

When you kindle the lamps. (8:2)

Rashi explains the term, *be'haalosecha*, in its literal sense: "When you raise up (the lamps)." The Torah should have used the word *b'hadlikcha*, which means when you kindle. *Rashi* offers two explanations which, on the surface, appear unrelated to one another: A) You should light the lamps until the flame rises up by itself (*she't'hei shalheves oleh mei'eileha*); B) You should stand on a step (footstool) situated in front of the *Menorah*. Therefore, "raise up" either means to cause the flame to ascend, or to raise himself up to stand over the *Menorah*. The *Mizrachi* (quoted by *Sifsei Chachamim*) says that these diverse interpretations are both plausible, because they can both be derived from one word.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, suggests that the two are connected. The *Menorah* symbolizes the light of Torah learning. Torah illuminates one's life. Torah study has two aspects: *lilmod*, to study; *u'l'lamed*, to teach/disseminate Torah. Accordingly, the word *be'haalosecha* can be explained as pertaining to both *lilmod* and *l'lamed*. *B'ehaalosecha*, to cause the flame to ascend on its own, may be interpreted as an injunction to the *rebbe* to teach his students in such a manner that the student can begin to comprehend the material on his own. The flame which the *rebbe* ignites within the student should rise up on its own (The student should always have a connection with his *rebbe*, but he should have a *derech*, pathway, in learning which his *rebbe* transmitted to them that allows him to learn on his own and to disseminate to others.)

Second, in order to teach on such a far-reaching level, it is vital that the *rebbe* himself be completely proficient in the subject matter, and that he have a profound understanding of the material. Only a *rebbe* who is knowledgeable of all aspects of the topic he is teaching can impart it in such a manner that it will impact his student to the point that he can now go on by himself. One can only teach that which he knows. A *rebbe* whose knowledge is deficient is a flawed teacher whose example will be a turn-off to his students. This idea is symbolized by the stepstool in front of the *Menorah*.

Since the *Menorah* was all of eighteen *tefachim*, it was hardly a problem for any decent-sized *Kohen* to reach up and light the *Menorah*. With regard to the cleaning of the *Menorah*, however, in order to do a good job, to get into the cups and clean out the oily ash, only a *Kohen* standing above the *Menorah* can perform this task with optimal efficiency. It would be best for him to stand upon a stool and look down at the cups and determine their cleanliness. Likewise, prior to disseminating Torah to others, one must be erudite in all facets, so that he will earn the respect and admiration of his student and serve as an example for him to emulate.

How does a *rebbe* inspire a student to "go it alone," to continue his spiritual growth on his own? Acting on one's own initiative requires a strong sense of self confidence. To develop this requisite quality, one must have a clearly defined sense of identity – who he is, his mission as part of *Klal Yisrael*, his abilities, and what is the greatest goal that he can possibly attain. He may neither settle for less than the maximum, nor may he become discouraged along his journey.

Success is contingent on a sincere attempt to succeed, because “ours is to do – not to conclude.”

A well-known Chinese proverb asserts: “If you plan for a year – plant rice. If you plan for a decade – plant a tree. If you plan for a century – educate a child.” When education is one’s focus, he is directing his efforts not simply for the here and now, but also for the distant future. To achieve this, he must infuse his student with a sense of mission, a drive and passion to achieve and to think and act on his own. This can only be accomplished when the student sincerely believes in himself, when his identity is clearly defined and remains a source of pride to him.

One of the primary reasons that we often fail in the *be’haalosecha es ha’neiros*, in imbuing our students (and children) to function on their own initiative, is that they do not possess positive identity. While this is a common occurrence with one who lacks self-esteem, others do have self-esteem, but fail to make the transition to incorporating their self-esteem into a positive identity.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, zl, addresses a class of people who lack a feeling of identity, but invariably strive for and attain prestigious positions, simply because of their drive to establish their identity. Thus, when someone (or they themselves) asks, “Who am I/Who are you?” they reply: “I am a doctor, a lawyer, a *rosh yeshiva*, a corporate executive, etc.”; “I am wealthy;” “I have a beautiful home;” “I have a luxury car;” “I travel to exotic places.” The problem with such identities is that they do not really satisfy one’s issues and deficits. Now, he is an unhappy doctor, unhappy lawyer, unhappy businessman. He has a palatial home which means nothing to him. He is a *rosh yeshiva*, but sadly does not derive satisfaction from it.

A person’s identity must be a true reflection of his inner self. Being a doctor etc., is what he does – not what he is. Rabbi Twerski cites the well-known Chelmite anecdote of the fellow who went to the *mikvah*.

Alone and undressed, he did not know who he was, “If everyone looks the same, how will I ever know who I am?” He came up with the brilliant idea of tying a red string around his foot. Now he had an identity. Unfortunately, in the process of showering, his red string slipped off his foot and one of the other fellows walked into it, and now it was on the other fellow’s foot.

When the first Chelmite noticed the red string on the other fellow’s foot, he remarked, “Pardon me, sir. I see the red string on your foot, which informs me who you are, but could you tell me, who am I?”

A profound lesson is conveyed through this anecdote. If my identity is a red string, then whoever has that string has my identity. Thus, whatever function, position, status I have – if my identity is the status – then the identity follows the title, but I remain unchanged, I still lack a real and true identity, because I have ignored my true self.”

One of the reasons that we grow up not focusing on our identity is that we lack a sense of

adequacy and wholesomeness which allows a more satisfactory adjustment to life. One who does not feel good about himself hardly has the motivation to focus on establishing his identity. Rabbi Twerski relates a beautiful and meaningful thought which I feel applies to us all across the board.

It was Friday night, and they had guests at their *Shabbos* table. One of the guests, who was apparently not very knowledgeable about Jewish tradition, asked why six candles were burning on the *Menorah*, rather than the usual two. It was explained that in most families, when one marries, she begins lighting two candles and, with the ensuing birth of each additional child, she adds another candle. Rabbi Twerski, who was a young boy at the time, remembers how good he felt in the knowledge that one of the candles that his mother lit Friday night was for him. He realized that the world was now a brighter place because of him.

Rabbi Twerski did not feel the fulfillment of this powerful message until years later when, in the course of his psychiatric practice, it became evident that countless people suffer from emotional problems and varying psychological symptoms due to deep-seated feelings of inadequacy..He poignantly sums it up: The weekly message to a child, conveyed at the initiation of *Shabbos kodesh*, that his/her existence has brought additional brightness into the home, can be a powerful stimulant for personal development.