

## For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and the fire would be on it by night, before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael throughout their journeys. (40:38)

Clearly, this *pasuk* has ramifications concerning the future of our people as our tenure in *galus*, exile, continues. The Jew should not think that the darkness which encompasses us in *galus* is so pervasive that we are unable to penetrate it; or that it completely envelops and stifles us. No!

*V'eish tiheyeh laylah*, "And fire would be on at night." The light of Torah will illuminate the darkness of exile. The *daled amos shel halachah*, four cubits of Jewish law, will light for us the path of darkness, as we will be able to make our way, as others have before us.

*Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl*, relates that he heard from the **Ponevezer Rav, zl**, an incredible insight regarding *Chazal's* statement that from the time the *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed, *Ein lo l'Hakadosh Baruch Hu ela daled amos shel halachah bilvad*. "All that Hashem has/maintains in this world is four *amos* of *halachah*." What do *Chazal* mean with this statement? Are they intimating that since the *Bais Hamikdash* has been gone, Hashem reposes His Presence only in the *daled amos shel halachah*, because there is nowhere else. Nothing is left. Earlier, we at least had the Temple. Now that it is gone, all that Hashem has left is our learning. In other words, the four cubits of Torah learning represent the "after." The "before" was the Temple.

The *Ponevezer Rav* explains that, with regard to Hashem's relationship with the Torah, nothing has changed. Even when the *Bais Hamikdash* was standing in all of its glory and the *korbanos*, offerings, and the priestly service were in full force, Hashem's world revolved around the Torah study of His People. When the *Bais Hamikdash* stood, Hashem rested His Presence also in the Temple. Now that it no longer exists, He only has His *daled amos shel halachah*.

A *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, is Hashem's world. Thus, the home of a scholar is a veritable *Bais Hamikdash*. It is to him that *Klal Yisrael* turns day and night to seek the *dvar Hashem*, word of G-d. Is it any wonder that when a righteous *talmid chacham* takes leave of this world, Hashem considers it as if the *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed? Perhaps we should keep this in mind upon coming in contact with a *gadol b'Yisrael*, Torah giant. He represents the apex in a human being's relationship with Hashem.