

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Beha'aloscha 5775 (2015)

In this week's Parsha, Beha'aloscha, the passuk says, "When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light."

Rashi immediately questions the choice of words used to express the kindling of the Menorah. The Torah uses the word "Beha'aloscha" which technically translates as "to go up" and does not per se mean, "to kindle." One would think that the word "Behadlikcha," which does mean to kindle, would be a much more appropriate word to use in this passuk.

Rashi's famous answer quotes a Gemara (Shabbos 21a) that says:

"One must kindle, hold a fire to the wick, until the flame rises from itself." Hence the use of a word meaning "to go up" is specifically chosen to express this point.

It is currently 11:10pm Wednesday night, and I just sat down to write this Rabbi's Message. Usually, by this time of night I have already completed this message, and set it aside for final editing until tomorrow morning. This week I intentionally delayed the writing of this message to be able to add something that I would otherwise not have been able to add.

Today, over 1.2 million Jews around the world joined in a celebration of Unity Day, a day set aside by the mothers of the three Holy, Holy boys, Eyal, Gil-ad and Naftali, whose lives were taken last summer by Hamas terrorists in a cruel act of meaningless terrorism.

I knew that I would be attending the Unity Day event at the Federation in Boca Raton this evening. I wanted to wait until after the event to see if it would influence my weekly message.

Those of you that could not or just did not make it to the event really missed a most inspirational and powerful evening. Those of you who were there know that the deep messages of Unity conveyed by all the videos and by all of the Rabbis' speeches were meaningful, sincere, inspiring and truly uplifting.

The call was for Unity, NOT Uniformity. The message, loud and clear across the board, was that our job is to maintain "TOLERANCE," "ACCEPTANCE," and "RESPECT" for those Jews who differ from ourselves in their beliefs and in their observance. "Respect them," don't "Reject them."

If one didn't know me better, one could think that I am trying to stifle the entire Kiruv movement by suggesting that we not try and bring anybody closer into the folds of Orthodox Judaism.

Au contraire mon ami.

I am merely suggesting that we should not impose our opinions on others with force, unsolicited. However...

The Gemara already tells how to light the Menorah. Utilizing the same system, when we attempt to kindle the spark, the "Pintele Yid," that is burning inside the hearts of every fellow Jew, then WE, as the kindlers, must stay close to our subjects until such time that they see fit to KINDLE from within themselves. The flame must come from within them and NOT be forced or imposed upon them.

This type of Kiruv is much, much harder. Do you know why? This type of Kiruv requires that WE do the work! WE have to step up our game such that when someone else sees us they walk away saying, "Wow. I would like to be like him." Kiruv needs to be done by setting an example and NOT by forcing your agenda.

You have heard me say it before. Everybody thinks that his/her service to G-d is the perfect position. Anyone who is to your "right" is a fanatic and anyone to your "left" is a "Shaigitz."

If you want to help to change someone else's life and help them see the beauty in Orthodox Judaism, then you have to be the BEST DARN SINCERE Orthodox Jew that you can be. Teach by your example. Let them see the love of your observance, let them feel the love of commitment, and let them ignite their own flame from within themselves.

"One must kindle, hold a fire to the wick, until the flame rises from itself."

Good Shabbos