



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Two Yuds
2. High Voltage



Aharon from Monsey < asubar@aol.com > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Why is the name of Hashem written in the siddur as two Yuds? In my siddur — siddur "Tefillat Kol Peh" — it is written as two yuds everywhere that I looked, with the exception of Shirat Hayam (the song at the sea). Why is this so? I suspect that there is more to it than merely an editor's whim.

Dear Aharon,

I'm afraid your suspicions are groundless. The phenomenon is purely a function of your siddur's editor and printer. The double yud is not one of the names of Hashem and has no kedusha (sanctity). It's simply a substitute for the name of Hashem and it appears randomly in various versions of the siddur. The siddur I use (*Kavanat Hashem*) has the name of Hashem written out fully all the time.

Essentially, the reason for using a substitute is out of respect. The name of Hashem has kedushah and must not be erased or abused. Since two yuds isn't a name of Hashem, it was substituted so that if the siddur wasn't treated properly it would be less serious. Especially today, with the availability of inexpensive printed siddurim, siddurim aren't treated with the same care and respect with which they historically were treated.

I called Eshkol Publishers, creators of the siddur 'Tefillat Kol Peh.' I asked them why in some places the name of Hashem is written as two yuds and why in other places it's written out fully. They told me that when they put together the siddur they copied (with permission) from various older siddurim by means of offset. Whichever way the name of Hashem appeared in the old siddur, the new siddur had the same.

But why two yuds? I heard the following reason from Rabbi Aharon Feldman, *shlita*: The Name of Hashem is written one way and pronounced a totally different way. It's written with a 'yud', a 'heh', a 'vav' and another 'heh'. However, we pronounce it as if it were spelled 'aleph' 'dalet' 'nun' 'yud'. As you can see, the letter 'yud' appears twice, once in the beginning of the written Name and once in the Name as pronounced. Hence, two yuds.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 276:1

Jonathan Katz < frisch1@MIT.EDU > from Cambridge, MA wrote:

Hi,

Can you settle a debate I have been having with some of my friends? Is it permissible to 'light Shabbos candles' Friday night using an electric light? If so, would you be able to say the blessing? How about if one does not have any candles around?

Dear Jonathan Katz,

Two reasons are given for lighting Shabbat candles: *Shalom Bayit* (Peace in the home) and *Oneg Shabbat* (delight of Shabbat). It's hard to experience *Shalom Bayit* while stumbling over furniture, or *Oneg Shabbat* while eating in the dark. By filling the home with light, Shabbat candles promote harmony and peace, and they make the food enjoyable.

Most *Poskim*, therefore, say that you may use electric lights and even recite the blessing over them, since they add to *Shalom Bayit* and *Oneg Shabbat* the same way as candles.

Some *Poskim*, however, differentiate between battery-powered lights, such as flashlights, and those that run on electricity generated from a power plant. Battery-powered lights are all right since they contain 'fuel' — i.e., the battery — which is right there when you light it. Regular lights, on the other hand, have no 'fuel'. Rather, the electricity is 'piped' in from the outside; and furthermore, the electricity doesn't really exist yet — it's being created every second at the power plant. In a sense it's like lighting a wick with no oil. It's known about Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, that once when he was in a hotel and unable to light candles, he 'lit' a flashlight and made a blessing over it.

Sources:

- The Radiance of Shabbos, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Cohen
- Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata 2:43, footnote 22

Yiddle Riddle

What is the longest *Birkat Hamazon* (grace after meals)? What can make it even longer?

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