

Shoftim

Kings, Women and Candles

When he sits on his royal throne, he should write a copy of this Torah...and it should be with him; he will read it all the days of his life...

Dvarim 17:18–19

The Jewish king took a Torah with him wherever he went.¹³² This is really a fascinating idea if we consider it. What is it about a king, in contrast to a high priest or prophet or any other leader in the Jewish world, that makes it so important for him to be constantly holding on to a Torah, never letting it out of his physical grasp?

“In the tent of Sarah, there was a candle that always burnt – from one *erev* Shabbos until the next; when Rivka entered that tent, this blessing returned.”¹³³ When Yitzchak saw this, he was then prepared to marry Rivka.¹³⁴ What was this candle all about? Why did it remain lit, and why did it matter?

In a letter to R. Yissachar Teichtell,¹³⁵ R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld wrote that this candle was the Shabbos candle, and it remained lit all week, for in Sarah’s tent, Shabbos was felt all week. It is customary for women to refrain from drinking the Havdalah wine at the conclusion of Shabbos.¹³⁶ R. Sonnenfeld explains that this is due to the power that women have to extend

132 Sanhedrin 21b. *Psikta Zutarsi* (s.v. *vbaya kishivto*), however, records the opinion that the king would only write the book of Dvarim. See the similar opinion of the Vilna Gaon in *Aderes Eliyahu* (Dvarim 34:18). See also Radal’s comments to Bereishis Rabbah 6:9, where he asserts that the Midrash there is of this opinion as well. *Yeshuos Malko* (comments on Rambam, *Sefer Torah*, 7:2) says that the opinion in the Gemara, that the Torah was tied to his arm “like an amulet,” actually agreed that it was not a full Torah, but only the book of Dvarim, for if otherwise, how could it fit on his arm? See also the interesting comments of Rashash, ad loc., who suggests that perhaps it was merely a list of the commandments rather than an actual Torah.

133 Rashi to Bereishis 24:67, quoting Bereishis Rabbah 60:15, mentions that the dough was blessed, and a cloud hovered above. The *Zohar* mentions only that the candle remained lit, and we will focus just on that. See *Be’er Basadeh* to Bereishis 23:2 regarding the small letter *chof* of the word *vilivkosa*, which would indicate that one can also dismiss the *chof* and read the word, *uliveisah*, (“and for her home”). He explains that Avraham cried over Sarah, and her home, these three blessings. See also *Etz Hadaas Tor*, vol. 2 (R. Chaim Vital), par. 342, where he discusses how these three blessings were indications of how Sarah corrected the sin of Chava.

134 *Chiddushei HaGriz* 24:67

135 Published in the preface to his work *Mishneh Sachir*. R. Teichtell is perhaps more well known as the author of *Em Habanim Semeicha*.

136 There are a number of reasons given for this. *Magen Avraham* to *Orach Chaim* 296:4 quotes the *Shnei Luchos Habris* and *Tolaas Yaakov*, that this relates to the woman’s role in bringing about the sin of Adam when she squeezed the grapes of the Tree of Knowledge to produce wine, which Adam then drank (see Sanhedrin 70a). See also R. Chaim Palagi’s *Kaf Hachaim*, 31:35. According to R. Isser Zalman Meltzer, quoted by R. Tzvi Pesach Frank in his *Har Tzvi*, *Orach Chaim* 154, this is due to the fact that women are exempt from blessing on the Havdallah candle; therefore, their answering “Amen” would be a disruption between the blessing on the wine. See R. Tzvi Pesach’s disagreement there. See also *Shevet Halevi* (vol. 4, 54:7), where R. Vosner asserts that

that Shabbos into the weekday, and therefore, they ought to have a little less to do with the Havdalah, for Havdalah emphasizes the separation between Shabbos and weekday! We must discover – what is the nature of this power, and what does it mean that women possess it?

Shammai would live the entire week preparing for the Shabbos, for when he found a nice piece of meat, he would purchase it and save it for the Shabbos. He inevitably found a nicer animal a day or so later, and purchased that one, too; then, he took the first one and ate it during the week. He would eat the first one so that the nicer one would be for Shabbos. Thus, all of his food during the week was really part of his preparation for the Shabbos.¹³⁷ Because Shammai spent his money on the first animal in order to have it for Shabbos, the fact that in the end he would enjoy it during the week did not make it any less for the honor of Shabbos! Shabbos spilled over and colored his entire week.

When we make Kiddush on Friday night, we begin with the words, “*Yom Hashishi*” – the sixth day. This is odd, for it is a fragment of a full sentence. In fact, we are meant to begin quietly with the words that begin the sentence, *Vayibi erev, vayibi boker*” – and it was evening, and it was morning – and then, we recite “*yom hashishi*” aloud. There is a midrash¹³⁸ that tells us that “*Yom hashishi, vayeichulu hashomayim*” is the source for *tosefes Shabbos*. *Tosefes Shabbos* is the obligation that we have to add a bit on to the Shabbos from the weekday, and to treat that time as though it is Shabbos as well. The first letters of each word of “*Yom Hashishi Vayeichulu Hashomayim*” are *yod, beh, vav* and *beh*, which spell out the name of Hashem. When we add on the last two words in the Torah about Friday to the first two words of Shabbos, we discover Hashem’s name. Therefore, we recite those two words aloud, before reading about Shabbos at Kiddush. Holiness truly comes when we can attach the secular to the holy, and bring the holy into our mundane lives. It is not enough to live spiritual lives in the synagogue. We must live those principles of Shabbos and spirituality in our ordinary, worldly lives as well. We can learn to add from the Shabbos to our week when we notice that the name of Hashem appears when we attach those parts of the Torah. So, on Friday nights, we emphasize that message by loudly intoning only the fragment of the sentence that will spell out the name of Hashem.¹³⁹

The woman has this special ability to infuse the divine into the worldly aspects of family life. This world was created with the letter *beh*, while the next world was created with the letter *yod*. These are both letters of Hashem’s name, and together, these two letters make up another one of Hashem’s names. We are told that man has the letter *yod* in his name, *ish*, the word for “man,” and the woman has the letter *beh*, in *isha*, the word for “woman.” When man and

this is simply a stringency and not a fundamental practice. *Aruch Hashulchan* also mentions that not all women are concerned about this *minhag*. See *Leket Yosher*, where he says that the Trumas Hadeshen would pass his wife the Havdalah wine to drink. Regarding the blessing on the candle, see also *Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa*, p. 61, n. 59, where he quotes R. S. Z. Auerbach’s opinion that since the blessing on the candle is not obligatory for women and only permissible, they ought not to make the blessing until after Havdalah and should drink the wine first. See also *Shashvei Efraim* (Kirschenbaum) on Brachos, p. 189.

137 Beitzah 16a

138 Bereishis Rabbah 9:14, according to *Biur Hagra*, *Orach Chaim* 271:10.

139 Rema, *Orach Chaim* 271:10

woman come together properly in marriage, the letters join and they bring the Divine Presence into their home. The man is connected to the letter that created the World to Come. His pursuits are related more directly to the spiritual, while the woman's are related to the more secular. But that is all somewhat superficial. It is the job of a woman to elevate the physical elements of life and to help turn them into spiritual things.

Based upon the *Drashos Haran*,¹⁴⁰ Rav Yonason David¹⁴¹ compares the man-woman relationship to that of the Sanhedrin and the king. The Sanhedrin was responsible for making scholarly spiritual decisions. Man is charged with learning the Torah, and has more mitzvos to keep. The king carried a Torah around with him at all times. It was his responsibility to build roads and wage wars. There is no direct reference in the Torah about each road, or other decisions the king would have to make. It was his job to have imbibed the spirit of the Torah so completely that he would be capable of making those decisions. The Sanhedrin had a very black-and-white code to consult. The king dealt in all of the gray areas. Man is charged with being the Sanhedrin of his family, and giving the family the benefit of his spiritual achievement. The woman is charged with offering the family the benefit of her ability to engage in the more earthly pursuits, and elevate those to the highest of planes.

Shabbos is holy, but the weekdays are secular. A woman's job is to take this world, created with the letter "*heh*" as she was, and connect it to the Shabbos – to the spiritual and eternal.¹⁴² (This gives us some incredible insight into the power of the male-female relationship on the Shabbos!) It is thus not suggested for her to drink the wine from the Havdalah; after all, she never really needs to separate from the Shabbos. Sarah's tent was never missing the Shabbos, but when she died, Avraham and Yitzchak were left without that Shabbos light of Sarah's that managed to burn the entire week. It was only when Yitzchak saw that Rivka could bring that light back into the weekdays that he knew that this was the woman who was to be the mother to all Jews, and who would implant in her daughters and granddaughters that same ability to extend the light of Shabbos from one week to the next.

The Jewish king would never make a move without the Torah in his hands. He was a man who was so infused with the spirit of Torah that his every move was to reflect that. It is something that we need to learn from our mothers, for only they can truly teach us what it can mean to be royalty.

140 Beginning of *drush* 11

141 "*Devek Tov*" (a pamphlet distributed at a simcha of R. Chaim Yitzchak Kaplan), *bayis* 6. See also *Pachad Yitzchak*, Shavuot 36, and *Reshimos Lev Chanukah*, p. 215.

142 The Sfas Emes (to Vayechi, 5634, s.v. *me'asher*, and 5653, s.v. *bi'inyan*) sees this idea (of connecting the weekdays to the Shabbos) as what is behind the two loaves of Challah on Shabbos, the *Lechem Mishnah* – one corresponds to the weekdays, and one to Shabbos. He bases this upon a cryptic passage in the *Zohar*. He then extends this to explain the relationship of Yissachar and Zevulun, Yissachar being Shabbos and Zevulun, the weekdays.