

MDTorah WEEKLY

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Parshas Vayeira - וירא
Oct 26, 2002 – כי מרחשון תשס"ג – Vol. 4 No. 4

Talking Business

Everyday Jewish Business Law



Living Education

Principles of Education Gleaned from the Weekly Parsha

Visiting Half The Zoo

Question

"Come to the zoo on *Chol Hamo'ed*!" said all the adverts. Yehoshua decided to take the opportunity to see the wonders of Hashem's creation. He walked in through the main gate, thinking that entry was free on *Chol Hamo'ed*. When he was looking at the lions, he felt a tap on his shoulder. "Your ticket, please," said the official. "I thought entry was free today," he said. "I'll leave now if you wish," he offered. The official would not be satisfied with less than the full entry fee. Yehoshua was only prepared to pay for visiting that part of the zoo which he had actually seen. Who is right?



Answer

Reuven owns a field, surrounded on all four sides by Shimon's fields. Shimon erects fences on three sides of Reuven's field. Reuven erects his own fence on the fourth side. He is now obligated to pay his share in the construction of the other three fences. By completing the fencing-in of his field he has shown that he was pleased with his neighbour's work on his behalf. In Tractate *Bovo Kamo* (20b), our Sages deduce from this statement that if it was Shimon who had completed the fencing-in, he could not demand Reuven's

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Creating the World: Creating Bnei Torah (Part 4)

To be a successful *mechanech* (teacher) two ingredients are essential: **patience** and **support**.

Without patience, a student's progress will never be able to match the tolerance level of his teacher; without support, whether psychological, emotional, academic, or other, the student will feel he either cannot succeed or that his success has limited or no value.

The darkest time in creation was when Hashem said, "והארץ היתה תהו" ("The earth was empty and desolate and the depths were covered with darkness... [Bereishis 1:2]"). Rebbe Shimon ben Lakish explains (*Midrash Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4) that this posuk is alluding to the four major *golios* (when the Jewish people were exiled and dominated by foreign cultures).

Yet, the posuk concludes, "ורוח...". "...The spirit of Hashem hovers above the waters"). The *Midrash* (ibid) says the *רוח* mentioned here alludes to the spirit of Moshiach, as it states regarding the Moshiach (*Yishayahu* 11:2), "ונחה עליו רוח ה'" ("and the spirit of Hashem rested upon him").

This teaches us that even in the darkest times one need not despair, as help is close at hand and one's situation can improve in an instant!

And so we find (*Shmuel II* 24:17) that after Hashem send a *Malach* to strike the Jewish people after Dovid Hamelech had wrongly counted them, Dovid, although confronted with a seemingly unstoppable *Malach Hamaves* (angel of death) with his

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Rav Leff Speaks

When Giving is Really Giving (And When It's Not)

Avraham Avinu interrupts a moment of Divine revelation in order to receive some guests. From this we learn that *hachnasas orchim* (receiving guests) is greater than *kabalas pnei hashechina* (receiving the Divine Presence). What we would have characterized as rudeness on a cosmic scale becomes a moral example for all the generations. Evidently, Avraham knew what he was doing—his conduct earned the imprimatur of Chazal—but what was the logic of it?

The foundation of the world is *chesed*. Hashem created the world in order that there should exist a creature to whom He can give benefit. And since Hashem wanted to give the greatest good, He created the *neshama*, which He placed in this physical world where

it could attain a relationship of closeness with Him, which is the ultimate good.

Before creation, nothing existed other than HaShem. He contracted Himself, so to speak, relinquishing something of His place in order for something else to exist. It was, in a sense, an act of *hachanas orchim*. Likewise, when a person invites guests into his home, where he is like a king in his castle, he must make room, he must diminish himself for the sake of his guests.

The purpose of Divine revelation is to enable us to know something of Hashem's *midos*, those character traits which he projects onto the world to show us how He wants us to be. When Avraham interrupted his visit from Hashem to tend to his unexpected

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A Balance of Powers

According to Rebbe Levi, when Yitzchak was born, the light of the sun became stronger (Midrash Rabbah 53:8).

The sun was created to rule the day (Bereishis 1:16). Its light represents the forces of nature in the world and within ourselves: Our needs, our appetites, etc. According to the famous midrash, the sun and the moon were originally the same size, but the moon complained "Two kings cannot rule with one crown," and G-d made the moon smaller. Why didn't He make the sun bigger? Because to do that would have strengthened the forces of nature, the power of our natural impulses, and made it even harder to subdue them to our spiritual goals.

But when Yitzchak was born, Rebbe Levi tells us, G-d made the light

of the sun stronger. With Yitzchak, a new consciousness of G-d entered the world. While Avraham discovered G-d as a loving G-d, Yitzchak discovered G-d as a judging G-d. Yitzchak is traditionally associated with Gevurah and the Divine quality of Gevurah. G-d's Gevurah is a power that subdues His chesed. Man's gevurah is a power that subdues his natural impulses. When that gevurah is directed to G-d, it is associated with the feeling that man really has no choice but to direct his life to G-d. That sense of existential imperative so deepens his devotion to G-d that he becomes capable of managing natural impulses that would otherwise overpower him. So when Yitzchak was born, G-d intensified the light of the sun, i.e., He conferred an extra measure of strength and vitality that intensified man's natural impulses.

Based on sefer Shem Mishmuel MD

(Talking Business—Continued from page 1) participation in the construction costs. When one person does work for himself and another person automatically derives benefit from it, the beneficiary is not obligated to pay for the benefit he enjoyed (*zeh neheneh v'zeh lo chosser pottur*). This presents *Tosafos* with a difficulty. Surely the three fences which Shimon built were also constructed for his own benefit. The fact that they also enclosed Reuven's field did not increase his costs. If so, why does Reuven have to pay his share of the construction costs if he completed the fourth side? *Tosafos* answers that the fact of Reuven completing the fourth side at his own expense indicates that he is pleased that a fence has been erected and that he is prepared to pay for this benefit. He must therefore participate in the cost of the other three fences. This answer requires clarification. What has *Tosafos* added? At the end of the day, Shimon has not incurred any extra expense because he

had to enclose Reuven's field as well. If so, what right does he have to demand payment for this automatic benefit?

Rav Tzvi Spitz (*Mishptei Hatorah, Bovo Kamo*, No.34) suggests the following explanation. The fact that Reuven indicates that he is prepared to pay for the work Shimon performed on his behalf retroactively converts him into Reuven's employed worker from the outset. We now view the fence construction performed by Shimon as having been for two people, himself and his neighbor. Even though it never entered Shimon's mind that he was working for Reuven, since Reuven's actions are interpreted to be appointing Shimon as his paid worker, he is obligated to pay him for his work. However, *Tosafos* add that if a person automatically benefits from another's work and indicates that the only reason why he wishes to enjoy this benefit is because it is free of charge, he cannot be forced to pay for it since *zeh neheneh v'zeh lo chosser pottur*.

Let us return to our case. Yehoshua had no intention to avoid paying for visiting the zoo. He just thought that this benefit was available free of charge on *Chol Hamo'ed*. Had he known that such a visit would cost him money, he would have been prepared to forego this enjoyment. The fact that there was one additional visitor in the zoo did not cause the zoo authorities any additional expense. We can therefore conclude that this is a further case of *zeh neheneh v'zeh lo chosser pottur*. According to the *halochah*, if Yehoshua now leaves the zoo, he cannot be made to pay for his partial tour. However, should he decide to see the rest of the animals, he would have to

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(Living Education—Continued from page 1)

sword drawn (Rashi, Radak), didn't hesitate to plead with Hashem to spare the people. From this, learned Chezkijahu Hamelech (*Brachos* 10a), even when he was told by Yishayahu the Prophet that because he did not have children (for he saw that his offspring would be wicked) he would die in this world and the next, (although lying in his death bed) he conjured up a plan to remove the heavenly loose from upon his neck. Chezkijahu told Yishayahu that he learned from his great grandfather, Dovid Hamelech, that even if an enemy's sword is ready to pierce one's neck, one should not refrain from pleading to Hashem to save him. This (*ibid*) is the meaning of the posuk in *Iyov* (13:15), "הן יקטלני לו איחיל" ("Though he kill me, I will beseech Him...").

Each child embodies a pure *neshamah*. His innate characteristics and upbringing may have covered him with blankets of darkness; of bad speech or behavior or lack of seriousness and interest in Kodesh and even a complete ignoring of responsibility.

However his *neshamah*, which embodies the light of Hashem and His Torah, remains forever pure and strong under those coats of darkness. A teacher can either stress the darkness or work toward reaching and exposing the light of his student's *neshamah*.

The pesukim above and the actions of our great tzaddikim direct us to search for the light amidst the deepest and most depressing and apparently unconquerable darkness.

The truth is, sometimes a child's improvement will come through the darkness itself, just as the light of the eye – eyesight – comes through the dark color in the middle of the eye and just as day develops from amidst the night. In any case, when confronted with his misbehavior, a child will be faced with either the consequences of his actions or be made aware of the correct path of behavior by his teacher. This itself will lead him out of his darkness.

For a teacher's rebuke to have impact on his student, his approach needs to be based on an honest belief that the child can improve and can eventually "see the light". This approach will fill the teacher with much-needed patience and the means to help his student truly improve. It will also give the teacher a feeling of confidence that his efforts will bear fruit. He will always look for ways and methods to help bring out the good in his students. This is the way of Hashem, for although He saw that wicked people would fill the world with darkness, He still created the world (*Eitz Yosef on Midrash Rabbah* 1:2) and even after reviewing His Creation, said, "והנה טוב מאד" ("...and behold, it was very good").

Some teachers expect that all his students will be attentative and interested in all his lessons. When his illusion is revealed, he either considers himself a failure or cracks down on his students, filling them with fear, lest they give him anything but their absolute attention.

A teacher can learn from *Ma'asei Bereishis* to relax his stance and he will feel better about himself, as well. We find in Bereishis (1:11-12) that Hashem commanded the trees to have the same taste as their fruit. The next posuk reveals that the trees did not do what they were told. On the other hand, the grasses did more than they were told as each one grew distinctly separate from the other. Most other of Hashem's Creations did exactly as they were

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told.

We find, therefore, that there are three types of creations and in our case, three types of students: One who listens, one who doesn't and one who does even more than he is told to do. We find, as well, that each individual child shifts back and forth from one type of behavior to another. Therefore, a teacher should not be surprised if his students do not follow his every command. Actually, the knowledge that sometimes students listen and sometimes do not, should relax the teacher and allow him to use his energies to look for practical solutions, rather than get angry and agitated and put unnecessary fear into the hearts of his students.

As we mentioned above, even a good student can have a difficult day. He may misbehave or even speak to his teacher in an aggressive tone because of something which is bothering him. **A teacher need not be thrown off balance. Ups and downs in a child's behavior are absolutely normal.**

The *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 2:5)* explains that at the very outset of creation, Hashem alluded to different stages where good would prevail and then wain and then would prevail again. Even so, Hashem created the world and sustained it. *בראשית ברא* alludes to the building of the Beis Hamikdash – when good prevailed. *תהו ובורו* alludes to its destruction when wickedness reigned. While *אור ויהי* alludes to the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash. So too, each child has his ups and his downs, yet he was worth creating and therefore educating, as well.

As we said above, because of the nature of students, a teacher can expect diversions from acceptable behavior. Therefore, he needn't see everything. Sometimes he can simply ignore what he sees. The *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 8:4)* says that when Hashem thought to create man, He saw that both tzaddikim and wicked people would descend from him. Nevertheless, He created man. What did Hashem do about the ongoing problem of the wicked descendants?

He simply ignored their presence. The fact that tzaddikim as well would descend from Adam was reason enough to create the world.

From here we learn two lessons:

- (1) Sometimes a negative action or trait need be ignored and,
- (2) One should concentrate on one's good traits and build on them.

A teacher, in particular, should try to convert his energy of criticism into one of support and emphasis of his student's good sides.

From the next *Midrash (8:5)* as well, we learn a principle of tolerance in education. While the different groups of *malachim* were arguing over whether it was wise to create man, Hashem simply created him. Lesson: in a case of doubt, give the student another chance!

In conclusion, just as Hakadosh Boruch Hu created the world despite the imperfect ways of man, so too, parents and teachers should show patience for the irregular behavior of children, and, in a tolerant fashion, while making the child aware of his lackings when necessary, they should use their energies to highlight and strengthen the child's good traits. This will lead to a calmer, more patient and more balanced response on the part of the parent or teacher and have a greater effect on the child. **MD**

To be continued.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Man's Deeds are Greater

According to Chazal, Avraham fulfilled all the mitzvos in the Torah without being commanded - all the mitzvos except one: the mitzvah of circumcision. Why didn't Avraham circumcise himself until G-d commanded him?

When a Roman nobleman challenged Rebbe Akiva to justify the mitzvah of circumcision, which seemed to him like violation of the perfection of the body as G-d had created it, Rebbe Akiva demonstrated to him that man improves upon what G-d creates by asking, "Which is better, a handful of grain or a cake?" The obvious answer is a cake. The power of man to improve on what G-d did, to take something He created and make it different and better, is symbolized in the mitzvah of circumcision. This incredible power applies not only to physical things. It is the principle which underlies the power of a tzaddik to assert his will and even nullify the will of G-d. Now, of course, a father can say to his beloved son, "Your deeds will be greater than mine." But however true that may be, a respectful child would never say to his father, "My deeds are greater than yours." Since the mitzvah of circumcision signifies the power of man's will to displace G-d's will, Avraham could not perform the mitzvah until G-d commanded him.

Based on sefer *Kedushas Levi*

(*Rav Leff—Continued from page 1*)

visitors, he was fulfilling the very purpose of revelation by emulating HaShem's primary trait of chesed. That is why *hachnasas orchim* is greater than *kabalas pnei hashchina*—because it represents its fulfillment.

Yet, the way in which Avraham accommodated his guests seems oddly standard. Instead of bringing them into his home and serving them royally, he put them under a tree and gave them a picnic, with milk and dairy!

Rav Dessler says that the world is divided into two types of people: givers and takers. We should all strive to be givers, like HaShem. But appearances are deceiving; what looks like giving is sometimes really taking, and what looks like taking is sometimes really giving.

The heart is one of the symbols of giving—*lev tov*—because it's constantly pumping blood to the whole body. But the truth is, the heart receives as much blood as it gives out. So why is the heart a symbol of giving more than taking? Because it takes blood in only to give it back out to the rest of the body. The taking is itself transformed into an act of giving, because it is an essential part of the process of giving.

People used to come to the Satmar Rebbe for blessings, and the custom was to leave money. Some were very rich, and they would leave \$100 or \$1,000, and the Rebbe would put the money in his pockets until they were bulging with bills. Then, when a poor person would enter, the

Nine that are Ten

What if the fifty righteous people should lack five? Would You destroy the entire city because of the five? (Bereishis 18:28)

Rashi explains what Avraham meant: Would You destroy Sodom for lack of five tzaddikim? That still leaves nine for each of the five provinces of Sodom. Together with You, the Tzaddik of the world, it would be as though there were ten.

What Rashi means is that when nine people join together to do a mitzvah, they do not yet form a minyan, a unit of community. But the cooperation of the nine produces a new spiritual force, so that the merit of their mitzvah is greater than the merit of nine individual deeds. That extra merit, which is a spiritual light that descends from G-d—the Tzaddik of the world—gives these nine men the merit of ten.

Based on sefer *Prinei Daas MD*

Rebbe would reach into a pocket, and without looking (he never looked at what he was taking or giving) would give him something. Was the Satmar Rebbe a taker? No. He took in order to give.

You can also be a giver who is really a taker. Someone travels twelve hours on a plane to the States, didn't sleep much, is suffering from jet lag, all he wants is a bed. Not food or talk, just a bed to sleep in. But what kind of host can one be if he doesn't serve a lavish meal and entertain his guest with scintillating conversation?

Meanwhile, the poor, tired guy is sitting there with toothpicks in his eyes, trying to stay awake so as not to offend his host. Who's giving and who's taking?

Why didn't Avraham bring the guests into the house? Why did he serve them dairy? They said that they were in a hurry. Had he invited them inside, it might have been an inconvenience for them. Once in the house, it's bad manners to just pick up and leave. But if you're just under a tree, it's much easier. And dairy is quick. But if they weren't really in a hurry, and just didn't want to impose on their host,

then Avraham was ready with the finest meats, and they were certainly welcome to enjoy their meal inside, as well. This was true chesed. Avraham was concerned with the needs of his guests, not just promoting his image for great hospitality. It was real giving, not taking disguised as giving. **MD**

Why is the heart a symbol of giving, even though it receives as much blood as it gives out? Because it takes blood in only to send it back out to the rest of the body.

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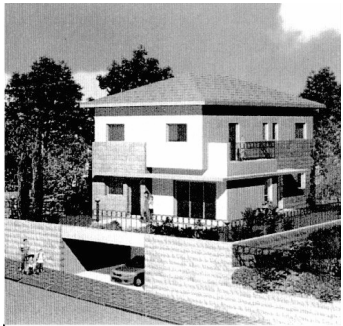


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Halacha L'Maase
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Tashmishei Kedushah

- Tashmishei kedushah* are objects which serve a holy object (such as a Sefer Torah). They contain a holy object or cover it and are in immediate contact with it. The law of *tashmishei kedushah* applies even to objects which are used more to protect than to show respect for a holy object (e.g. the ark in which a Sefer Torah and other sacred writings are placed, even if they are printed rather than handwritten by a scribe. According to most poskim, sacred texts that are printed have a sanctity comparable to the handwritten text.). Ornaments that are placed upon a Sefer Torah are also considered *tashmishei kedushah* even though they do not actually touch the Sefer Torah itself.
- Tashmishei kedushah* that are worn out and unsuitable for further use must be put aside in a safe place. It is forbidden to use them for any other purpose and it is forbidden to burn them. The prohibition to burn them is implied in the verse "Do not do so to Hashem, our G-d." In contrast, *tashmishei mitzvah* do not have *kedushah* after the mitzvah has been done.
- Mezuzah cases and paper or plastic which is wrapped around it are considered *tashmishei kedushah*.
- The law of *tashmishei kedushah* applies only to objects that have been designated and used as *tashmishei kedushah*. The law of *tashmishei kedushah* does not apply to objects that have been prepared or separated for use as *tashmishei kedushah*, but have not actually been used. It also does not apply to objects that have been used only once as *tashmishei kedushah* and have not been designated for use as *tashmishei kedushah*. For example, the brown paper that is used to wrap a Torah book for mailing has no *kedushah*. But if it were wrapped with that same paper with the intention that the paper should always cover it, it acquires *kedushah* and must be treated as *tashmishei kedushah*.
- Tashmishei kedushah* such as the wrapping of a Sefer Torah, may not be made from something that was previously used for a mundane purpose if it is used in the same form in which it was used for the mundane purpose. But if its form is changed, it is permitted to use it. *Tashmishei mitzvah*, such as a talis bag and even the talis itself, can be made from something that was previously used for a mundane purpose. (*Tashmishei mitzvah* need not be placed in a geniza.)
- An object which serves *tashmishei kedushah* (*tashmish detashmish*), like the bag of a talis in which tefillin inside their bag are placed, has no *kedushah*. (The tefillin bag is considered *tashmishei kedushah* even though it does not touch the tefillin directly [they are in cases] because they do touch the straps.)
- A bookshelf that is used for sifrei kodesh is considered *tashmishei kedushah* and it is forbidden to use it for mundane purposes. It is forbidden to discard it or to burn it. Some allow it to be sold or to be redeemed. The bookshelf is no longer considered *kadosh* and the value of the bookshelf (the proceeds of the sale) is applied to purchasing sifrei kodesh. **MD**

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