



## פרשת בהעלתך

## CHANGE?!



Our *parsha* opens with Hashem giving Moshe the commandment concerning the lighting of the *menorah* by Aharon Hakohen. This directly follows the inauguration of the *mishkan* in the previous *parsha*, which involved all the *shevatim* except *shevet* Levi, of which Aharon was the head. Rashi explains that the mitzvah of lighting the menorah gave comfort to Aharon, since he was not included in the *mishkan's* inauguration. Moshe taught the details of this great mitzvah to his brother and then the Torah states that Aharon "did so... as Hashem had commanded Moshe."

What is the significance behind these words? Rashi says that these are words in praise of Aharon, for not changing (any detail) - "לא שָׁנָה". The *Maharal* in *Gur Aryeh* explains why this would earn special recognition for Aharon. The igniting of the menorah required painstaking exactness, so that all the wicks were facing precisely towards the center branch. This was prescribed by the Torah, and Aharon did not relax this requirement for his own convenience. He did not make any changes. The *Maharal* (at the end of *Parshas Tzav*) gives another explanation which can be applied here. Although Aharon did not hear this commandment directly from Hashem but from Moshe, he still did it with the same care, enthusiasm and happiness as if he had heard it directly from Hashem.

The two explanations really go hand in hand. Aharon Hakohen toiled to perform his exact *avoda* since he considered it as a direct commandment from Hashem. It is easy to change or to make improvements on another person's suggestions; it is quite another thing to tamper with the Divine Will.

The veracity of this can be borne out through a cursory look at the Reform Movement. Once the movement abandoned *shemiras hamitzvos*, it wasn't long in coming that it rejected the Divine Authorship of Torah to justify their actions.

Our Torah, however is not bound by time and Hashem provided us with the *halachic* process to make **changes** when necessary. This is the process that was used to write down our *Torah Sh'bal Peh*, which otherwise would have been left an oral law. More recently, this process allowed Sara Schenirer נ"ע to institutionalize Torah learning for women.

*Pirkei Avos* teaches us to "do His will as you would your own, that He may do your will as though it were His" (*Avos* 2,4). We should consider each *mitzvah* as if we heard it directly from Hashem and carefully fulfill it as the *halacha* prescribes.

Every Bar Mitzvah boy is excited to begin fulfilling the mitzvah of putting on *tefilin*. For me however, there were some minor complications. I am a born lefty and I do practically everything with that hand except perhaps cutting food or paper; this I do better with my right hand. The *halacha* states that the *tefilin shel yad* are to be worn on the weaker arm. Which was I to consider my weaker arm? My father נ"ע, went to ask our Rov, the illustrious founder of the German kehila in Washington Heights, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer זצ"ל .

Rav Breuer advised him to have me write my Hebrew name from then on with my right hand and then to put the *tefilin* on my left arm, like everyone else. It seemed that the Rov did not want me to appear different from most people. He probably assumed that once I began writing my Hebrew name with my right hand it would become natural, and I would then be considered ambidextrous. This would require me to put my *tefilin* on my left arm. I did this for ten years, but the writing of my Hebrew name with my right hand still seemed very unnatural.

I was about to get married, and I bought myself a new pair of *tefilin*. I wondered if I should continue wearing my *tefilin* on my left arm so I spoke to my Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Naftoli Friedler, זצ"ל. He decided to "revisit" the *shaila* with Rav Breuer. Rav Breuer then told him that I should **change** and put my *tefilin* on my right arm, as do all traditional lefties. Here "change" seemed to be the route to follow after it went through the correct halachic process.

As we discuss the subject of "change" I can't resist including the following incident, although I am not sure of its implications. I was driving with my four-year old granddaughter in the car and she asked me when we would be arriving at our destination. I told her in ten minutes. Five minutes later, she asked me the same question again and I said, "In five minutes." She paused, thought for a second and then said, "Oh Zaidy, you **changed** your mind."

**Surrender yourself to the will of Hashem; Keep His mitzvos and don't try to change them.**

### Point of Discussion

**Why is change dangerous although sometimes necessary?**