

The Maharal (*Nesivos Olam* Nesiv ha-Torah chapter 18) provided another source. The verse in *Mishlei* declared, *Ki ner mitzvah ve-Torah or*, “A mitzvah is a candle and Torah is light.” Light refers to the flame. There are three parts to a candle: the wax, the wick, and the flame. Beautifying a mitzvah is a sign of spirituality. It adds to the soul of the mitzvah. Therefore, it should cost an added third, just as with a candle, a third of the candle is the flame, which corresponds to Torah and soul.

Everybody agrees that this law does not apply to all. Someone who has funds must spend a bit more to purchase a beautiful mitzvah object. However, one who does not have enough money for his basic living expenses does not need to spend money to purchase a more beautiful mitzvah object. He is to purchase only the least expensive object that is fit for use in a basic manner. This was the ruling of the Rashba when he answered an interesting question that was presented to him by a community that had both wealthy and poor members.

There was a practice in the past for communities to hire a *chazzan* to lead the prayers. Hundreds of years ago there was a dispute in a community about how to divide the cost of the Chazzan’s salary among the members of the synagogue. Some claimed that each family should contribute according to the members in the family. Those with large families, it was argued, should pay more. They were benefiting more from the prayer leader, as they had more individuals who were being inspired by his services. This point of view argued that the small families, who had fewer individuals gaining from the Chazzan, should pay less. Others argued that the costs should be split up based on financial ability. Those who were wealthier should pay more. Those who had less money should pay less. The Rashba (*Shut* 5:15) issued a ruling for the community. He agreed that conceptually all families benefited from the Chazzan and therefore those fathers