



Once during his travels, Rabbi Aaron of Karlin arrived at the town of Zarowitz close to the Shabbat. He saw a small cottage situated on the edge of the town and he knocked on the door hoping to find some hospitality there. A small woman opened the door and listened to his request to remain there for the Shabbat. "You are welcome to stay," she replied simply, and she ushered him into the house.

As soon as he set his foot inside the door, Rabbi Aaron felt himself enveloped by an overwhelming sense of holiness, and he knew that there must be something unique about the occupants of this house. Reb Aaron prepared himself for the Shabbat and was about to go out the door to the shul when he met Reb Yitzchak, the owner of the house, just returning from his workday. The man was dressed in simple peasant garb, and there was nothing to distinguish him from any other worker. He greeted his guest warmly, but his features disguised any emotion.

Rabbi Aaron was accustomed to celebrate the Shabbat with enthusiastic singing and prayers, and he followed his usual rituals. His host, however, rushed quickly through the prayers, hurriedly said kiddush and then sat down to eat his simple meal. But even in this plain food, Rabbi Aaron could detect an undeniable holiness, although he couldn't figure out what it stemmed from. He studied the man and woman, but there was nothing special about anything they said or did that would set them apart from any of ten thousand other poor Jews.

When the Shabbat ended Rabbi Aaron thanked his host and hostess and continued on his journey, the mystery unsolved.

The following week the wife of Reb Yitzchak turned up in the Study Hall of the nearby city of Premiszlan and spoke to the members of the local burial society requesting that they come with her. "Please come with me to Zarowitz now, for my husband is dying and he has asked that you be with him in his last moments."

The men immediately followed her to her home, but when they entered the house, her husband wasn't even there. "What is this, some kind of joke? Have you brought us all this way for nothing?"

"No, of course not, gentlemen," she replied. "My husband is on his way and will be here shortly." And sure enough, her husband walked through the door, holding a bunch of straw. This, he spread on the floor and then simply lay down upon it. Then he began speaking to the burial society officials: "My friends, it is now time for me to leave this world. I have lived as a nistor [a hidden saint] all my life, but the time has come for me to reveal myself. The moment that I die, go with all speed to Premiszlan and bring back as many scribes as you can gather. Have them bring pens and paper, for here they will copy over my secret writings. This must be done while I am still lying here on the ground, before I am buried. Watch me, and when you see a change in my face, all writing must cease at once."

Reb Yitzhak finished speaking, closed his eyes, and for a moment his face burned like a fire. Then, his lips which had been moving in silent prayer became still, and he was gone.


Scores of scribes were hurriedly brought to the cottage where the tzadik lay. Each one was given a leaf of paper to copy and they raced against time to complete their holy task. The officials' eyes were fixed on the face of the tzadik, looking for any change. Suddenly, the face lost all of its color and the box which contained his writings mysteriously closed by itself. The scratching of pens stopped abruptly, and preparations were quickly begun to ready Reb Yitzchak for burial.

When Rabbi Aaron heard of the death of the tzadik and the circumstances

which surrounded it, his heart was filled with bitter regret. What wondrous Torah secrets he might have learned from the deceased! He went to pay his respects to the widow and perhaps to glean some bit of knowledge about the tzadik's life from her.

"Well, there's nothing I can really tell you," she said. "I'm sorry, but my husband wouldn't permit it." Rabbi Aaron was bitterly disappointed. He wished her comfort, among all the mourners of Zion, and turned to leave. But just as he reached the door, the widow called out to him, "Wait, there's one small thing I can show you. Do you see those candlesticks there on the shelf? Well, from the day I married until the day my husband died, those candlesticks burned constantly all by themselves."

Rabbi Aaron left the cottage deep in reflection. The wondrous accomplishments of the hidden tzadik would remain one of G-d's many secrets, perhaps to be divulged only by Moshiah, himself.



THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

Take the sum of all the congregation of the Children of Israel (Num. 1:2)
Jewish law teaches that once something has been counted it can never be nullified, even if it is only one out of a thousand. G-d likewise counted the Jewish people, so that although they are far outnumbered by the nations of the world, they can never be nullified. (*Chidushei Harim*)

From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel (Num. 1:3)
At the age of twenty a person become responsible for his sins and accountable to the celestial court. At that time the Jew's true struggle and ongoing war with the Evil Inclination just begins. (*The Admor of Gur*)

You shall number them according to their armies, you and Aaron (Num. 1:3)
When a census is taken it is generally unnecessary that the poll takers be of high rank or official status. Counting people does not require great skill or intelligence. Yet when G-d wanted His children to be numbered He insisted that Moses, Aaron and the heads of the tribes carry out the task themselves, to teach us how highly G-d esteems the Jews. (*Sichot Kodesh*)

The tribe of Zebulun (Num. 2:7)
Every other tribe is mentioned in this section of the Torah with the preface "and." Why is Zebulun different? Zebulun's job was to engage in commerce, in order to support the tribe of Issachar, whose members were primarily involved in the study of Torah. By omitting the word "and" before Zebulun the Torah teaches that this tribe was in no way subservient or of secondary importance to their brothers. One who supports Torah learning is significant in his own right. (*Baal Haturim*)



8:01 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
3 Sivan / May 30
Torah Portion Bamidbar
Ethics Ch 6
Shabbat ends 9:09 PM



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**The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person**
ניסד תור ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)

Keep Your Balance

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

What is the definition of a well-balanced individual? One who has a chip on both shoulders!

In Exodus we read the Ten Commandments. The great revelation at Sinai saw Moses come down the mountain bearing the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments engraved on them. As we know, the two tablets were divided into two columns—the one side was devoted to our responsibilities to G-d, such as faith and Shabbat, while the other side dealt with our interpersonal duties, e.g., no murder, adultery and thievery.

The message that so many seem to forget is that both these areas are sacred, both come directly from G-d, and both form the core of Torah law and what being Jewish is all about. We may not take the liberty of emphasizing one tablet over the other. A healthy, all-around Jew lives a balanced, wholesome life.

A good Jew is a well-balanced Jew. If you are "religious" towards G-d but not fair with people, you can become a fanatical fundamentalist blowing up people in the name of G-d! The same G-d who motivates and inspires us to be G-dly and adhere to a religious code also expects us to be a mentsch.

But neither can we neglect the right side of the tablets. A good Jew cannot simply be a democrat, a humanitarian. Otherwise, why did G-d need Jews altogether? To be good, moral, ethical and decent is the duty of every human

being on the planet. A good Jew must be a good person—and also fulfill our specific Jewish responsibilities, the mitzvahs that are uniquely Jewish.

I recently came across an interesting statistic on the Ten Commandments. The right-hand tablet, bearing the duties to G-d, consists of 146 words. The left-hand tablet, listing our human responsibilities, has only 26 words. Yet tradition has it that both tablets were filled with writing. There were no big, blank spaces. So how did 26 words equal the space of 146 words?

Well, anybody who uses a computer or word processor knows the answer. You simply adjust the font size. The 26 words on the left, reflecting our moral and ethical human responsibilities, were simply a bigger size than the 146 words on the right, reflecting our G-dly, religious responsibilities. So we must never underestimate the importance of the human-relations side of the Ten Commandments.

Then again, just so we don't start limping, the very same G-d who said we should be nice also said we should have faith, keep Shabbat (yes, it is one of the Big Ten), kosher, mikvah, and the rest of it.

As we read the Ten Commandments this week, let us resolve to keep our Jewish balance, not to limp or become "one-armed bandits." Please G-d, we will live full, wholesome, rich and well-balanced Jewish lives. Amen.

Dedicated in honor of our dear parents
Misha and Olga Rovner
And our dear children
Jacob and Jordanna Rovner
By Anna and Serge Rovner

