

PARSHAS PEKUDEI

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

When the Mishkan was completed, Moshe Rabbeinu gave a bracha to all the volunteers who had contributed to its building. It was “May the Shechinah rest in the work of your hands” (Rashi). The Bais Yisrael explained that Moshe Rabbeinu was concerned lest B’nai Yisrael become arrogant over their accomplishment. He therefore blessed them that their motives and attitude should remain pure and holy, despite the possibility of complacency. The Sefer Bas Eyn (at the end) cites an amazing Medrash on this subject. When Shlomo Hamelech completed building the Bais Hamikdash, he heard two birds chirping to each other. Since he could understand their language, he discerned that one said to the other “You see this gigantic building. If I wanted I could ruin it with one move.” The king inquired, “How could you possibly do such a thing?” The bird responded, “what do you care? I’m just trying to impress my wife?” The Bas Eyn explains the Medrash as a parable. The bird is the Satan, claiming that he can ruin the entire building to the point where the Shechinah will not come to rest. The king inquires, how can this be when I put in so much teshuvah and mitzvos? The bird responds that if you will even go home and brag to your wife that you have completed such an amazing building, that drop of gaavah – arrogance – will drive away the Shechinah which runs from haughtiness. This teaches us that we must be very careful even when performing good deeds to leave our egos out of the picture. Doing something le’sheim shomayim means that we do it simply for the mitzvah and joy it brings others, not for any personal acclaim. The K’sav Sofer explained Moshe Rabbeinu’s bracha as meaning that we should indeed always *want* and wish for the Shechinah to be part of our lives, families, work and even vacations.

Perhaps we can use this concept to explain another cryptic Medrash in this Sedra. Chazal (on posuk 40:17) tell us that Moshe put up and took down the Mishkan every day of its seven inaugural days. The question, of course, is for what purpose and to what end? The Ramban answers that it was to accustom the Levi’im to the process which they would have to follow each time the Cloud of Glory started moving and settled in a different place. The Imrei Emes taught that this was to teach B’nai Yisrael that even if the Mishkan were to fall, they should not despair, as Shlomo Hamelech says “a tzadik falls seven times and rises.” Of course, as many have heard, my rebbe, Rav Hutner zt”l commented that the tzadik rises not *despite* falling, but rises better than before *because* he fell, hence Moshe Rabbeinu’s seemingly odd demonstration.

The Sefer Yagdil Torah uses this concept to explain a strange but common phenomenon. People sometimes put a great deal of effort into a project, sometimes even a lifetime. When they come extremely close to its completion, some obstacle comes up and it’s as if a brick wall has arisen between them and the final few bricks or miles. A person might feel that this is heaven showing him to give up. However, the exact opposite is the case. A person who has been totally successful at a task may become complacent and egotistic, thinking that he is perfect and his creations are flawless. To save him from this spiritual calamity, Hashem sends him impediments and issues. Even Moshe Rabbeinu and Shlomo Hamelech, when the doors would not open, needed this reminder not to even allow a tiny bit of gaavah to invade their holy endeavor.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS

## HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

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KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

*We continue this week with the Halachos of Purim and the reading of the Megillah:*

**Question:** Once when I was listening to the Megillah, my mind wandered and I found myself thinking about other things. I did not “speak out” but I also was not quite concentrating on the words. Was I yotzei and what should I do if it happens again?

**Answer:** The Shulchan Aruch (690:3) rules that one must read the entire Megillah. He mentions this because there is a disagreement in the Gemara if *bedeved* – worse comes to worse – one did not read the entire Megillah if he was yotzei. The Mishnah Berurah (No. 5) here writes that this ruling is absolute (*l'ikuvah*) and therefore if the Baal Koreh missed a word he is not *yotzei*. Most Poskim (see Mishnah Berurah No. 48 here) apply this Halachah to the listeners as well, meaning that if someone missed even a single word he is not *yotzei*. The question of “what if my mind wandered?” is a valid one since he did not technically interrupt (*mafsik*) the reading of the Megillah. He just didn't have *kavanah* for a few moments. Some Poskim (see Rabbi Shmuel Felder, Shiurei Halacha, page 14, note 17) bring a proof from another Halacha in the Shulchan Aruch (124:10). If someone forgot to say *Yaaleh Veyavo*, he can technically listen to the Chazan repeat the Shemoneh Esray from beginning to end and be *yotzei Yaaleh Veyavo*. However the Mishnah Berurah there (number 40) states that it would be better if he davened over by himself since these days (100 years ago!) most people cannot concentrate that long and he will surely miss some of the words of Shemoneh Esray. We therefore must conclude that “spacing out” without “talking out” is not considered to be listening. There are many other proofs to this principle. However, the question is, if we accept the fact that most people cannot concentrate on the entire reading of the Megillah, how is everyone yotzei? One answer offered in Poskim is to follow along in a kosher Megillah and say the words when you realize you have spaced out. However, in reality only a few people in every Shul have a kosher Megillah so this is not a good remedy to the problem. One suggestion made in Poskim is that whoever does *not* have a Megillah should follow along in a Chumash or Megillah book and keep his finger on the place the entire time. In this way, even if his mind wandered a bit, he is considered not to have completely lost track of the *Megillah reading* and he is yotzei. Also, one should try not to come to the Megillah reading so exhausted that he will fall asleep or lose concentration.

**Question:** In a worst case scenario, can one be yotzei the Megillah by hearing it live on the telephone, especially with “face-time”?

**Answer:** The Poskim are unanimous that hearing the Megillah through any medium other than live and in person one is not yotzei. The reason is that the voice is not a primary *kol* but a secondary voice which has been transformed by technical electronic methods. Most Poskim hold that this applies to a microphone as well. If someone does find himself in a Shul where the Baal Koreh is using a microphone, he should stand close enough to the Baal Koreh to hear the *laining* without the mike (Igros Moshe 2:105; Minchas Yitzchok 2:113).

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