

Parsha Encounters

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20 Teves 5766/January 20, 2006

Parshas Shemos - Rabbi Shimon Zehnwirth

Haste Makes Waste

"And Moshe said to Hashem..., 'I am not an eloquent man, neither yesterday, and not the day before, and not since You have spoken to me.' " (Shmos 4:10)

Rashi explains the meaning of this unusual verse: Moshe stood before the burning bush in conversation with Hashem for an incredible seven days. For an entire week, Hashem tried to convince Moshe to do His bidding—to become His messenger to Pharaoh and lead the Jewish people out of bondage. Finally, on the seventh day, Hashem became "angry" with Moshe, who then agreed to follow Hashem's command.

Why didn't Hashem become "angry" earlier? It seems clear from Rashi that had Moshe acquiesced to Hashem's request just a few moments earlier, after six days of back and forth, there would not have been any "anger" towards Moshe. Only because Moshe slightly overstepped the limit of questioning did he incur Hashem's "anger." This presents a difficulty: why didn't Moshe follow Hashem's command immediately? Furthermore we find in the Midrash that Moshe was praised for taking the time to clarify his mission (Shmos Rabbah 4:1). But shouldn't he first act with zeal, do as he's told, and ask questions later?

Indeed, our job is to follow Hashem's commandments whether we understand them or not—but not to act out of ignorance. A well-trained soldier follows any order, but not without first understanding how that order must be completed. Moshe would do anything Hashem asked, even if it did not make sense to him, but first Moshe tried to fully understand that command. Had Moshe not hesitated a

moment too long, he would have been totally correct in his actions.

Sometimes, we can confuse zeal with speed. We do find that z'rizim—zealous people—are the first to act when performing mitzvos. But that is merely one facet of true z'rizus. Genuine zeal is defined (Orchos Tzadikim, Shaar HaZrizus) as a single-minded focus on the objective that summons all of one's energies towards that goal. True, in many cases that will result in swift action. Often, however, a zariz (zealous person) will stop to clarify, to ask and get a better picture of this project that commands his complete attention.

When we fulfill the mitzvos, and when we carry out Hashem's will as interpreted for us by the spiritual giants of each generation, we must bear in mind that Hashem does not want mindless robots that rush to act in knee-jerk response. As zealous servants of Hashem, we must pause to ask, probe and sometimes even respectfully challenge our Torah teachers and leaders in our quest to serve Hashem. In the final outcome we will follow their guidance even if we don't understand every detail. But we must do our utmost to learn and comprehend, even if that entails some delay, so that our deeds will be performed with the perfection and the authentic z'rizus that befits our sacred task.

Rabbi Zehnwirth is the principal of Hannah Sacks Bais Yaakov High School.

The kollel would like to extend a mazal tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Zehnwirth on their new baby boy. The Shalom Zachor will take place IYH at Adas Yeshuran 3050 Touhy.

Halacha Encounters

Kiddush B'makom Seuda

Rabbi Dovid Greenberg

The Navi writes in Yeshaya (58:13) “V'karasa L'Shabbos Oneg”, literally that you should call Shabbos a delight. Chazal derived from here that in the place of the delight (the meal) one must call out about Shabbos (i.e. recite the kiddush). This halacha contains two facets. 1) Kiddush must be recited in the same place as the meal 2) The meal should follow the kiddush immediately (otherwise the connection is not apparent).

What constitutes the same place?

There are three variables mentioned in halacha regarding this issue. Some say one room, no matter how large, is always the same place. Others opine that as long as one can see the place where kiddush was made, even from outside the house (but not from across the street), even through a window, it is considered as one spot. A third view is that if one had in mind from the onset of kiddush that the meal should be in a different room in the same house, even on a different floor, it suffices. Since all these opinions are disputed, the consensus is as follows: The best option is to have everyone around the table during the recitation of kiddush, and to eat there. If one had in mind during kiddush that he'll eat in a different part of the room, that is equally permissible. Similarly, one may plan on eating in another room that is visible from the place he recited kiddush. However, as long as one of the variables is present, in extenuating circumstances one may recite kiddush; and of course need not repeat it in a post facto situation. (O.C. 273:1, M.B. there)

How soon afterwards must one eat?

One should eat as soon as possible after kiddush. Minor delays related to preparation of the meal are not considered an interruption. This includes using the restroom or changing a child's diaper. (M.B. 273:14) If one had in mind to eat immediately and was met with an unforeseen delay, he may still proceed with his meal without repeating kiddush. This applies even if one was forced to go outdoors. (ibid 13, oral ruling of Rabbi C. P. Scheinberg) There are some scrupulous individuals who are stringent to have water to wash with right next to the table, to minimize the wait before the meal.

What foods constitute a meal?

One should eat at least a k'zayis (volume of an olive) of bread, cake or other food made from one of the five species of grain. (Namely; wheat, barley, spelt, oats or rye.) This should be consumed within a

K'day Achilas Pras (3-4 minutes). If one is unable to obtain a grain product, one may drink a reviis of wine or grape juice (approx. 3 oz.) instead. Preferably, this should be in addition to the Milo Lugma (cheek-full approx 1.6 oz.) drunk to fulfill the requirement of kiddush. Other drinks, even Chamar Medina (i.e. whiskey), will not suffice. In extenuating circumstances one may rely on eating a kzayis of fruit, but only for kiddush of the day. (M.B. ibid 25-27) When there are no “meal” foods available, there is no requirement to make kiddush after davening. This is why we do not recite kiddush on Yom Kippur. Therefore, a person who is too sick to eat a proper amount of a “meal” food, is exempt from the mitzvah of kiddush (Shu't Minchas Yitzchok vol. 8 siman 30) The Vilna Gaon ruled that even by the daytime one cannot fulfill his requirement of kiddush unless he eats bread afterwards. Some are stringent in this regard. (Maasei Rav 122)

Some Halachic Scenarios

In a multi-family dwelling, it is common that a neighbor may offer their residence to use for a “kiddush”. This allows for the men and ladies to have separate areas. According to many poskim, two apartments, even under the same roof are considered as separate houses. Therefore, if a woman would hear kiddush from her husband in one apartment, she would not be able to start eating in the other (even though she had this in mind). The proper procedure in such an instance would be for the woman to make her own kiddush inside the “women's” apartment. (Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchoso ch. 54 footnote 21)

On Succos, when one made kiddush in the succah and, before the meal, rain began to fall, if one could see the dining room from the succah he may begin to eat inside. If not, one should make sure to drink at least a reviis of wine in the sukkah before leaving. (M.B. ibid 5) (If one had in mind at the onset of kiddush that he might go inside, then if the sukkah is connected to the house, or at least in an enclosed private yard, one may begin the meal inside (Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchoso ch. 54 footnote 33)

When one returns home from having eaten at a “kiddush”, he need not repeat kiddush. When there are family members or guests who have not yet heard kiddush, one may repeat it for them. Many people repeat kiddush before the meal regardless, in deference to the opinion of the Vilna Gaon cited above. (Also see Igros Moshe Vol. 4 siman 63)

Rabbi Greenberg learns full-time at the kollel.