentary Tehila LeDavid (111:1) notes that this is not considered a hefsek between geula and tefila as the stepping backward, according to the Sefer Rokeach, is a sign of man's humility and total subjugation to the Almighty and only then is he in the proper framework to address Hashem. In addition, the very recitation of the verse (Tehillim 51:17), "Hashem Sefasai tiftach" is a further indication of man's inadequacy and needs Divine assistance to pray.

We see clearly from the above that the blending of the two emotions of reverence and love is a prerequisite for entering the Mikdash. It is interesting to note that ahava, which comes from the root hav - to give, is very often accompanied by an object. One selects a beautiful esrog or other mitzvah object as a demonstration of their love of Hashem. Yirah, on the other hand, is not characterized most often by restricting oneself and abstaining from certain behavior. Thus eating in the Sukkah might be a demonstration of ahava for Hashem but not eating or drinking even that which is halachically permissible to so do, and refraining from even drinking a glass of water outside of the Sukkah, would be an indication of yirah. An individual taking upon themselves a more stringent observance of the law is a demonstration of yirah. The Chazon Ish (Sefer Emunos U'Bitachon 1:13) posits that one who is desirous of improving and enhancing his character traits should begin with sur mayrah - abstaining from that which is negative as it is relatively easy for man to do acts of goodness, but to curb one's behavior is exceedingly challenging. It is for this reason that King David (Tehillim 34:15) writes "Turn from evil and do good", putting yirah before ahava, as we find as a prerequisite for Hashem to dwell in the Mikdash. Interestingly, when we are taught at the beginning of Terumah (25:8), "make for me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in them". Our Rabbis note it doesn't say that I may dwell in it, rather that I may dwell in them. I'd like to suggest that each person aspires to have a Divine presence in them and, therefore, each individual has to strive to constantly improve their yiras Shomayim to accompany their love for G-d, making oneself the proper receptacle for His Divine provenance.

The Gemara (Berachos 20B) teaches that whoever is obligated in shamor (abiding by the restrictions of Shabbos) is equally obligated in the zachor (positive remembrance and enjoyment of Shabbos). Note, however, that this Talmudic teaching begins with the restrictions of Shabbos, teaching that commensurate with one's meticulous observance of the many details of the thirty nine prohibitions of Shabbos will be one's appreciation of the oneg of Shabbos. It begins with the reverence of Shabbos and then one enjoys the love of Shabbos. There are a few practical examples of implementing yiras Shomayim.

It is understandable that one is not to talk during davening in shul. Yiras Shomayim is the understanding that one does not speak in shul other

than prayer and the study of Torah even when they are not actually praying in shul. How one conducts themselves in shul before and after davening is a demonstration of their reverence for the shul. Refraining from speaking matters unrelated to prayer or Torah study while one is wearing their tefillin reflects their reverence for the tefillin and the relationship it engenders. Placing filters on technological devices helping one to refrain from exposure to negative sites and sights is an outgrowth of yiras Shomayim. Even one's careful reciting of bentching and beracha achrona from a text, as opposed to reciting it by heart, reflects yiras Shomayim.

We are all distraught and nervous over the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We not only are worried for the many thousands of Jews in the Ukraine, but we are also reminded of the tenuous state of stability in our world. The Talmud (Yevamos 63a) teaches that, "Misfortune - calamities, including wars, come to the world only on account of Israel." This is substantiated by the prophet Tzechaniah (3:6) who says in the name of Hashem, "I have eliminated nations...I have destroyed their streets... their cities have become ruins" and in the next verse "I said just fear Me (oh Israel) - tikchi musar - learn the lesson." Rashi understands this to mean that when Jews see punishment and devastation brought upon other nations, they will learn the lesson to be fearful lest they too will be punished, and this should move them to repent and improve their ways. Rashi is referring to yiras ha'Onesh - fear of retribution, which is one expression of yirah. May this latest catastrophe quickly come to an end but hopefully leave us with greater yiras Shomayim.

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Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Parashat Pekudei – 5782 - Just As You Were Told

After two months of a huge and complicated construction project, while encamped in the heart of the desert, the children of Israel completed the detailed instructions for building the Mishkan (Tabernacle) that they received from G-d and turned to dedicating the temporary temple that was to accompany them through their desert journeys. This week's Torah portion – Parashat Pekudei – concludes the description of the building of the Mishkan, a

description that's spread over five parshiyot of the Torah.

At the end of the description of the construction work, the Torah states: (Exodus 39, 42-43)

In accordance with all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel do all the work. Moses saw the entire work, and lo! they had done it-as the Lord had commanded, so had they done. So Moses blessed them.

Three times, the Torah repeats and emphasizes the fact that the children of Israel did not change any of the detailed instructions given by G-d. Moses, amazed by this fact, blessed them with a special blessing mentioned in the book of Psalms: (Psalms 90, 17)

And may the pleasantness of the Lord our God be upon us, and the work of our hands establish for us, and the work of our hands establish it.

We note that over the last two parashot, the Torah emphasizes again and again that things were done exactly "as the Lord had commanded Moses."

Why was Moses so excited by the children of Israel doing just as they had been commanded to do? And why does the Torah see the need to emphasize this? It should be an obvious thing, to follow the directions just as they were given by G-d, especially for something as lofty as building the Mishkan.

Again, at the beginning of Beha'alotcha in the book of Numbers, we find something similar. The Torah describes G-d's request of Moses to instruct Aaron to light the menorah in the Mishkan. Immediately following this, the Torah says: (Numbers 8, 3)

Aaron did so; he lit the lamps toward the face of the menorah, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The great biblical commentator, Rashi, illuminates the emphasis insinuated by the language of the Torah:

This shows Aaron's virtue that he did not deviate [from G-d's command].

Again, we see a sense of wonder about Aaron not changing any of the detailed instructions given to him by G-d regarding lighting the menorah in the Mishkan. And again, we must ask: What is so special about this?

The answer lies in an understanding of human nature. As humans, we find it very difficult to do exactly as we are told. We like to do "about" as we are told. Why? Because if we do things exactly as we are told, we are seemingly negating our own independence and personality for the sake of the directions we were given. We want to feel like we contributed to the

story. So, we like to do things "about," and not "exactly," as we are told.

In building the Mishkan, G-d asks the children of Israel to follow His instructions exactly, and they did so. They took themselves out of the equation and fulfilled G-d's will as it was, and for this they deserved praise.

But a difficulty arises by the Torah emphasizing this. Usually, with everything related to holiness and spirituality, we feel an even greater need to express our individuality. We sense our inner spirit that tells us how to act. We want to be connected and feel part of the spiritual act. But in the building of the Mishkan, we see that G-d wanted us to remove ourselves from the picture and do exactly as He commanded, to make G-d's will – our will. As Chazal said, "...do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His" (Chapters of the Fathers 2,4).

At many crossroads in our private or religious life, we might face a dilemma: Should we interject our own will into the picture, or should we concede to G-d's will. At such times, we should remember the great blessing inherent in following G-d's will as it is. Exactly as it is.

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.

Rav Kook Torah

Shabbat Mevarchim Rosh Chodesh: Our Prayers for the New Month

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

On the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh, the new Hebrew month, we announce the new month with a special prayer, called Birkat HaChodesh. We pray that the coming month will be a time of good health, peace, and blessing.

The first paragraph of Birkat HaChodesh is an ancient prayer composed by third-century scholar Abba Arikha ('Rav'), founder of the famed Babylonian academy of Sura. Here is the text of Rav's prayer, as recorded in the Talmud: (Berakhot 16b)

"May it be Your will, the Eternal our God, to grant us long life,

a life of peace,

a life of good,

a life of blessing,

a life of sustenance,

a life of vigor of the bones,

a life marked by reverence of Heaven and dread of sin,
 a life without shame and embarrassment,
 a life of riches and honor,
 a life in which we may be filled with love of Torah and awe of Heaven,
 a life in which You will fulfill all of our hearts' desires for good."

While the prayer does mention love of Torah and awe of Heaven, most of the requests appear to refer to life's material aspects: sustenance and physical vigor, riches and honor. Were these wishes foremost in the prayers of that pious scholar?

The True Meaning of Rav's Prayer

Rav Kook taught that we should be careful not to understand the requests of Rav's prayer in a superficial way. The focus is not on material blessings but spiritual goals. Each request relates to some aspect of spiritual growth and reaching our life's higher mission.

"May it be Your will... to grant us long life" - חיים ארוכים. A long life does not mean long in years, but long in content and accomplishments. This is a preamble for the requests that follow.

"A life of peace" - חיים של שלום. This refers, not only to peaceful relations with others, but to our own inner peace and harmony. We should not be stymied by internal qualities - flawed character traits, confusion, intellectual blunders - which undermine our efforts to grow spiritually.

"A life of good" - חיים של טובה. No, this is not a request for good times and affluence. This is a spiritual request, a prayer that all external factors which affect us, should influence us in good directions and positive ways.

"A life of blessing" - חיים של ברכה. Not blessings that we receive, but blessings that we give. May we bring blessings to the world through our actions: helping the needy, consoling the broken-hearted, and providing moral leadership and direction.

"A life of sustenance" - חיים של פרנסה. A prayer that all our needs be met - physical, psychological, and spiritual.

"A life of vigor of the bones" - חיים של חלוץ עצמות. In a Talmudic discussion in Yevamot 102b, Rabbi Elazar surprisingly noted, "This is the best blessing of all!" Physical vigor and energy are important in life; but is this the most important blessing that one can ask for?

Rav Kook explained that chilutz atzamat refers to our mindset and outlook. We pray that we should be

willing and eager to undertake our spiritual mission, our special service of God. We should not feel that avodat Hashem is a burden. This is the ultimate blessing, for the goal of all blessings is the path itself: our service of God. As the Sages wrote, we should seek "God's mitzvot, and not the reward for observing His mitzvot."

"A life without shame and embarrassment" - חיים שאין בזהם בושה וכלמה. No one is perfect. We all have shortcomings and weaknesses, a source of embarrassment. But our lives as a whole - the choices we make and the actions we take - should be without shame, a reflection of our better qualities. We should be able to look at our lives with pride and satisfaction.

"A life of riches and honor" - חיים של עשר וכבוד. Sometimes wealth can change a person, undermining his integrity, befuddling his values, blinding him to his true goals. Therefore we ask that our wealth be bound with true honor, namely, our values and higher goals.

And finally, we ask for "a life in which You will fulfill all of our hearts' desires for good" - חיים שימלא ה' משאלות לבנו לטובה. Why tack on at the end, "for good"? Sometimes people wish for things - personal gain, material wealth - which they think will be good. We pray that our hearts' desires will be for that which truly is good, complementing the ultimate goal and the greatest good.

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Pekudei

פרשת פקודי תשפ"ב

אלה פקודי המשכן

These are the reckonings of the Mishkan. (38:21)

What appears to be a sad commentary on the nature of people is actually Hashem's way of rewarding the righteous. The *parsha* begins with Moshe Rabbeinu's accounting of all the precious metals and jewelry that *Klal Yisrael* donated for the construction of the *Mishkan*. Why did Moshe do such an accounting? Was he not trustworthy? Unquestionably, Hashem trusted Moshe, knowing that his integrity and devotion were impeccable. Some disturbed people in every community have nothing else to do but denigrate their leaders. This is, unfortunately, the product of envy which is espoused by insecure individuals who look at themselves and

see a wretched example of someone who could have been a successful person. Regrettably, as noted in the *Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 51:6)*, Moshe heard some scoffers speaking behind his back, claiming that he had become wealthy through the contributions to the *Mishkan*. They asserted in a not-so-subtle manner that he had skimmed off the top.

What is most shocking about this is that Hashem Himself had attested to Moshe's integrity. *Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, suggests that specifically because of Moshe's greatness, Hashem orchestrated this slander to reward him. The *Sefarim (Maggid Meishaim, Vayakhel)* contend that when one speaks evil, slanderous speech against his fellow, the victim receives all of the *z'chuyos*, merits, that the offender possessed, and the offender, in turn, receives all of the victim's sins. *Orchos Tzaddikim (Shaar Anavah)* relates that a person once slandered a righteous man. The victim sent a gift to the offender in return for the merits that he had just received – which had once been the slanderer's merits. When the *Yom HaDin* – the day in which we will all stand before the Heavenly Tribunal to give an accounting of our lives – arrives, we will be surprised at the many merits that have accrued from those who have spoken derogatorily of us. Likewise, we will be shocked by the many sins that have resulted when the coin is flipped, and we have been the slanderers.

The *Satmar Rebbe, zl*, notes the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos (6:1)* which delineates the many benefits garnered by one who studies Torah, among them *mochel al elbono*, one who forgives the individual who shames/slanders him. This implies that one who has achieved a lofty level of Torah scholarship, who has accrued a reputation of piety and devotion to Hashem, can (and will) still be slandered by a malcontent. Despite a person's spiritual achievements, scoffers and slanderers, jealous people who cannot tolerate his success and will do everything in their power to take him down, will always exist. After all, if they were capable of speaking audaciously against Moshe, what would prevent men of such execrable character from attempting to destroy a contemporary Torah scholar?

Rav Shternbuch cites the *Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos II pg. 590)* who explains *Chazal's (Sanhedrin 14)* teaching that Heaven absolves the sins of one who ascends to a leadership position. The *Chasam Sofer* asserts that when one achieves distinction, when he rises above his peers, some

people will always be ready to speak *lashon hora* against him. After all, his sins will be absolved and transferred to them.

אלה פקודי המשכן

These are the reckonings of the *Mishkan*. (38:21)

Building a “home” for the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, here on earth was apparently top priority for the nascent Jewish nation. They had received the Torah at Sinai amid a Revelation unparalleled in history. The *Mishkan* was to be the continuum of that Revelation, a place where Jews could relate to Hashem “dwelling” in their midst. Hashem commands us to make a Sanctuary for Him, after which He will reside within us. If our lives outside the Temple environs are consecrated by the understanding, purity and devotion taught within the Sanctuary, then the *Mishkan* serves as the source for the *Mishkan* within ourselves. In this manner we seek the presence of Hashem not only in the Temple but among and within us wherever we go. Having said this, basking in Hashem's Presence would seem to be the apex of spiritual achievement in this corporal world. *Chazal*, however, inform us that the *mitzvah* of *hachnosas orchim*, hospitality to those in need, takes precedence over receiving the *Shechinah*. Indeed, Hashem was in the midst of visiting Avraham *Avinu*, when he was compelled to excuse himself to attend the guests that had arrived at his tent. The question is obvious: What is so special about hospitality that it overrides receiving the *Shechinah*?

Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, quotes the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos (4:2)*, “One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is worth more than a life of eternity in the World-To-Come.” This teaches us that Hashem places us in this world for a purpose: to serve Him. Service means action, and action supersedes any spiritual revelation to be attained in this world, or even in the next. If an opportunity to fulfill a *mitzvah* presents itself during a period that we have dedicated to Torah study, or in which we are involved in any other spiritual endeavor (other than active *mitzvah* performance), one must take off from his present endeavor/experience and hasten to perform the *mitzvah*.

The bottom line is: All spiritual ascendancy encounters have one ultimate goal: action. Revelations are wonderful only if they lead to performance. *Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl*, was once reciting *Krias Shema* when he heard two men disputing which one of the two was obligated to bury a deceased. *Rav Yisrael*

removed his *tallis* and *tefillin* in middle of *Krias Shema* – and scurried to bury the deceased. It was not his responsibility; he was wearing his *tallis* and *tefillin*; he was in the midst of reciting *Krias Shema*, but a *mitzvah* had surfaced and he, being a man of action, jumped at the opportunity to serve his Master.

Action, pro-activity, applies to all areas of Jewish life. We live with a purpose; we are a people on a mission. While our goals may vary – some focus on erudition, others on goal-oriented, financial success – our ultimate goals are Torah dissemination and acts of lovingkindness. Yet others devote themselves to the arena of Jewish education or the rabbinate. They all have one principal recipe for success: action. The premier architect of Torah *chinuch*, education, in America was *Horav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, zl*. A complete treatment of his life and legacy would require a volume (of which we have a well-written one) just to peruse his daily schedule. His life story is an inspiration which should galvanize us to action.

Rav Shraga Feivel arrived in the *Bais Hamedrash* each morning before *Shacharis*. He followed this with a breakfast of hot cereal and a cup of milk at home. He would return to the *Mesivta* with exuberance, having thought of new approaches he wanted to try. He would then stand by the door, with his pocket watch in hand, to greet each student. When a boy arrived late, *Rav Shraga Feivel* stared at his watch in disbelief (so to speak). His *gut morgen*, good morning, rendered curtly, was all the rebuke the student required. He had conveyed his message. *Rav Shraga Feivel* could not fathom how anyone, student or *rebbe*, could be late for Torah study. He would declare to his students, “If we are striving to build *Yiddishkeit*, how can we afford to waste a minute?” Time was very important to him, and he communicated his feelings to his students. He would admonish his students to learn, and, if they did not want to learn, they should at least play ball – anything but sit around doing nothing.

Rav Shraga Feivel visited every classroom daily, always issuing carefully chosen comments to encourage or subtly rebuke the students. When his words went over the students’ heads; they were directed towards the *rebbe*. He set aside part of each day for private discussions with individual boys. He spoke to each student at least twice annually. He maintained an extremely close relationship with his *rebbeim*, lauding their achievements and encouraging them to grow to even higher heights.

Late afternoon was when *Rav Shraga Feivel* taught his select *shiurim*, lessons. On most nights, he returned for night *sefer*, evening study programs. His day did not end with his classes. When he went home, he began anew his work on behalf of the *klal*, community at large. He was a man who did not live for himself. This was his recipe for success.

אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות

These are the reckonings of the *Mishkan*, the *Mishkan* of Testimony. (38:21)

Rashi notes the double use of the word *Mishkan*. He explains that it alludes to the two *Mishkanos* which were taken as a *mashkon*, collateral, until that day in which we repent and become deserving of having our collateral returned to us, with the building of the *Bais Hamikdash Ha'Shilishi*, Third Temple. *Horav Yosef Chaim Sonenfeld, zl*, asks a powerful question. The Torah provides for a lender to take collateral from someone to whom he lends money. Otherwise, he has little to no assurance that his money will be returned. The Torah, however, presents one stipulation: If the debtor is poor, and the collateral that he had given is something he needs at night, for example a pillow or a blanket, the lender must return it to him at night and retrieve it the following morning. If this is the case, how is it that Hashem has taken our *Batei Mikdash* and not returned them? We need them back as soon as possible! Veritably, our spiritual lives depend on it.

Rav Yosef Chaim responds with an answer that indicates the critical importance of increasing the Jewish nation’s sense of yearning for *Moshiach*. He explains that the idea behind returning the collateral is based upon the premise that the poor man requires it for his existence: i.e., he cannot sleep without it. Can we truthfully assert that we cannot function without the *Bais HaMikdash*? Do we feel the “pain” of the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, in *galus*, exile, with us? Do we think that Hashem does not want to return the *Bais HaMikdash* as soon as we demonstrate a craving, an eagerness to have it back? We are all too complacent with our lives. We have become accustomed to not having a *Bais HaMikdash*, as is expressed by the popular idiom of the state of potentiality and ambiguity: “It is what it is” – and we do nothing about it.

Horav Zalmen Volozhiner, zl, advances that although *Klal Yisrael* as a whole, in its entirety, has not merited the return of the *Bais HaMikdash*, it does not mean that each individual who sincerely yearns

for its rebuilding is not to be considered as if he himself had the *Bais HaMikdash*. In other words, both a general cumulative component and an individual component exist concerning the rebuilding of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Each individual Jew who truly pines for the *Bais HaMikdash*, who agonizes over its exile and the dismal state of *Klal Yisrael* without it, merits to some extent that the *Shechinah* will repose within him. He will enjoy the return of the “collateral,” albeit on an individual basis.

In previous generations (perhaps because they were exposed to much less materialism), Jews – even the simple unschooled Jew of the *shtetl*, far removed from the citadels of scholarship – were more focused on the advent of *Moshiach* and would talk about it with a realistic sense of expectation each day. The arrival of *Moshiach* was imminent and, therefore, often the thrust of their conversations. *Horav Moshe Shternbuch*, *Shlita*, relates that his mother had purchased a new dress. It was a special dress which her family expected her to wear for a special occasion. She agreed, “Yes, it will be put aside for a special occasion, a day of extreme joy and rejoicing: when *Moshiach Tziddkeinu* will arrive!”

Horav Shmuel Aharon HaLevi Pardes, *zl*, visited Poland in the beginning of 1932, and he made a point to travel to Radin to receive the blessing of the *Chafetz Chaim*. Following *Tefillas Maariv*, the evening prayer, he walked over to the *Chafetz Chaim* who greeted him warmly. “From where to you hail?” the sage asked. “From America,” *Rav* Pardes replied. The *Chafetz Chaim* continued his conversation: “Here in Radin, we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of *Moshiach* at any moment. Does this yearning prevail as well in America?” *Rav* Pardes did not want to respond. Clearly, American sentiment was different than what was manifest in Radin. Nonetheless, he answered, “Yes, in America we, too, are anxiously awaiting his arrival.”

As the conversation ended, *Rav* Pardes overheard the *Chafetz Chaim* “speaking” to Hashem (this was not unusual), as if he were expressing a personal prayer: “Hashem, the Jews in Poland suffer from deprivation and extreme poverty. It is, thus, understandable that they are waiting for *Moshiach* to come and redeem them from their physical afflictions. In contrast, however, Jews of America have a surplus of material comforts and wealth. Yet, despite their material indulgence, they still yearn and wait for

Moshiach. If so, Hashem, why are You holding us back from finally greeting *Moshiach*?”

ויכנס הענן את אהל מועד... ולא יכל משה לבא אל אהל מועד כי שכן עליו הענן וכבוד ד' מלא את המשכן

And the cloud covered the *Ohel Moed*... and Moshe was unable to enter the *Ohel Moed* because the cloud resided there, and the glory of Hashem filled the *Mishkan*. (40:34,35)

Sefer Shemos concludes with a description of Hashem’s *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, entering the *Mishkan*. All of the work of *Klal Yisrael* in planning, gathering the materials and building the *Mishkan* achieved fruition at that moment. They had succeeded in building a “home/Sanctuary” for Hashem in this world. The first *pasuk* of *Sefer Vayikra* begins with Hashem calling/summoning Moshe *Rabbeinu* from within the *Ohel Moed*. Our quintessential leader, who was involved in every aspect of the creation of the *Mishkan*, remained outside its environs. He would not yet enter. *Chazal* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 1:15) explain that juxtaposition of the closing words of *Sefer Shemos* upon the opening words of *Sefer Vayikra* teaches us a critical lesson concerning *derech eretz*, manners, decency. They say that a *neveilah*, animal carcass, is better than a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, who has no *daas*, wisdom/knowledge. We see this from the model of Moshe, who was the *avi ha’neviim*, father/greatest of all the prophets; he had been the conduit for the performance of miracles and giving of the Torah, yet he was not able to enter the *Mishkan* until he was summoned by Hashem.

In this vein, *Daas* applies to the scholar’s ability to incorporate his Torah knowledge into himself. The Torah does not remain a superficial discipline from which he studies and amasses knowledge. The Torah transforms him into a Torah personality, whose every nuance is inculcated with and guided by the Torah. Having said this, the mere idea of asserting that a *talmid chacham* who lacks *daas* is worse than an animal carcass is incredible. He may be a flawed scholar, but should he be likened to a carcass?

Horav Tzvi Kushelevsky, *Shlita*, explains this based upon the division of the various elements of our world. *Chazal* distinguish between inanimate and animate as falling into one of four categories: *domeim*, *tzomeach*, *chai*, *medaber*. A *domeim* is an inanimate object – a stone. A *tzomeich* is a living/growing organism – a plant/produce. A *chai* is a living, breathing creature whose life qualities are on a higher

plane than that of a plant. Last is the *medaber*, human being, who has the power of speech. A *talmid chacham* is in a league unto himself because his life has purpose – true purpose as Hashem has dictated. As such, he rises above the ordinary *medaber*. The distinction between them is apparent when each is bereft of his unique identifying distinction. When a *chai*, living creature, loses its life, it becomes a carcass. Without its defining quality of life, it is nothing. The distinguishing quality of the *talmid chacham* which distinguishes him from all other *medabrim* is his unique capacity of *daas*. The *talmid chacham* is a repository of Torah, which is his identity. If the Torah he imbibes is a mere discipline or a source of mental gymnastics to develop his cognitive qualities, then he is no longer a *talmid chacham*. He may well still be erudite, but if he does not possess *daas* – the Torah has done nothing for him.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that the “transition” resulting from a loss/lack of *daas* – from *talmid chacham* status to ordinary *medaber* -- is so great that he is worse off, has sustained a greater loss than an animal that has lost its life. The descent from *chai* to *domeim* is not merely as severe as from *talmid chacham* to *medaber*. Torah should refine its student – or he is not a student.

Accordingly, the greater the scholar, the more knowledge with which he is blessed, his *daas* should grow commensurately. *Horav Ovadiah Yosef, zl*, was a *talmid chacham* without peer, whose *daas* and human decency paralleled his level of erudition. The stories which abound about his sensitivity to people, the respect he gave to everyone, regardless of status in life, are legendary. I found one story that I feel is especially inspiring. During the last twenty years of his life, the *Chacham* lived in a large apartment in Har Nof together with his son, his daughter-in-law and their family. He had a massive *sefarim* library which included over 40,000 *sefarim*. His *Rebbetzin* once remarked that no new volume made its way onto a shelf until after he had learned through it from cover to cover. Furthermore, he did not just peruse the volume; he annotated and added his own commentary to almost every volume that he learned. He would point out areas in which the author had missed some point, noting where else this topic was discussed. The bookshelves were all over the house, even in the hallways. Indeed, the *Chacham's* criterion for selecting an apartment was the height of the ceilings,

which would allow him more space to store his precious *sefarim*. [I daresay anyone realizes the magnitude of 40,000 *sefarim*.]

During his early days in the apartment in which he lived, as he aged and the number of *mispallelim*, worshippers, increased, the *kehillah* moved his *Bais HaKnesses, shul*, to an apartment on a different floor. When asked why he did not make it easier on himself and keep the *shul* where he lived and studied all day (after all, less walking meant less pain), he replied, “First of all, some notes have recently gone ‘missing’ from my desk. Some of the people who join us in prayer do not realize that each note is precious to me. (They think that they can take it as a souvenir.) More importantly, however, when I write comments on the margin of a *sefer*, I am writing this for myself. It is not for public consumption. At times, these comments may be viewed as derogatory to the author, when, in fact, no offense was intended. Recently, the author of a treatise told me that a friend of his was *davening* in my apartment and noticed his *sefer* on the shelf. He took it down and perused it. He noted that I had written a comment that might be misconstrued as a criticism of his *sefer*. The author was hurt and came to speak to me about it.

“It is worthwhile for me to leave my home for every *tefillah*, rather than take a chance of slighting the feelings of an author.” This should provide the reader with a perspective on the meaning of *daas*.

Va'ani Tefillah

רחום וחנן חטאתי לפניך - *Rachum v'chanun chatasi lefanecha*. O compassionate One gracious One, I have sinned before You.

Nefillas apayim, falling down on one's face, is a special prayer recited following *Shemoneh Esrai* during which we supplicate Hashem, affirming that we acknowledge our sinful behavior and pray for forgiveness. Originally, this prayer was recited while the supplicant was actually face-down to the ground. Now, we bend our head, leaning it on our arm, covering our face. It should be recited sitting. [*Rivash* opines that sitting is arbitrary; one may stand.] We place our head on the right arm, since the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, is opposite a person, on his right side. The *Bais Yosef* quotes his brother, *Horav Binyamin*, who contends that one should rest his head on his left arm, thereby facing the *Shechinah* which is on the right side. If he were to rest on the right side, he would have his back to the *Shechinah*. *Ohr Tzaddikim* quotes the *Shulchan Aruch* which is of the opinion

that, during *Shacharis* when one is wearing his *Tefillin* on his left arm, he should rest his head on his right side, out of respect for the *Tefillin*.

In memory of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

ר' נפתלי מכלאל בן & מרת שרה ריבע בת ר' יעקב מאיר הכהן ע"ה
נתנאל ז"ל

The Rothner Family

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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum*

Forgetting Shabbos Candles

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Since we derive the laws of Shabbos from the construction of the Mishkan, this topic is unquestionably in order.

Question #1: Missed One

“After Shabbos began, I noticed that I had forgotten to light one of my candles. Must I light an additional candle in the future?”

Question #2: Unable to Light

“I was unable to light my Shabbos lights because of circumstances beyond my control. Must I begin lighting an additional candle every week in the future?”

Question #3: Already Add

“My mother lights only two candles all the time, but I have been lighting three. One week, I missed lighting; do I now need to light an additional one, for a total of four, even though I already light more than my mother does?”

Question #4: Electrified

“I did not light my Shabbos candles, but there was plenty of electric light in the whole house. Must I add an additional light in the future?”

Introduction

An accepted custom is that a woman, who misses lighting Shabbos candles one week, adds to her future lighting, either by kindling more lights, by adding more oil to her lamps, or by lighting longer candles. The basis for this practice is recorded relatively late in halachic literature. It is not mentioned anywhere in Chazal, nor in the period of the ge'onim or early rishonim. The source for this custom is the Maharil (Hilchos Shabbos #1), the source of most early Ashkenazic customs, particularly those of western Germany (sometimes called minhag bnei Reinus, those who lived along the Rhine River). Although the Rema refers to this custom as a *chumra rechokah*, an

excessive stringency (Darchei Moshe, Orach Chayim 263), he notes that women observe this practice and, therefore, he rules this way in his glosses to the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 263:1), where he mentions the practice of adding a light.

In this instance, the custom reported by the Maharil was accepted and became established not only over all of Ashkenaz, including the eastern European world, but also by the Edot Hamizrah, the entire world of Sefardic Jewry. So, halachically, this has the status of a minhag Klal Yisroel. It is uncommon to find such a relatively late custom that has become so well established.

It is also curious that, although we would consider this a relatively minor custom, the halachic authorities devote much discussion to understanding its halachic ramifications, complete with many applications.

Lamp or candle

An important technical clarification is required. Although most women fulfill the mitzvah of kindling Shabbos lights with candles, we should be aware that the word “ner,” which today means “candle,” in the time of Tanach and Chazal meant the lamp in which you placed oil to light. Although candle manufacture goes back to antiquity, it was not commonly used in Eretz Yisroel and Bavel until long after the era of Chazal. In their day, unless the term *ner shel sha'avah* (wax lamp; i.e., a candle) or similar term is used, it should be assumed that the word *ner* refers to a lamp. Thus, the *posuk*, *ki ner mitzvah veTorah* or (Mishlei 6:23), means that a mitzvah functions as a lamp and the lights that burn inside it is the Torah.

Man or woman

Another introduction is in order. Technically speaking, the mitzvah of kindling Shabbos lights is incumbent on every member of a household. To quote the Rambam: “Everyone [emphasis is mine] is required to have a lamp lit in his house on Shabbos” (Hilchos Shabbos 5:1). Although it is usually only the lady of the house who kindles the Shabbos lights, she does so as the agent of the rest of the family and their guests (Levush 263:3; Graz, Kuntros Acharon 263:2). In other words, they have implicitly appointed her a *shaliach* to fulfill their mitzvah for them, just as they have appointed the man of the house to recite kiddush on their behalf.

The custom, going back to the time of the Mishnah (Shabbos 34a), is that a woman kindles the lights. The Zohar mentions that the husband should prepare the lights for her to kindle. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in his

glosses to the Mishnah, notes that the Mishnah also implies this when it states that a woman is responsible for kindling the lamp (Shabbos 31b), implying that someone else prepared it for her to kindle. The Magen Avraham, quoting the Arizal, notes that preparing the lamps for kindling is specifically the responsibility of the husband (Magen Avraham 263:7).

Thus, if there is no woman in the house, or she is unavailable to kindle the Shabbos lights at the correct time, a different adult should kindle the lamps and recite the bracha when doing so. (Some have the practice that the husband kindles the Shabbos lamps on the Shabbos after a woman gives birth, even when his wife is home [Magen Avraham 263:6; Mishnah Berurah 263:11 and Aruch Hashulchan 263:7].)

If a man was supposed to light candles -- for example, he is unmarried -- and forgot to light them one week, is he now required to kindle an extra light every week because of the custom mentioned by the Maharil? This question is disputed by late halachic authorities.

Kindled less

If a woman kindled less than the number of lamps that she usually does, is she required to add more lamps in the future?

This matter is the subject of a dispute between achronim; the Pri Megadim rules that she is required to add more lamps or more oil in the future, whereas the Biur Halacha concludes that there is no such requirement.

Two or three

The Rema raises the following question about the custom of kindling an extra light: Although the Gemara makes no mention of kindling more than one lamp for Shabbos use, common custom, already reported by the rishonim, is that people kindle two lamps every Friday night. Many reasons are cited for this custom of lighting two lights; the rishonim mention that one is to remind us of zachor and the other of shamor. (Other reasons for this custom are mentioned in other prominent seforim, such as Elyah Rabbah [263:2]; Elef Lamateh [625:33]; and Halichos Beisah [14:57].) The Rema asks that when a woman kindles three lights, because she forgot once to light and is now adding an extra one to fulfill the Maharil's minhag, it seems that she is preempting the custom of kindling two lights because of zachor and shamor.

The Rema responds to this question by quoting sources in rishonim (Mordechai, Rosh Hashanah #720; Rosh, Rosh Hashanah 4:3) that, in general, when a halacha requires a certain number, this is a

minimum requirement, but it is permitted to add to it. Thus, for example, when we say that reading the Torah on Shabbos requires seven people to be called up, this means that we should call up at least seven people, but it is permitted to call up more, which is indeed the accepted halachic practice (see Mishnah Megillah 21a).

Based on these rishonim, the Rema explains that the custom is to kindle at least two lamps, and that adding extra because a woman forgot once to light is not against the custom (Darchei Moshe and Hagahos, Orach Chayim 263). This is why the fairly common practice of adding one lamp for each child of the household is not a violation of the custom of lighting two lamps for zachor and shamor. Furthermore, the custom that some have to kindle seven lights or ten lights every Erev Shabbos, mentioned by the Shelah Hakodosh and the Magen Avraham, does not violate the earlier custom of the rishonim of lighting two.

The prevalent custom is that a woman who kindles more than two lamps when at home kindles only two when she is a guest (She'arim Hametzuyanin Bahalacha 75:13). Some late authorities discuss whether a woman who lights extra lights because she once forgot should do so also when she is a guest (Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa, Chapter 43, footnote 31; see She'arim Hametzuyanin Bahalacha 75:13, who is lenient).

Why do we light Shabbos candles?

Prior to answering our opening questions, we should clarify a few other issues basic to the mitzvah of kindling lights for Shabbos. The Gemara explains that kindling Shabbos lights enhances shalom bayis, happiness and peace in the household. Specifically, the authorities provide several ways that lighting increases the proper Shabbos atmosphere.

(1) A place of honor is always properly illuminated, and, therefore, there should be ample lighting for the Shabbos meal (Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:5; Rashi, Shabbos 25b).

(2) Not only is there more kavod for the Shabbos meal when it is properly lit, but it also increases the enjoyment of that meal (She'iltos #63). It is not enjoyable to eat a meal when it is difficult to see what you are eating.

(3) It also makes people happy to be in a well-lit area. Sitting somewhere that is dark conflicts with the Shabbos atmosphere (Rashi, Shabbos 23b).

(4) If the house is dark, someone might stumble or collide with something and hurt himself, which is

certainly not conducive to enjoying Shabbos (Magen Avraham, 263:1).

There are circumstances when some of the reasons mentioned above apply and other reasons do not. For example, according to the first two reasons -- to treat the Shabbos meal with honor and to enjoy it -- one is required to have light only where one is eating; however, one would not necessarily need to illuminate an area that one traverses. On the other hand, the fourth reason, preventing a person from hurting himself, requires illuminating all parts of the house that one walks through on Shabbos. Since these reasons are not mutually exclusive, but may all be true, one should make sure that all areas of the house that one uses in the course of Shabbos are illuminated (Magen Avraham 263:1).

Husband does not want

What is the halacha if a woman would like to kindle extra lamps, more than her custom, but her husband objects, preferring that she light the number of lamps that is her usual custom. I found this exact question discussed in Shu't Tzitz Eliezer, who rules that she should follow her husband's directive, noting that the reason for kindling Shabbos lamps is to increase shalom bayis, which is the opposite of what this woman will be doing if she kindles lamps that her husband does not want (Shu't Tzitz Eliezer 13:26).

Atonement, Reminder or Compensation?

At this point, we can return to our specific discussion about someone who forgot to kindle Shabbos lights. The acharonim discuss the purpose of adding an extra lamp because a woman once forgot to light Shabbos lights. The Machatzis Hashekel (Orach Chayim 263:1) suggests three different reasons for the custom:

Reminder

The reason mentioned by the Bach and other acharonim for the custom is that kindling an extra light every week provides a permanent reminder to kindle Shabbos lamps (Bach, Orach Chayim 263; Magen Avraham 263:3).

Atonement

The Machatzis Hashekel suggests another reason, that kindling the extra light is atonement, kaparah, for not having fulfilled the mitzvah.

Compensation

Yet another reason is that not kindling Shabbos lights one week caused a small financial benefit. To avoid any appearance that we benefit from a halachic mishap, the extra lamp is kindled to make compensation.

(Yet another reason for the custom of adding an extra light is suggested by the Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 263:7).

Do any halachic differences result from these reasons?

Yes, they do. If the reason is because of "reminder," it is appropriate only if she forgot to kindle, but if she was unable to light, she would not require a "reminder" for future weeks (Magen Avraham 263:3). The example chosen by the Magen Avraham is that she was imprisoned, although we could also choose an example in which a life-threatening emergency called her away from the house right before Shabbos.

On the other hand, if the reason is because of compensation, she should add extra lamp.

The Magen Avraham and the Machatzis Hashekel conclude that we may rely on the first reason, that it is to remind her for the future, and that the minhag applies, therefore, only when she forgot to kindle, but not when she was unable to.

Unable to light

At this point, let us address the second of our opening questions: "I was unable to light my Shabbos lights because of circumstances beyond my control. Must I begin lighting an additional candle every week in the future?"

It would seem that it depends on what she meant by "circumstances beyond my control." If she needed to be with one of her children in the emergency room at the time that Shabbos began and no one else in the house kindled lights, I would consider that a situation in which she is not required to light an additional lamp. On the other hand, if she ran out of time and suddenly realized that it is too late to light, this is clearly negligence and she is required to kindle an extra light in the future. Specific shaylos should be addressed to one's rav or posek.

Already add

At this point, we can address one of our opening questions: "My mother lights only two candles, all the time, but I have been lighting three. One week, I missed lighting; do I need to light an additional one, for a total of four, even though I already light more than my mother does?"

The answer is that you are required to add one because of the custom quoted by the Maharil, in addition to the three that you already light (Elyah Rabbah 263:9).

Electric lights

It should be noted that all four reasons mentioned above for lighting Shabbos lights would be fulfilled if

someone turned on electric lights. Notwithstanding that universal practice is to kindle oil or candles for Shabbos lights, most authorities contend that one fulfills the mitzvah of kindling Shabbos lights with electric lights (Shu't Beis Yitzchok, Yoreh Deah 1:120; Shu't Melamed Le'ho'il, Orach Chayim #46, 47; Edus Le'yisrael, pg. 122). There are some authorities who disagree, because they feel that the mitzvah requires kindling with a wick and a fuel source that is in front of you, both requirements that preclude using electric lights to fulfill the mitzvah (Shu't Maharshag 2:107). The consensus of most authorities is that, in an extenuating circumstance, one may fulfill the mitzvah with electric lights (Shu't Yechaveh Daas 5:24; Shu't Kochavei Yitzchak 1:2). It is common practice that women who are hospitalized, or in similar circumstances where safety does not permit kindling an open flame, may rely on the electric lights for Shabbos lamps. When one needs to rely on this heter, at candle-lighting time, she should turn off the electric light she will be using for Shabbos, and then turn it on for use as her Shabbos light.

Lighting in an illuminated room

The contemporary availability of electric lighting adds another interesting dimension to the mitzvah of lighting Shabbos lamps, which requires a brief introduction. The rishonim discuss whether one is allowed to recite a bracha over Shabbos lights in a room that is already illuminated, when the reasons for the mitzvah are accomplished already. Some maintain that, indeed, you cannot recite a bracha on the Shabbos lamps when they are basically unnecessary, whereas others rule that the extra light enhances the joyous Shabbos atmosphere and one is therefore allowed to recite a bracha on the candles (see Beis Yosef 263). After quoting both opinions, the Shulchan Aruch (263:8) rules that one should not recite a bracha in this situation because of "safeik brachos lehakeil," whereas the Rema explains that minhag Ashkenaz allows reciting a bracha.

One of the practical halachic ramifications of this disagreement is whether one may recite a bracha over the Shabbos candles in a room that has electric lights. It would seem that, according to the opinion of the Shulchan Aruch, one should not, while the Rema would permit it. Contemporary poskim suggest avoiding the question by having the lady of the house turn on the electric lights in the dining room in honor of Shabbos immediately before lighting the Shabbos candles and recite the bracha, having in mind to include the electric lights (Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah 43:34). (The Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah suggests other options that accomplish the same thing.)

At this point, we can address the fourth of our opening questions: "I did not light my Shabbos candles, but there was plenty of electric light in the whole house. Must I add an additional light in the future?"

The question germane to our subtopic is: what is the halacha if a woman forgot to light Shabbos lights, but there were electric lights that were left burning anyway; does the penalty of the Maharil apply in this instance? I discovered a dispute in this matter among late halachic authorities, in which Rav Shmuel Vozner ruled that she is required to kindle another lamp in the future (Shu't Sheivet Halevi 5:33), whereas Rav Ovadyah Yosef ruled that she is not (Yalkut Yosef 263:43; see also Shu't Melamed Le'ho'il, Orach Chayim #46; Shu't Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 3:14:6; Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah Chapter 43, footnote 30; Shu't Avnei Yoshfeih, Orach Chayim 1:55:6.)

Conclusion

The Gemara states that one who is careful to use beautiful "neiros" for Shabbos will merit having children who are talmidei chachomim (Shabbos 23b). Let us hope and pray that in the merit of observing these halachos correctly, we will have children and grandchildren who light up the world with their Torah!

לע"נ

שרה משה בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
 ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה
 אנה מלכה בת ישראל ע"ה