

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BESHALACH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

DELEGATING DUTIES

Triumphant and jubilant, *Klal Yisrael* left *Mitzrayim* with their heads held high. Their former masters had drowned at the *Yam Suf*, and their next stop was *Har Sinai* to receive the Torah from Hashem. No nation dared stand before them — no nation, that is, except for Amalek.

Swiftly and without warning, the warriors of Amalek attacked the Jewish people. Quickly, Moshe tasked Yehoshua with leading the counterattack, while he ascended a nearby hill, and raised his hands to Heaven to inspire the Jewish fighters. When the Jewish people saw this, they fought with fervor, and started to beat back the enemy.

However, Moshe's arms grew heavy, and the Jewish people faltered. Aharon and Chur then helped steady Moshe's hands, and the Jewish warriors renewed their attack, and defeated Amalek.¹

Simply understood, Moshe's hands grew heavy because he was holding them aloft for a long period of time. However, Rashi² recognizes a deeper reason for Moshe's fatigue. Rashi points to Moshe's appointing of Yehoshua as the source for his weariness — in his words, "Because Moshe was lax in the *mitzvah*, and appointed another in his place, his arms grew weak." Rashi understood this weakness to be of a spiritual nature, in response to Moshe's weakness in observing a *mitzvah*.

The Gur Aryeh³ explains Moshe's reasoning. Yehoshua was a descendant of Yosef, and the *Shevet* of Yosef had a particular aptitude for the destruction of Amalek. Thus, Moshe's reasoning was well thought out. Nevertheless, the Torah pinpoints a subtle lack of respect for *mitzvos* in Moshe's decision, and he is taken to task for his thinking.

It is likely impossible for us to even fathom what *mitzvos* meant to Moshe. If there was some sort of lack of appreciation, it was so slight as to be almost undetectable. Yet, *mitzvos* are so important that Moshe was chastised for this infraction.

Mitzvos surround us every day; we always have an opportunity to grow closer to Hashem. We may become negligent or sloppy in our performance of *mitzvos*, as they seem so commonplace. Yet we see how important each *mitzvah* is, and how even our slight feelings towards the *mitzvos* can have an awesome effect.

1 *Shemos* 17:8-13

2 *Shemos* 17:12 s.v. ידי משה

3 *ibid.* s.v. ומנה אחר

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

While we all understand it is important to do *mitzvos*, how can we inspire ourselves to roll up our sleeves, and involve ourselves in the doing of *mitzvos*. Is there really value in delivering packages to the poor, can't I just give money to an organization that does that?

The *mitzvos* were specifically designed by Hashem to perfect each individual, and mankind as a whole.¹ Every time a person does a *mitzvah*, a spiritual part of them is uplifted, purified, and perfected.

When we reflect on the great good that *mitzvos* afford us, the ability to emulate our Creator, the ability to come close to Him, and the ability to perfect ourselves, how could we not want to personally engage in the doing of *mitzvos*?

Every *mitzvah* is precious, and an opportunity for infinite growth. Treat *mitzvos* like gold, you will be much better off because of it.

1 *Derech Hashem, Chelek 1*, 'A Person in This World.'

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Aveilus precludes me from learning mussar now. But a Jew must have mussar! Please, study mussar aloud in my home, so I may listen while you learn. - Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, R' Y. Z. Segal zt"l's request of a talmid, during the shiva of his Rebbetzin a"h. Consult a Rav for practical ruling.

AT HIS WICK'S END

Mr. Dovid Feig* stared at the Chanukah candles as a sigh escaped his lips. "I did the right thing," he thought, but that didn't quell the feelings in his heart.

Ever since he was young, Mr. Feig had a particular affinity towards the special *mitzvah* of Chanukah. Maybe it was the presents, the latkes, or the beauty of the menorah. Whatever it was, Dovid Feig simply liked Chanukah.

Which is why, when he found judaica stores selling premade wicks, either the cotton ones, or the floating type, he chose not to purchase them. He preferred to take cotton balls and roll his own wicks. Why? Because he loved Chanukah.

Time passed, and his young children were now older. In the *Ashkenazic* tradition, they too had their candles to light. And, like him, they made their own wicks. However, his children simply didn't have the same feelings towards Chanukah that he did.

Every year it became a joke. "Tatty likes Chanukah, so we have to make wicks," they would half-grumble, half-joke with each other. Joking aside, though, they would ask if they could use the premade wicks. Or, even better, the pre-filled cups, where you simply had to remove the top and a wick was all set up in oil.

Mr. Dovid Feig wasn't young any more, and his fingers didn't have the dexterity they once had. Additionally, as he moved up the ranks in his office job, he became busier than ever. Thus, the job to make the wicks fell on his sons, who were truly starting to resent this activity.

After taking stock of the situation, Dovid recognized that he was not doing the right thing. Yes, he loved Chanukah, and he truly wished he could be as involved in the process as possible. But since it was not possible, it was creating too much tension in the house. With a clear mind, but a heavy heart, he went out and bought the floating wicks.

The menorah was beautiful as everyone sang *Maoz Tzur*. His family left the candles, and went to the kitchen to eat dinner. But he stayed, watching, staring at the candles. "I did the right thing, I just wish I could have done better," he whispered.

After a moment's more reflection, he turned and joined his family.

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

"I did the right thing, I just wish I could have done better," he whispered.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Even if dealing with just the preparations for a *mitzvah*, one should personally involve oneself.¹
- The great *Amoraim* would spend time on their Shabbos preparations, despite having a myriad of other things to do, and people who could do the preparations for them.²
- Even when helping someone else perform a *mitzvah*, it is important to be personally involved.³

1 *Ha'amek Sheilah*, 165:1

2 *Sh"lah, Aseres Hadibros, Shabbos, Ner Mitzvah* 6

3 *Ran on Kiddushin* 41a, s.v. איכא דאמרי