



Sponsor an issue of Migdal Ohr for only \$36 and help spread Torah to thousands of readers each week!
To reserve your sponsorship, e-mail info@jewishspeechwriter.com and include the date/week you'd like to sponsor and the text of the dedication.

©2008 - J. Gewirtz

A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:20 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:38 - שקיעה
- 8:49 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:25 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:20 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:40 - שקיעה
- 6:22 - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:52 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אמוטען שבת!

Did You Know?

The Torah contains the prohibition of cooking a kid in its mother's milk three times. This teaches us that it is forbidden to cook meat and milk together, eat them together, or have benefit from such a mixture. Our Sages protected us from inadvertently transgressing this sin by establishing "fences" (seyagim) around it. They deemed fowl to be as stringent as beef or lamb. Also, the Rabbis prohibited eating dairy foods even after eating meat. This is because the taste of meat lingers in one's mouth, and also because actual pieces of meat can be stuck between the teeth after meat has been eaten. For these two reasons, our Sages ordained that two things must happen before dairy can be eaten after meat: 1) Birkas ha-Mazon [or berachah acharonah] over the meat meal must be said and 2) A substantial amount of time must elapse. The almost universal custom is to wait six hours, though some communities have more lenient customs. One who abandons his custom to adopt a more lenient one is described by the poskim as a *po'reitz gader*, a "fence-breaker", and as one who transgresses the exhortation, "*Al titosh Toras imecha* - Do not forsake the teachings of your mother."

Thought of the week:
Do not look at the vessel, but at what it contains.

Spread the word! Distribute Migdal Ohr in YOUR shul!
Get it in PDF, just e-mail info@jewishspeechwriter.com

"ועשית כiyor נחשת וכנו נחשת לרחצה... ונתת שמה מים" (שמות ל"ח)

"Make a copper wash basin and its copper base for washing; and place it between the Tent of Meeting and the Altar, and put water in it."

The Gemara in Zevachim (22a) explains that the basin could be used to sanctify the kohanim's hands and feet, but the base could not. If one were to somehow pour water from the base, it would not be considered as the kohanim having washed themselves.

This is understood from the fact that the posuk says to make a copper basin and a copper base, instead of saying a copper basin and base. This teaches that they were both made of copper, but the similarity ends there.

The basin contained water with which to sanctify the kohanim by washing in preparation for the Avoda, while the base was merely a stand for it. Unlike the kiyor itself, the base had no ability to sanctify someone. This is a valuable lesson.

Rashi explains that the kiyor had spigots on the bottom through which the water flowed. In order for the kiyor to work properly, then, it had to be elevated somewhat. This necessitated the copper base which was constructed. Without that, the kiyor could not be used. Despite that, the base maintained its status of not being able to make anyone holy.

In order to keep the Torah and mitzvos, we often need intermediaries or mediums to achieve our goal. It is important, however, that these means not become an end unto themselves.

In Pirkei Avos, Chazal tell us, "Asu siyag laTorah," make a fence around the Torah. This means we are supposed to establish barriers which we will not cross, so as not to transgress G-d's commandments. Why did they choose the word "siyag," which implies a light fence? Why not establish a wall, or better yet, a fortress?

The answer is that if we were to do that, we might come to put more emphasis on the barrier and forget what it's supposed to be protecting. By losing sight of the true purpose, it is possible that we may come to sin in other ways while trying to defend the barrier, or perhaps even trespass on the very mitzvah we are trying to protect.

This happened when Adam told Chava that G-d had commanded them not to touch the Tree of Knowledge. Had he told her that the actual command was not to eat it, but that he had decided they should not even touch it as a safeguard, the snake would have been unable to trick her and saved us all a lot of grief.

Therefore, the Torah teaches us that the base is only a base. It's just a means to elevate the kiyor, but it is not intrinsically contributing to the sanctification process. If something is wrong with the base but the kiyor is still functioning, the kohanim can use it. It would be terrible if one felt that because the base was damaged the entire kiyor was worthless, G-d forbid. But that is human nature, to focus on the trappings and miss the essence.

The kiyor reminds us that we must elevate the mitzvos and the Torah (which is compared to water) as they can sanctify us. The chumros and protections we establish to reinforce the Torah and Mitzvos can also help to sanctify us, but only if we understand that they are not mitzvos themselves, but merely play a supporting role.

One day, a man received a letter from the President. It had the Presidential seal and was postmarked in Washington, D.C. It was sealed with ceremonial ribbons and a wax seal with the eagle upon it. He treasured the letter so much that he encased it in glass and showed all his visitors this wondrous missive.

Unfortunately, he never did open it, so he didn't see it was an invitation to meet the President in person. He got carried away with the packaging and missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.