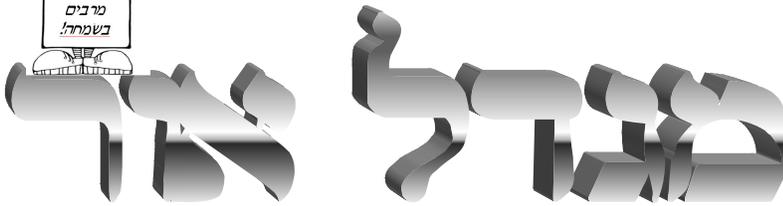


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This issue sponsored in honor and appreciation of my parents,
Rabbi Jonah and Blanche Gewirtz
 of Silver Spring, MD
 who usually sponsor this week in honor
 of my birthday. (I beat them to it.)
 Their continual support encourages me to
 continue producing and spreading Torah.
 I hope to give them nachas for many years.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 5:22 - הדלקת נרות
- 5:40 - שקיעה
- 8:47 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:23 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:18 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 5:42 - שקיעה
- 6:24* - צאת הכוכבים
- 6:54 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars
 Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

Now that we don't have a Mishkan or Bais HaMikdash, our shuls take the place of them. In place of korbanos, we have Tefila, our prayers.

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 123:1-2) writes that at the end of Shemona Esrai, one takes three steps back as if taking leave of a king. Once he has done so, he remains in that spot until the Shliach Tzibur reaches kedusha, or at least begins the repetition of the Amida.

The Mishna Berura (123:8) writes that if one wishes to return to his spot he may not do so until the Shliach Tzibur reaches kedusha, as the Shulchan Aruch said, but adds that one need not return to his place at all.

However, the Magen Avraham states that based on the Bais Yosef's comment that some require six steps, that is, 3 back and 3 forward afterwards, you would need to return to your place, and that is why some people do not wish for people to walk in front of them while they are standing where the 3 steps back took them and thereby interrupt their set of six steps.

In any event, says the Mishna Berura, many make a mistake because of this objection and hurry to take three steps forward, before the Shliach Tzibur has begun, which runs counter to the actual halacha, and is not merely an opinion.

Thought(s) of the week:

When you pray, you are speaking to G-d. When you learn Torah, He is speaking to you.

”ונתת את הכפרת על הארן מלמעלה ואל הארן תתן את העדות אשר אתן אליך.” (שמות כה:כא)

“And you shall place the lid on the ark from above, and into the ark shall you place the testimonies that I will give to you.”

The Holy Ark, the Aron, was the resting place of the luchos, the tablets Moshe brought down from Sinai. Many commentaries discuss why the command to place the tablets into the Aron was given now, a second time, when it had previously been commanded in verse 16.

Rashi says this was to tell you that the luchos were placed in the Aron before the Kapores, the lid of the ark upon which sat the Keruvim, was placed on top. The Ramban asks that on the contrary, this phrase implies that the cover had to be placed on the Aron, completing it, and then the tablets inserted. He says that the Torah doesn't specifically tell us the purpose of the Keruvim, cherubs, on the lid of the Aron. Later, though, we are told that HaShem would speak and His voice would emanate from between their upturned wings.

In that case, the mention of putting the tablets into the ark at this point is to explain why the Keruvim was an appropriate spot for HaShem's presence to rest. It is because the holy luchos were placed beneath them. The Ohr HaChaim adds that the luchos are to remain in the Aron, so the command is reiterated to tell us that once put there they are not removed. Though there seem to be many differing opinions about the nature of this command and the making of the ark, we can reconcile the different ideas and take a single, direct lesson from it.

The top of the Aron held golden cherubs, from whence the Divine Spirit would speak. What made it an appropriate place for this miraculous occurrence was the fact that it was part of the Aron, the place where the luchos, the testimony of G-d's appearing to us at Sinai and His giving us His precious Torah, rested.

Practically speaking, we can view the luchos as the Torah, and the voice above the Keruvim as spirituality. It is easy for people to get carried away with things that make them feel holy and ignore the actual Torah, which is the source of this holiness. Thus, one can focus on a stringency and negate basic tenets. One may see someone transgressing a Rabbinical commandment and embarrass him publicly, thus transgressing a Torah law.

Alternatively, someone may get infatuated with something kabbalistic and follow customs but not fulfill rudimentary mitzvos. Or, he may do something that “feels right,” without determining whether it is proper, much as King Shaul chose to keep King Agag of Amalek alive and from this misplaced mercy came Haman who nearly destroyed the entire Jewish Nation.

Therefore, when the Torah tells us to cover the Aron with the Kapores so that HaShem might rest upon it, it reminds us that the spiritual high of hearing HaShem's voice is only made possible by keeping the Torah which lies inside. We cannot let ourselves be moved to seek a feeling which may be incorrect. Instead, we must ensure that all our practices are firmly rooted in the Holy Torah.

A woman came to a well-known Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi S., with an unusual request. She told him that she wanted to wear a Talis, the prayer shawl usually worn by men.

Assuring him that she was an Orthodox woman who kept all the mitzvos, she explained that she felt she needed a spiritual boost and was sure that wearing the Talis would give it to her.

Rabbi S. saw that she was serious, and said to her, “It is not a simple thing to take on a new mitzvah, or to wear the Talis. What I want you to do for the next week is to wear the Talis garment alone, without the tzitzis strings in it, and see whether you get the feeling you seek.”

At the end of the week, the woman came back to him walking on air. “It was so special, such a holy feeling, to wear the Talis. I can't wait to experience it with the strings on the corners!”

The Rosh Yeshiva replied, “You experienced no holiness in the Talis. Without the tzitzis it is no more than a tablecloth. You are seeking holiness outside the Torah. Go back and study the mitzvos incumbent upon you and you will find the feeling you desire through a deeper understanding of them.”