Jewish Tribune – Beha’aloscha

**Lighting up the world**

A few years ago, my father ז"ל reminded me what Rabbi Shimon Winegarten said at my graduation, when I left Hasmonean High School all those years ago. (Little did I realise that I would be back fairly soon!)

Rabbi Winegarten was the guest of honour and charged us all to make a Kiddush Hashem in our lives. He gave the example of driving on Golders Green road. Aside from driving carefully and legally, he said it was incumbent upon us to drive graciously, to let people go and be considerate on the road. Why? Because everyone one of us is an ambassador for our people and are judged accordingly.

I don’t remember what prompted my father to remind me and I hope it wasn’t my poor driving!

But my father’s good memory allows me to connect that injunction with the opening possuk of this week’s parsha.

This week’s Parsha begins with the mitzvah of lighting the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdosh. The Torah uses the work “Be’haaloscha” to describe this lighting. This translates as “when you will make the lights rise”. The meforshim are troubled by this term, as “hadlokah” is normally used to describe lighting; indeed, the Targum says “beadlokusoch”. Our parsha should instead be called “Be’hadlikcho”!

Rash”i famously explains that the Torah is teaching us: שצריך להדליק עד שתהא שלהבת עולה מאליה, which means that it’s not enough to light the menorah but one also needs to make sure that the fire burns nicely.

Rabbi Bixenspanner once explained this Rashi as follows. The Gemoro (Shabbos 22b) says that the purpose of lighting the menorah in the mishkan was to show the entire world that the Shechina dwells amongst Klal Yisroel.

Why is it necessary for the entire world to know that the Shechina dwells amongst us?

We have recently enjoyed the yom tov of Shavuos where we re-enact Matan Torah. The Gemoro (Shabbos 89b) tells us that since that day, the entire world has always been watching Klal Yisroel closely. Because of that, it is very important that we behave in an elevated way and live up to our mission of being a nation fit for the Shechina to dwell amongst us.

Being watched by the entire world comes with its own set of challenges. One of the biggest of these is that we always need to be extremely careful not to make a Chillul Hashem and rather, whenever possible, to create a Kiddush Hashem. This applies both to individuals and to the community at large.

Rabbi Bixenspanner suggests that that is what Rashi is referring to. שצריך להדליק עד שתהא שלהבת עולה מאליה means that it is not enough to just light the menorah, but we also need to make sure that the fire burns nicely.

Lighting the menorah in this elevated fashion is a manifestation of the fact that we are very literally a light unto the nations, charged with making a Kiddush Hashem.

This Shabbos my wife and I privileged to be making a bar mitzvah of our youngest son. It is obviously a proud and emotional time and whilst I write these lines, I still have time to consider what message to share with him on his big day.

The one I received at my graduation from Rabbi Winegarten is as relevant and important as it was then, and perhaps a message of Kiddush Hashem is one I should share with our son. And hopefully he will be an even better driver than me!

**Rabbi Golker is the Menahel of Hasmonean High School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**