

# Kiddush Hashem

## CURRICULUM & RESOURCES

BOOK 3

*...manifesting  
Hashem's name  
in the world.*



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These lessons were developed in conjunction with **Mifal Kiddush Hashem**  
and based on the **Sefer Mekadshei Shemecha** by Rabbi Shruga Freedman

For a free download of the sefer, more resources, and additional information on Kiddush Hashem,  
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*Mifal Kiddush Hashem was established to spread a deeper understanding and appreciation of our mission in being mekadesh shem shamayim.*

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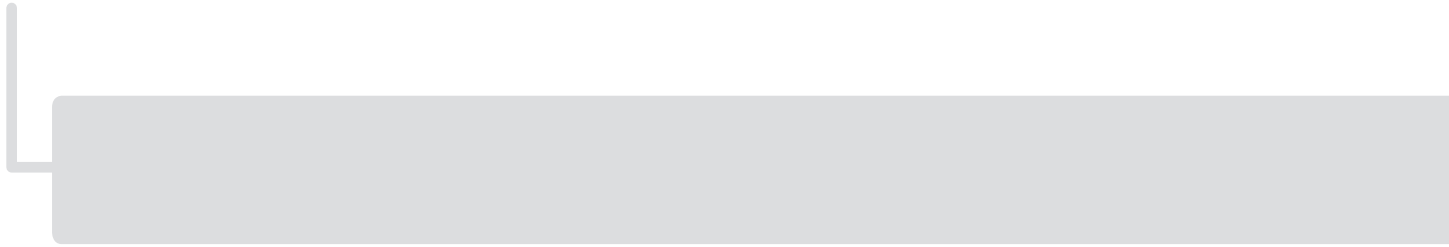
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# Introduction.



## ■ DEAR TEACHERS,

These lessons have been designed to help students understand the importance of emulating ה' attributes in their daily interactions. It is our hope that through their study, students will gain the sensitivity to further their unique mission in this world. We believe that by teaching this material, students will become a link in the holy chain of Jews that have sacrificed to increase ה' honor through their righteous actions.

These lesson plans have been organized to facilitate the teacher's ease of use. Stories and extended text have been placed appropriately within the lesson plan, adding interest and depth to the lesson.

All תורה sources have been cited with footnotes for the teacher's convenience. At the end of each lesson, additional resources have been included for further clarification and study.

## ■ SHORT REVIEW

### ■ PREVIOUS LESSONS.

In the last ten lessons, students learned about קידוש ה'. Presented below is a list of the previous lessons as a review of the essential concepts that were taught.

- Lesson 1 - Defining קידוש ה' and חילול ה'
- Lesson 2 - Bringing the world to the recognition of ה': the purpose of creation and כלל ישראל
- Lesson 3 - Publicizing the Name of ה' through His blessings and the כלל ישראל of השגחה
- Lesson 4 - Honoring ה' for His own sake, not for a person's own honor
- Lesson 5 - Emulating the ways of ה' so that each of us becomes a צלם אלוקים
- Lesson 6 - קידוש ה' in the workplace: being faithful and honest
- Lesson 7 - Interactions with non-Jews-honesty and returning lost objects
- Lesson 8 - Respectful conduct precedes Torah Study
- Lesson 9 - Balancing our pride, humility and honor
- Lesson 10 - Our unique Jewish Mission

# Lesson 11.

## ■ KIDDUSH HASHEM IN THE PRESENCE OF JEWS

### ■ INTRODUCTION.

Thus far we have spoken about the importance of sanctifying the name of ה' before non-Jews. However, the קידוש ה' is even greater when exhibited before a Jew. When a non-Jew witnesses an act of קידוש ה', he may be personally influenced to draw closer to ה'. When a Jew is impacted by an act of קידוש ה', this also inspires him to sanctify ה's name. Now he becomes a role model for others, bringing more קדושה into the world.<sup>1</sup>

### ■ OBJECTIVES.

Students will:

- Compare and contrast the effects of קידוש ה' before a non-Jew and before a Jew.
- Define the three reasons why we must all involve ourselves in the מצוה of helping Jews return to מצוה observance.
- Create scenarios of true to life situations, depicting how they might influence other Jews.

### ■ ANTICIPATORY SET: INITIATING INTEREST.

The teacher will use the graphic organizer tree found at the end of this chapter to show the ramifications that an act of קידוש ה' has on future generations. The teacher will

explain the following:

In previous קידוש ה' lessons we spoke about the analogy of the captain (representing a Jew) who must guide his ship and his passengers (representing the non-Jews) to their ultimate destination. A non-Jew who is influenced by an act of קידוש ה' is brought a bit closer to his destination. However, an irreligious Jew who is influenced by קידוש ה' to become שומר תורה ומצוות now becomes a captain who himself can lead many more passengers to their final destination.

The act of קידוש ה' has not only caused this particular Jew to keep מצוות but his future family as well. The person who is responsible for this is rewarded not only for the מצוה of this family, but for all the מצוות that will be kept by the descendants of that family for all generations to come.<sup>2</sup>

### ■ DEVELOPMENT.

רב יוסף שלום אלישיב זצ"ל once said that each generation is granted a מצוה that is particularly significant for its time. Our generation has been given the מצוה to "let the Name of Heaven become beloved through you."

During the times of the הפך היום וצ"ל in the early 1900's, the השכלה movement, which enticed many Jews to forsake their religious lifestyle and embrace new economic

## קידוש ה' לעיני ישראל

opportunities, spread rapidly throughout Europe. Nine out of every ten German Jews falsely believed that they were accepted by their non-Jewish neighbors and pledged their allegiance to their German heritage instead of their Jewish roots.

In order to combat this spiritual collapse, the הפנ חיים זצ"ל wrote a plea to the people of his generation asking them to rescue those who had been lost.

In the introduction to his book, called "חומות הדת," the הפנ חיים זצ"ל outlines the obligation to reach out to Jews influenced by the השכלה movement.

In the book, he brings three reasons why we are obligated to perform this holy work. These three reasons help us understand why קידוש ה' is so much greater of a מצוה when witnessed by a Jew.

### 1) כבוד ה' — HASHEM'S GLORY

The world was created so that כלל ישראל, who are ה' children, would be able to give honor to His name. Through our acceptance of, and commitment to, תורה ומצוות, we bring honor to Him and show love for His precepts. It is a great merit for a person to have an opportunity to give honor to a king. It is all the more so a great merit to be chosen to bring honor to the Creator

of the world. It should give us great שמחה that we have the merit and the tremendous reward for doing so.

When a Jew witnesses others degrading ה' name by not keeping the מצוות, he should feel pain as if his own father was degraded before him. He should do all in his power to restore ה' honor.<sup>3</sup>

We should use the gifts and talents with which we have been blessed to honor ה'. One blessed with wealth should use it to build yeshivos, and one blessed with the gift of speaking should inspire others with תורה insights.<sup>4</sup>

הלכה requires a Jew to give up his life rather than transgress one of the three cardinal sins: שפיכות דמים, גילוי עריות ועבודה זרה—murder, illicit relations and idolatry. However, (in cases of non-state sponsored religious persecution) he is also required to give up his life if forced to violate any prohibition, even one that is considered minor, if the violation occurs in public before ten Jews. This is only regarding Jews. If, however, this coercion took place in front of a much larger number of non-Jews, he would not be obligated to give up his life על קידוש ה'. (In a time of state-sponsored religious persecution, known as שמד, one is required to sacrifice his life for any commandment, even in private.) This seems to suggest that a קידוש ה' that takes place in the presence of a Jew is greater than one that takes place

before non-Jews.

This is because when one demonstrates the importance

of being שומר תורה ומצוות before a Jew, he may create another captain who has the ability to bring many more passengers to their ultimate destination.

## STORY #1—REACHING OUT

Chana (name changed) had gone to ארץ ישראל with her family during the summer following eleventh grade. She was looking forward to her senior year, when she would apply to seminaries in ארץ ישראל. Common as it might be these days, she knew that a chance to visit ארץ ישראל was a generous gift from her parents—not to be taken for granted.

While Chana was riding a bus in ירושלים, two *chareidi* women were talking with animation. Chana didn't intend to eavesdrop, but she could not help overhearing their conversation.

A non-observant family had moved into her building, complained one woman to her friend. Why they would choose to live among the “ultra-Orthodox” was a mystery, and something of an affront as well. What would it be like seeing the non-observant mother, father and children going about their lives, with such profoundly different values, ways and appearances? What unpleasantness might they anticipate from people whose lives were at tremendous odds with theirs, and who undoubtedly looked upon *chareidim* with hostility and contempt? And what about the children...?

The woman was clearly upset and terribly worried that the presence of these people would threaten her family's way of life, with its many גדרים (protective fences) which she and her husband had worked hard to build. Chana listened. She didn't have a lot of קירוב exposure in her background. Yes, she had volunteered for a local program that year, teaching the basics of Judaism to young children from assimilated families one evening each week, and she had worked earlier in the summer at the program's קירוב camp, but she had not been deeply involved in outreach.

To this day, she does not know what made her do it. Suddenly, she found herself speaking. She was very embarrassed but forged ahead.

“I don't think it is my place to say anything, and I realize you are upset with the whole situation with your new neighbors, but perhaps they behave the way they do because they were never shown a different way of life, or the beauty of *Tiddishkeit*. Perhaps if you would show them...”

The women were surprised and a bit bewildered. They looked at Chana skeptically, with just a touch of pity in their expressions.

The woman who was complaining about her new neighbors responded, “*Mammele*, you are young and naive. You have no idea how deep the animosity runs from the *chilonim* to the *chareidim*. They would surely scorn an invitation from me. And besides, how could I go out and tell them to do things differently when I am not a perfect person myself? How can I tell them what to do, when I still have things to work on?”

Providentially, Chana remembered something she had learned. The words spilled out with ease:

At אגודת ישראל's first כנסיה הגדולה in the early 1930s, the הפזן חיים זצ"ל urged everyone to fulfill their obligation to do whatever they could to save their fellow Jews from the forces of assimilation that were raging through Europe during the era of “isms.” His urgings were met with protest. “How can we tell others to do what we haven't perfected ourselves?”

The הפזן חיים זצ"ל responded with a משל: A traveler was invited by a wealthy man to have a cup of tea. When the guest looked into his cup, he saw sediment that had settled on the bottom. “Where is your water from?” he asked. When told that the town's water came from a local river, he advised his host that the town needed a filtration system. The system was installed, and thereafter, the water was crystal clear. It worked well until a huge fire broke



out some time later and burned down half the town.

The next time the traveler was in town, he heard what had happened and inquired, "Couldn't you put out the fire?" The people replied, "It took a long time for the water to work its way through the filtration system, and there wasn't enough filtered water available to quickly control the flames."

"That was foolish!" said the traveler. "You don't need filtered water to put out a fire!"

The **כלל ישראל** went on to explain to those who resisted his call to outreach, "There is a fire raging in **כלל ישראל**. Just go out and do whatever you can to stop it."

The ladies listened politely. They exchanged pleasantries, asking Chana her name and where she was from and parted company pleasantly.

Chana questioned whether she had done the right thing, even though it had seemed right at the time.

Months passed. One night shortly after **סוכות**, Chana heard a voice in a thick Israeli accent when she answered the telephone.

"Is this the home of Chana Freund?"

"Yes, Chana speaking. How may I help you?"

"My name is *Giveret* Klapchuk from **ירושלים**. I don't know if you will remember me, but I am so happy I found you. Last summer, I met you on a bus. You overheard my conversation about our new *chiloni* neighbors...."

"Oh, yes," replied Chana, the memory rushing back, along with the color in her cheeks. "How ever did you track me down?" she asked tentatively.

"**ברוך ה'**, I remembered that you said you lived in Brooklyn, and I kept calling all the telephone numbers for 'Freund', until I found you."

Chana was amazed and curious.

"At first I was taken aback—a young American girl speaking up as you did. But I thought about what you said, and I decided to try. I invited the family for that **שבת** and, **ברוך ה'**, they have been coming to us every **שבת** since. They have *kashered* their kitchen. They took their children out of *chiloni* schools and enrolled them in a Shuvu school. The family is growing in *Tiddishkeit*, and I wanted you to know."

Chana had the courage to reach out. Her courage was contagious. Can we imagine the **זכויות** of Chana and *Giveret* Klapchuk for the spiritual transformation of the neighbors? And can we imagine the **זכויות** of the new neighbors themselves, for the courage they displayed in changing their lives?

Their story can become our story. We need only begin, as the **תורה** teaches us, and **הקדוש ברוך הוא** will send us **סעִיִּתָּא**. The outcome is His, but the **השְׁתַּדְּלוּת** is ours. "

-By EILEEN FINE FROM *Binah Magazine*. COPYRIGHT 2008. (718)305-5200.

## "כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה" (ספרא ויקרא כ"ג: 2) ערבות

### EVERY JEW IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS FELLOW

We have been given the responsibility not only to influence other Jews, but to make sure that our actions do not create a **חילול ה'** (a desecration of ה's name). It is the responsibility of the entire Jewish nation to be united in bringing honor to ה's name and to ensure that no

individual disregards **תורה** law, thereby creating a **חילול ה'**.

In 1993, **רב אליה שוויי זצ"ל**, addressed the annual convention of **אגודת ישראל** in America in response to allegations that certain Jewish institutions had improperly obtained government funds. "[We] cannot shrug off the smear against us by saying, 'It was that institution. . . their actions,'" he proclaimed. "The

ה' must be borne by all of us, for the status of תורה students has fallen. This affects us all. . . It is. . . the responsibility of the entire כלל ישראל that there [will] be no thieves among us.”

-*Jewish Observer*, JANUARY 1994

Each individual Jew must feel the responsibility for his actions. A חילול ה' made by an individual Jew can have negative consequences on thousands of other Jews. He should view his actions with the understanding that they may impact an entire nation.

The ערבות in ראש השנה נמרא explains the concept of ערבות. If someone has already fulfilled a מצוה such as קידוש or ברכת המזון, he may perform the מצוה and recite the blessing again, in order to help another Jew fulfill his obligation. His own observance will be seen as lacking if he does not help his friend to fulfill his מצוה obligation.

Since the ultimate purpose of כלל ישראל's מצוה observance is to bring honor to ה', one Jew who fails to observe a מצוה will detract from ה'’s honor, not allowing כלל ישראל to achieve its true purpose.

At קבלת התורה, we not only accepted the responsibility for our own מצוה observance but also to help our brothers. The הפן הייחודי explains by way of analogy that if ראובן cosigns to be a guarantor

for a loan for שמעון for thousands of dollars and later realizes that שמעון will use the money for a business deal that is destined to fail, he will do his utmost to ensure that שמעון does not get involved in that deal. ראובן does this, because he knows that if שמעון loses his money and cannot afford to pay back the loan, he, as a guarantor, will have to pay back שמעון's loan.

When we see another person who needs help with the fulfillment of מצוה, we, like ראובן, must do our utmost to motivate others to do מצוה, because we are the guarantors for every Jew's מצוה observance, and we are all responsible for each other.

To illustrate this concept the מגן אברהם says that if one only has enough oil to light his מנורה למהדרין for himself and his friend has no oil to light his own מנורה, he should divide the oil so that they can both light [one candle] each night. Even though he will not be able to light למהדרין, he should still give to his friend, since both of them will now be יוצא.

The same holds true if one owns his own אתרוג in a city that has a communal אתרוג. If a neighboring city has no אתרוג, the owner of the אתרוג should give up his own אתרוג and use the communal אתרוג, in order to ensure that each city has an אתרוג to fulfill the מצוה.<sup>5</sup>

## STORY #2—LONG DISTANCE DIVIDENDS

A man once gave Rabbi Aryeh Rodin of Congregation Rodfei Shalom in Dallas a donation for \$2,000. The rabbi was puzzled why the man, who was Jewish but clearly not observant, wanted to make such a large contribution to his synagogue. “Rabbi,” explained the man, “recently I was in Jerusalem at the Western Wall. There I saw a man praying with such fervor; I was moved to the depths of my soul. I wanted to express how moved I was, but I didn’t want to insult the man by giving him money, so I decided I would make a contribution to a synagogue where that man would feel comfortable praying. “When I returned to Dallas, I described the man I saw at the Wall — the long black coat, the broad black hat, the sidelocks — and asked where a man like that would feel comfortable praying; Rabbi, they told me your synagogue! So here I am.”

Eventually, this man and his family began to attend services religiously and became major supporters of the synagogue and its outreach efforts. In retelling the story, Rabbi Rodin points out, “The *Yerushalmi* had no idea that his devotion to prayer changed the life of an American man and his family, bolstered תורה programs and enabled the construction of a shul building in Dallas. After 120 years, when this man passes on to the next world, he will be greeted in Heaven and commended on what he did for increasing תורה and building a new shul for the Jewish

people in Dallas! "The *Yerushalmi*, who never in his life left the Holy Land, will wonder, 'What is Dallas?'"

- A TRUE STORY DOCUMENTED IN THE *Artscroll Maggid Series* BY RABBI PESACH KROHN.

related the following message as told to by רב נח ווינברג זצ"ל, "If one person can kill six million Jews, one person can also save six million Jews." We each have the obligation to take part in this great project—one Jew at a time.

### 3) "לא תעמוד על דם רעך" (ויקרא יט:טז): השבת אבידה HASHAVAS AVEIDAH

The תורה takes great care to outline very specific laws regarding our obligation to return a lost object to its owner. The הפן היום זצ"ל explains that if we must be so careful to return a lost object to its owner, how much more so to return his "lost" soul! Even if one found a very expensive object, how could it be compared to the reward of a מצוה? The reward of eternity is priceless. How can one compare the loss of a diamond ring to the loss of a מצוה?

If a person was drowning and his friend had the ability to save him, he would run to save him and be happy to do so. Imagine the satisfaction of saving a person's life. How much greater would be the satisfaction of saving a person's נשמה!

The שלי"ה says that just as we are commanded to help a

person whose life is in danger and not to ignore him, so too must we save a person who is in spiritual danger. If we are obligated to save his body, we are also obligated to save his soul.

השבת אבידה also applies to influencing religious Jews to strengthen their מצוה observance. When a Jew causes another to rise to a higher level of observance, he has returned to him a treasure more priceless than diamonds!

We have learned from the הפן היום זצ"ל that one should never hesitate to teach and influence others, when given the opportunity. On the other hand, we must do whatever we can to prepare ourselves and establish a proper foundation. When one is strong, he has something to offer others. A young man once asked the חזן איש if he should leave yeshivah for half a year to take a teaching position but was instructed not to do so at that stage in his life. The חזן איש explained that the more he learned the more he would have the ability to influence others when the time was right. He explained to another student that the הפן היום זצ"ל learned for many years in order to become the great person that he was. However, after all of those years of learning, he was able to change the world in a very short time. (פאר הדור בריו)

## STORY #3—WHOM WE SERVE

רב אברהם חיים פויער שליט"א wrote the following: I was fresh out of yeshivah and kollel where I had studied diligently for many years. There, in the sheltered environment of the yeshivah, my time had been my own. I was beholden to no one, and I could study תורה day and night, to my heart's desire. But now I had accepted the position of ראש מתיבתא and I had a whole school full of boys and their parents to answer to. Indeed, they made many demands on my valuable time. Before school hours, during school hours, and after school hours, there was always something going on which stole my precious time. My only consolation was the fact that every morning our מנין was graced with the presence of the גדול הדור, רב יעקב קמנצקי, who wintered in Miami Beach, FL to avoid the cold up north.

Once, I drove רב יעקב to the בר מצוה of a boy who lived a very long distance from our מתיבתא. It took quite a bit of time and effort to attend this lengthy affair, and I was a bit annoyed. As I drove רב יעקב back home in my car, I complained how I have so little time to learn, because I must respond to every invitation I receive, be it from a student attending the מתיבתא or the child or grandchild of one of our supporters; and this devours all of my time and energy.

רב יעקב smiled and answered me (in Yiddish) in his sweet but firm way: “You know what they say in America? ‘*Der customer iz allemohl gerecht!*’ ‘The customer is always right!’ You must understand; they — the lay people, the masses, everyone — are the customers. We, the rabbis and teachers, are the salesmen! We are selling them ה'’s מצוות and תורה. We must do whatever it takes to make our customers satisfied and happy! We must participate in all of their שמחות. But never forget Who we are really working for. We are not really working for our customers; we are working for the Almighty, Himself, whose תורה we teach! What a זכות! What a privilege! What endless opportunities for ה' קידוש!

A frequent theme of רב יעקב’s convention talks was the special responsibility of creating כבוד שמים in all that we do. So great is the merit of ה' קידוש that even where it results from improper motives it elicits a divine reward. For example, because a ה' קידוש resulted when ה' thwarted the plans of המן, סיסרא, and פנחב, they were rewarded with descendants who were great תורה scholars (גייטן נוב).

רב יעקב once told ר' שלמה יעקבסון, who was considering establishing a kollel in Denmark but was concerned about removing his children from the intense תורה environment of ירושלים, “If the descendants of המן, whose intentions were all evil, were תורה scholars because of the ה' קידוש that he brought about, how much more so can we expect the children of those whose every intention is for a ה' קידוש, to grow to be תורה scholars.

-Reb Yaakov BY R' YONASON ROSENBLUM

The above story also assures us that one needn't worry that by helping and bringing others closer to ה' that he will sacrifice his own development and closeness to ה'. The הפן חיים זצ"ל explains that ה' will help him to get closer to Him and develop his strengths in a much shorter time. It is for this reason that it was אברהם אבינו who was so beloved to ה'. אברהם was not only concerned with his own personal growth and development, but brought others close to ה'.<sup>6</sup>

On the verse “קדושים יהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם” (ויקרא יטב) the כתב סופר explains that one might think that emulating ה' and being separate and holy would mean to separate oneself from others. However, we see that even though ה' is separate and holy, He is מעורב עם הבריות—He is involved, so to speak, with His creations. He desires that we care about our fellow Jews and guide them to serve ה'.<sup>7</sup>

The מדרש tells us that Jewish children are the living splendor of ארץ ישראל. On a trip to ארץ ישראל in the 1950's, רב ועליג עפשטיין זצ"ל, the revered ראש הישיבה of Yeshivah Shaar Hatorah of Queens, took his young son קלמן (the current בריסקער רב) for a visit to the home of the ראש הישיבה.

The רב turned to רב ועליג and said, “Take him to עין חיים and let him see the תורה children learning תורה and their רבנים teaching them. That is the *shain'keit*, the splendor, of

“...ארץ ישראל”

-SHUVU PARLOR MEETING, JULY 1995—*Jewels from the Crown* / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU

## ■ ACTIVITY.

As religious Jews, we meet other non-religious Jews in many situations. We might see them at the local kosher store, at a שמחה or a dinner, or even in our own neighborhoods. Sometimes a non-religious Jew runs the dry cleaner that we frequent or comes to service a broken appliance in our homes.

Although we might initially be embarrassed to try and influence him to keep תורה ומצוות, if we keep in mind that we may have the merit to save his נשמה, we will be less hesitant to do so.

Sometimes it is through our actions alone that another Jew might be influenced. Think of scenarios in which a Jew who sees us acting in the right way might be influenced. Create a scene in which a non-religious Jew who witnesses your actions will be influenced to keep תורה ומצוות.

- A Jew who works with you in the same office
- A Jewish store owner who owns the store where you buy food
- A Jewish cashier who mans the cash register where you are making a purchase
- A Jewish teacher who teaches secular subjects
- A non-religious Jew who comes to a class that you are giving
- A non-religious Jew who comes to your home for שבת

or:

- How you might influence others if you were the head of an important Jewish organization
- One might also consider a time that he was influenced to become stronger in his own observance

### ■ LIFE LESSON.

Self-assessment is sometimes difficult for younger students. However, it is motivating for students to hear how their classmates assess their talents and strengths. Print a list of the names of students in the class and give them out to each of the students. Pair the students off and have each one list what they feel are the prominent skills of their classmates and how they could use these skills to bring other Jews closer to תורה ומצות.

Once they have been given time to write their ideas, the teacher should allow students to present their ideas. (The teacher should make sure that none of the students are averse to having their names and skills read aloud. If this is the case, the teacher could devise a method of having the students write their ideas and letting each student see only the responses that were written for him or her.)

YAAKOV INFLUENCES DAVID TO BECOME  
שומר תורה ומצות.

DAVID MARRIES AND  
BUILDS A JEWISH HOME.

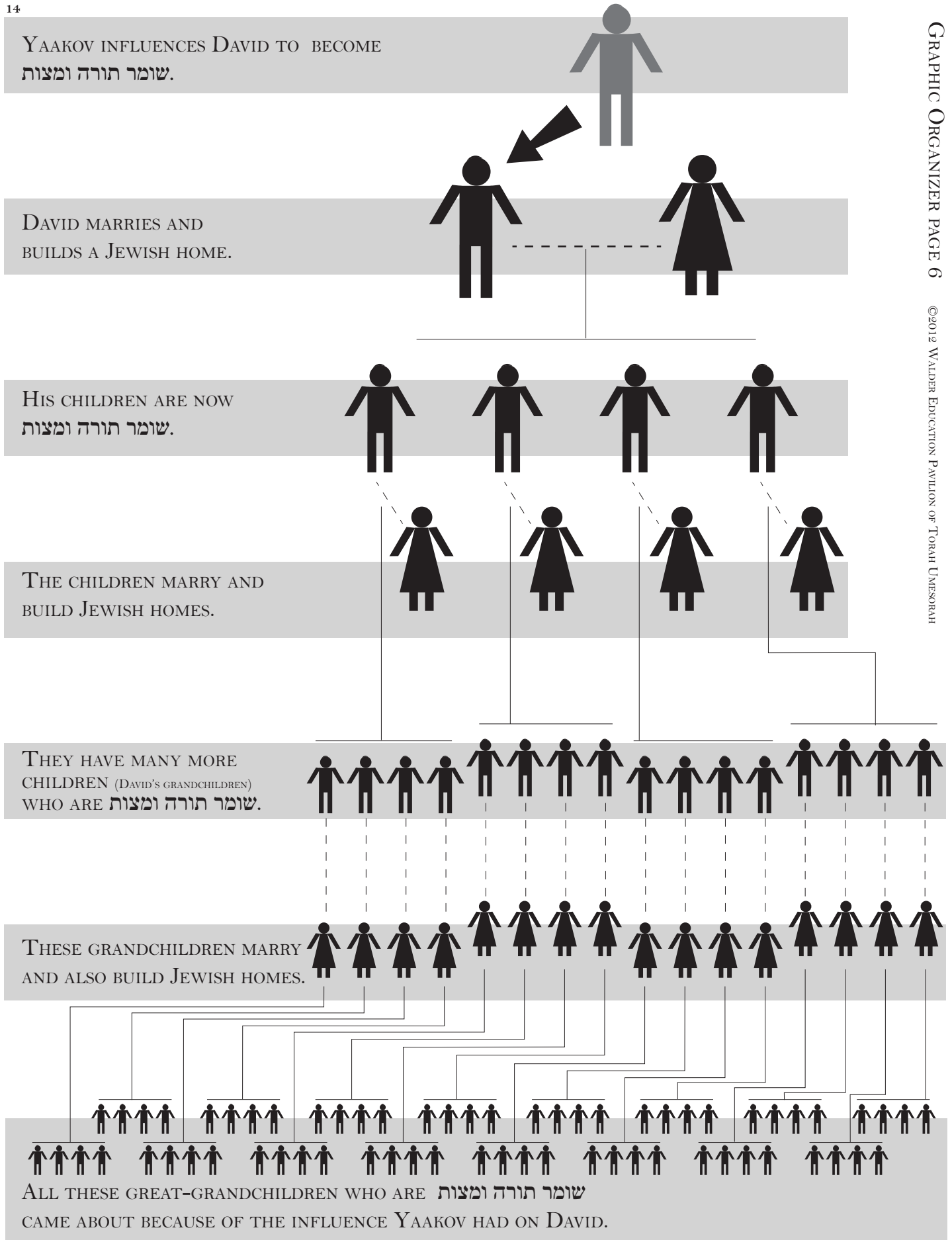
HIS CHILDREN ARE NOW  
שומר תורה ומצות.

THE CHILDREN MARRY AND  
BUILD JEWISH HOMES.

THEY HAVE MANY MORE  
CHILDREN (DAVID'S GRANDCHILDREN)  
WHO ARE שומר תורה ומצות.

THESE GRANDCHILDREN MARRY  
AND ALSO BUILD JEWISH HOMES.

ALL THESE GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN WHO ARE שומר תורה ומצות  
CAME ABOUT BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENCE YAAKOV HAD ON DAVID.



## SOURCES

(1) ברור הוא שמצות קידוש ה' הוא בין לישראלים בין לגוים, וא"כ למה מצינן שפעמים יש חיוב למסור נפשו לקדש שמו רק לפני עשרה ישראלים כדכתיב ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל, הא גם לגוים יש ענין לקדש שמו? וראיתי במשך חכמה דבר נורא, שהטעם הוא כדי ללמד את כולם איך להעשות קדושים, כדי שגם הם יהיו ממקדשי ה'!! דהיינו אם הוא גורם שאינו יהודי יאמין בה', הרי הוא מוכה אדם אחד להיות מאמין בה', ובשביל זה פעמים אין עדין חיוב למסור נפש. אבל אם הוא גורם ליהודי לחזור בתשובה ולהיות ממקדשי ה', בזה הוא הופך אותו להיות צלם אלקים מעולה ולהיות תחת הנהגת השגחה פרטית, ועכשיו יהיה ביכולתו לפרסם כבוד ה' יותר ויותר, ובשביל זה צריך למסור נפש. (ספר מקדשי שמך)

(2) הג"ר שלמה וולבה מביא מחובות הלככות (שער הבטחון פ"ג) על ענין זה של קירוב הבריות לתורה: "גמול העולם הבא אין אדם ראוי לו במעשהו הטוב בלבד, אך יהיה ראוי מן האלקים בשני דברים אחר המעשה הטוב: האחד שיורה בני האדם עבודת הבורא ויתעלה וינהיגם לעשות הטוב ... וכאשר יתקבץ למשתדל גמול הצדקתו אל גמול צדקתו, וגמול אמונתו לבו וסבלו, יהיה ראוי לגמול העוה"ב אצל הבורא".

ובשער אהבת ה' (פ"ו) כתב: "אפילו אם יהיה מגיע אל התכלית הרחוקה בתיקון נפשו לאלקים, ואילו היה קרוב למלאכים במדותם הטובות ומנהיגים המשוכחים והשתדלותם בעבודת הבורא ואהבתם הזכה בו, אינה כזכויות מי שמורה בני אדם אל הדרך הטובה ומיישר הרשעים אל עבודת הבורא, שזכויותיו נכפלות בעבור זכויותם בכל הימים ובכל הזמנים ... מי שאין מתקן אלא נפשו בלבד תהיה זכותו מעטה, ומי שמתקן נפשו ונפשות רבות תכפל זכותו כפי זכויות כל מי שיתקן לאלקים".

עוד הביא הגר"ש וולבה מהזוהר בפרשת תרומה (דף קכ"ח ע"א) בתרגום ללשון הקודש: "הזכאי צריך לחפש רשע ולקנות אותו בתשלום שלם, כדי להעביר ממנו הטומאה להכניע הסטרא אחרא. ויעשה זה כדי שייחשב זה כאילו הוא ברא אותו, והוא השבח שלו שיתעלה על ידו כבוד הקב"ה - יותר מכל מעשה טוב אחר. והתעלות כבוד זה הוא יותר מכל, למה? מפני שהוא גורם להכניעת הסטרא אחרא ולהתעלות כבוד הקב"ה ... בא וראה, כל מי שאוחז ביד רשע ומשתדל אתו לעזוב הדרך הרעה - הוא מתעלה בשלש עליות שאדם אחר אינו מתעלה ככה: הוא גורם להכניע סטרא אחרא, גורם להתעלות ה' בכבודו, וגורם לקיים כל העולם בקיום שלו למעלה ולמטה. על אדם זה כתוב: "בריתי היתה אתו החיים והשלום". והוא זוכה לראות בנים לבניו, וזוכה בעוה"ז ובעוה"ב, וכל שלוחי מרת הדין אינם יכולים לדון אותו, לא בעוה"ז ולא בעוה"ב. ועל זה כתוב (תהילים קיב) "גבור בארץ יהיה זרעו דור ישרים יבורך הון ועושר בביתו וצדקתו עומדת לעד".

(3) הפז"ן חיים חומות הדת - אחו"ל כל מה שברא הקב"ה בעולמו לא בראו אלא לכבודו שנאמר "כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו וגו'" וכל הברואים שבעולם צריכין לתת כבוד לשמו וכדכתיב "הבו לה' משפחות עמים, הבו לה' כבוד ועז" ואחו"ל על עגלון מלך מואב כשאמר לו אהוד "דבר אלקים לי אליך" כתיב "ויקם מעל הכסא" שבזכות זה זכה אח"כ לכל הכבוד ע"ש בגמרא. ובפרט העם אשר בחר ה' לחלקו שנקראים אצלו בשם בנים, כדכתיב "בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם" בודאי צריכין להודו ליתן כבוד לשמו דהיינו לקבל עול מלכותו ית' עלינו באמת וללכת בדרכיו ולשמור חוקיו ומצוותיו ומשפטיו וגו' "שזה הכל בכלל כבוד השם כאשר אנו מחבבין את דרכיו ומצוותיו ומשפטיו ללכת בהם. והנה כאשר האדם נותן כבוד למלך הכבוד, הוא כבוד גדול גם לעצמו שזכה ליתן כבוד לאלקי השמים ואלקי הארץ אשר הוא מלך הכבוד סלה. והנה כמה האדם שמח וטוב לב כאשר בא מלך לאיזה עיר והוא נברר להיות ממקבלי פניו וליתן לו את כבודו הראוי לו. עאכ"ו צריך האדם להיות בשמחה עצומה כאשר זוכה לכבוד את הבורא עולמים אדון כל יצורי מעלה ומטה. ובפרט שזה הכבוד שנתן לו בחייו יזכר לו לעד ולנצח נצחים שזה האיש נתן כבוד לאלקי השמים ויותן לו כבודו הראוי לו עבור זה וכדכתיב "כי מכבדי אכבד" והנה הש"י שהוא מלך העולם מכנים אנו אותו בתפלתנו בשם אב, וכדכתיב "הלא הוא אביך קנך" וא"כ איך נוכל לחשוב כאשר בעוה"ה נתחלל כבודו ית' מיום אל יום ע"י הפרת תורתו ומצוותיו הלא אילו היו פוגעין לאדם בכבודו אביו בפניו או אפילו רק בכבוד אחד מבניו הלא לא היה מחשה, ולפידים יצאו מפיו על האיש המבזהו, ואיך נוכל לחשוב בבזיון אדון הכל ית' מלך עולמים אשר יצר נשמותינו והוא אבינו מעולם ועד עולם וכדכתיב "אם אב אני איה כבודי וגו'"

והנה כתיב בקרא "וירא כי אין איש וישתומם כי אין מפניו וגו'" ואחו"ל ע"ז שמרמו על מה שנשבעה ארון ה' בשדה פלשתים ולבסוף כבדה מאוד יד אלקים עליהם עד שהוכרחו לשלחו אל מקומו שאמר הקב"ה אילו תרגולת של אחת מכם היתה בורחת, כמה מבואות היה מחור אחריה, וארון בריתי בשדה פלשתים ואינם חוששים וגו' ואף אנו נאמר בעניינינו אילו היה נולד איזה דבר בעיר שע"ז היה מתקלקל כל עסקו, כמה מצדקי היה עושה כדי להפריע הדבר ההוא. וכן בענין זה כאשר אנו רואין בעוה"ה שרבו המתפרצים להפריע דת קדשינו שהיא חיי נפשנו לעד ולנצח נצחים ע"י התפשטות ספרי הצנונים בכל עבר ופנה, חל החיוב עכ"פ עלינו לחזק דת קדשינו בכל עיר ועיר ע"י הרבצת התורה הן לבעה"ב והן לנערים והן להמון כאשר נבאר אי"ה לקמן. אבל כשאין אנו עושין כן ואנו מחשין מזה נראה שאין אנו חוששין לכבודו ח"ו וכדי בזיון, וכענין זה מצינו גבי מעשה דקרח שרצתה השמש שלא לזרוח עד שיעשו דין בשביל בן עמרם אמר הקב"ה לכבודי לא מדחתם ולכבוד בוי"ד מדחתם ע"ש".

(4) הפז"ן חיים חומות הדת - והנה להקים דת התורה תלויה לכל אחד במה שחננו ה' וכמו דכתיב "כבוד את ה' מהונך" ואחו"ל אל תקרי מהונך אלא מהונך דהיינו בכל מה שחינך, יש מי שחננו ה' בעושר רב ויש בידו להקים ישיבות ובתי ת"ת, אין לך הקמת הדת יותר מזה ונבאר הדברים לקמן בפרקים הבאים אי"ה וכן מי שחננו ה' בפיו לדרוש ברכים אודות זה או שאר ענינים עקרים הנוגעים לעצם שמירת הדת כל זה בכלל הקמת הדת הוא. וכן לעמוד בפרץ נגד הדברים הגורמים להריסת הדת ח"ו. המתעסק בכל



## ■ SOURCES (CONT.)

ענינים כיוצא בו הוא בכלל ברוך.

(5) [מספר חומת הדת של הפין חיים מאמר שני]

הנה ידוע שבעת שקבלנו התורה מאת ה', לא רק על עצמו בלבד קיבל כל אחד לקיים, כי אם כל מה שיהיה ביכולתו לחזק את קיום התורה אצל שאר בני ישראל גם כן התחייב כל אחד, ונעשינו כולנו ערבים זה לזה, וכמו דכתיב הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת, וכמו שפירש"י שם דהיינו שנעשו ערבים זה לזה, ולכך הדין שכל אחד מישראל מוציא את חבריו בקיום המצות אף שיצא הוא כבר כגון קידוש ותקיעת שופר וכדומה [וכמו שכתב הרא"ש בברכות דף כ'] דאם יחסר לחבירו איזה מצוה כאילו חסר לו, וכן נמי שיפריש כל אחד את חבריו מאיסור לא תעשה, דאם לא יפרישו מהאיסור במקום שיש ביכולתו, יענש גם הוא: וזה הענין של קבלת הערבות, מלבד מה שקבלנו על עצמינו מלפנים בעת קבלת התורה, אנו שונים אותו גם כן בכל יום בעת שאנו מקבלים עלינו עול המצות [בפרשה שניה של ק"ש דכתיב בה ושמתם את דברי אלה על לבבכם וגו' וכמו שאחז"ל בברכות י"ג ע"א] ואנו מפרטים אחר כך בברכת אמת ויציב שהקבלה היא על עצמו ובניו ועל כל כלל ישראל, וזהו מה שאנו אומרים ודבריו חיים וקיימים וכו' על אבותינו ועלינו על בנינו ועל דורותינו ועל כל דורות זרע ישראל עבדיך וכו' חק לא יעבור:

ועתה נתבונן בעצמינו, הלא ידוע שכשראובן ערב בעד שמעון על כמה מאות רובל, וכל שכן אם ערב בעדו על כמה אלפים, ורואה ששמעון רוצה לקחת איזה עסק, והוא מכיר מכבר את העסק ההוא כי רע ומר הוא, שעל ידי זה יפסיד כל מעותיו, כמה מההשתדלות היה עושה ראובן למונעו מן העסק ההוא, בעבור ידיעתו והכרתו היטב שעל ידי זה יחזור כל החוב עליו. וכן נמי בעניננו, צריך האדם לדעת, דאם יכול למנוע את חבריו מאיזה עון על ידי הוכחה וכדומה, או את אנשי עירו, והוא מתעצל מזה, יתפש לעתיד לבא באותו עון, וכמו שאמרנו חז"ל כל מי שיש בידו למחות באנשי ביתו ואינו מוחה נתפס על עון אנשי ביתו, באנשי עירו ואינו מוחה נתפס על עון אנשי עירו, לכל העולם כולו ואינו מוחה נתפס על כל העולם כולו. ואיתא בויקרא רבה, שה פזרה ישראל, מה דרכו של שה לוקה באחד מאיבריו וכולם מרגישים [ר"ל שדרך השה הוא שכל העדר מתחברים ביחד, וכששה אחת לוקה ברגליה וכדומה והיא עומדת, כולם יעמדו לפי שעה] אף ישראל אחד חוטא וכולם נענשים. והנה אנו רואים בעו"ה שקיום הדת מתמוטט מדי יום ויום, ואם לא נראה לחזקה מי יודע מה יהיה יכול להוליד ח"ו כעבור שנים, כי כל בית ישראל נמשלו לחרם, וכדכתיב [ישע"ה ה' ז'] כי חרם ה' בית ישראל, וכשגדרה נפרצה מעט, אם לא נראה לתקנה, הפירצה הולכת ומתרחבת ועל ידי זה יכלה כל החרם לבסוף, ואפילו אם לא יופקר במשך הזמן רק איסור אחד של תורה, גם כן רע ומר הוא, וכל שכן אם יגיע הדבר ח"ו לידי חייבי כריתות ומיתות בית דין, אוי ואבוי יהיה כי יפקוד הש"י העון על כולנו:

אל יתפאר האדם בנפשו לומר כי ישיב לפני ה', לא היה בי כח למנוע אותם מן האיסורים. אבל הלא ידוע מ כמה פסוקים ומאמרי חז"ל כי חפצי שמים צריכים להחשב בעיני אדם על כל פנים כחפצי עצמו, ובחפצי עצמו ידוע שאפילו כשהעסק הולך בענין רע, אף על פי כן אינו מתיאש ממנו, ותמיד חושב עצות איך לשפרו, וגם שואל מאחרים הסוחרים הגדולים איזו עצה ותחבולה לזה, והקב"ה ממציא לו עצה, ומצוי הדבר שלבסוף מרויח מן העסק. ואף בזה, אילו היה שקול בעיני האדם רצון הקב"ה כרצונו, היה מחפש עצות ותחבולות איך להקים הדת שלא תתמוטט, וכדאי היה הקב"ה ממציא לנו עצה וגם עזר גדול מאתו יתברך לזה [וזהו שאמר הכתוב בכל דרכיך דעה וגו', רוצה לומר באותן הדרכים שהוא מתנהג בעניני עצמו צריך להתנהג בעניני שמים]. אבל בעו"ה אין אנו עושים כן בעניני שמים, ותיכף כשהאדם רואה לפום רהיטא שאין לו עצה לזה, תיכף הוא מתיאש מזה ופותר עצמו מן הדין, אבל לא בשביל שהוא פותר עצמו למטה יפטר למעלה. לך נא ראה מה שאמרנו חז"ל (שבת נח) על הפסוק והתית תו על מצחות האנשים הנאנחים והנאנקים, דהיינו שהקב"ה צוה למלאך שירשום על הצדיקים תו, לרמז תו של תחיה, ולבסוף כתיב שציוהו להתחיל העונש מאנשים הקדושים, כי מדת הדין עלתה לפניו לומר מה נשתנו אלו מאלו, וענה הקב"ה אלו צדיקים גמורים ואלו רשעים גמורים, ושאלה מדת הדין היה להם למחות, וענה הקב"ה גלוי לפני שלא יקבלום, ושאלה מדת הדין אם לפניך גלוי לפניו מי גלוי, מיד יצא הדין לחייב את כולם:

ובמדרש איתא ששאלה מדת הדין, מי מהם נהרג עבורי, מי מהם נפצע מוחו עבורי. מכל זה נובל להתבונן עד כמה גדול החיוב על כל אחד מישראל לחפש עצות ותחבולות, ולהתרוצות על כל פנים אף להתבונן, ואך למנוע עון ופשע מישראל:

ודע עוד, דמלבד שיש עליו חטא על שלא מיהא בחבירו כי כל ישראל הם כאיש אחד, וחטא של חבריו פוגם גם בנשמתו. עוד יש עליו דין חמור לעתיד, כשחבירו החוטא נענש ומת בעונו, גם הוא ידרש על דמו, וכדאיתא בתנא דבי אליהו כל מי שסיפק בידו למחות ולא מיהא ולהחזיר את ישראל למוטב ואינו מחזיר, כל הדמים הנשפכים בישראל אינם אלא על ידו, שנאמר ואתה בן אדם צופה נתתיך לבית ישראל ושמת מפני דבר והזהרת אותם ממני באמרי לרשע מות תמות ולא הזהרתו וגו' הוא רשע בעונו ימות ודמו מידך אבקש עכ"ל, מכל זה יתבונן האיש הנלכב גדול החיוב בענין זה:

(6) יתברך היצור וישתבח הבורא, אשר בחר באומה נבחרה אוהבי מצותיו ושומרי תורתו, יעקב בחר לו י"ה ישראל לסגולתו, בני ישראל עם קרוב, זרע אברהם אוהבו, כדכתיב [ישע"ה מ"א] "ועתה ישראל עבדי יעקב אשר בחרתיך זרע אברהם אוהבי" ולמה זה חיבה יתרה נודעת לאברהם אע"ה משאר אבות העולם, שקרא אותו המקום בשם אוהבו?



כירור ענין זה נודע לנו ממאמר השי"ת בראשית י"ח: "כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה' וגו'" "ידעתיו" פי' רש"י לשון חבה, הורה בזה כי נפלאות אהבת ה' לאברהם יותר מכל מעשה הטוב וזכות הנפש אשר היה לו לעצמו, כי באמת גם לפניו היו יחיד סגולה אשר ידעו את ה' ודעת דרכיו יחפצו ובאהבתו ישנו תמיד. מי לנו גדול מחנוך אשר מעוצם תשוקתו ודביקותו בה' נתפרדה החבילה חברת ארבע היסודות, חדל מהיות אדם ונתעלה להיות כאחד מצבא מרום העומדים את פני המלך לשרתו, "ואיננו כי לקח אותו אלקים" ולא מצינו באברהם אע"ה שנודרך עפרוריותו כל כך. אך לא מצד פחיתות וחסרון נפשו לא הגיע אל המעלה הזו, לא, כי אם אברהם אבינו ע"ה הי' עושה כאשר עשה חנוך להתבודד עצמו מחברת בני אדם התעלה גם הוא להיות ממלאכי אל, ואשר לא עשה כן, הוא כי התבונן בחכמתו כי לא באלה חפץ ה' שישלים האדם את נפשו לכד, ואת אנשי דורו ישאיר אחריו תרבות אנשים הטאים ומכעיסי ה', כמקרה אשר קרה לדורו של חנוך ודור המבול, הנסיון הזה לימד אותו כי טוב לאדם למעט בהשלמת נפשו, למען רבות כבוד ה' למעט את מורדיו ולהרבות עבדיו ויודעיו, כי מה יתן ומה יוסיף האדם אם יוסיף מלאך אחד על אלפי רבבות מלאכי מעלה, הלא ה' בורא וממציא כהנה וכהנה חדשים לבקרים, ואם כה יעשו יחיד סגולה בכל דור ודור, ימצא אחד מני אלף קדש לה' ורוב העולם מקולקל, הארץ תשם מרעית וישוביה וחפץ הבריאה תשארה מעל...

ועל זה הזהירנו השי"ת "ולמדתם אל בניכם" "ואת בניהם ילמדון", וכדומה מצות התוכחה "הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך", כל אלו המצוות מורים לנו כי לא תושלם חפץ הבריאה אם ישלים האדם את נפשו לכד ולא ישלים את נפשו זולתו. והזהירו באבות "העמידו תלמידים הרבה", גם אהרן נתפאר במדה זו "אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה"

והאוחז במדה זו מראה אהבתו אל ה' ביתר שאת וביתר עז, כי מדרך אוהב את המלך להתאמץ

ולשתדל בכל האפשר להכניס בני אדם תחת עול מלכותו, ולהרבות לו עבדים כיד המלך, ויען כי זכה אברהם אבינו ע"ה למדה זו טרם ציוה ה' עליו, רק משכלו ומדעתו עמד בראש כל חוצות, בנה מזבחות וקרא בשם ה', העמיד תלמידים הרבה, את הנפש אשר עשה בחרן, לכן לו יאות להקרא אוהבו של המלך ית"ש, זרע אברהם אוהבי, וכנגמול נפשו השיב לו ה' וחלף אהבתו אל ה' היה אהבת ה' אליו, וזהו שהודיענו ית"ש באמרו "כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת אחריו ושמרו דרך ה'..."

אם אמר יאמר עבד העברי חשקה נפשי בה' וחפץ אני להתקרב אליו ואיך אעשה זאת למעט בלימודי ומשכלות שלימות נפשי כדי להשלים נפש חבירי? התשובה אליו דברי חז"ל: הרבה למדתי מרבתי ויותר מחבירי ומתלמידי יותר מכולם - היפלא מה' דבר למלאות לך שלימות נפשך מה שהחסרת לכבוד שמו - אתה עשה את אשר צווך לעשות ללמוד דעת את העם, וה' יעשה את שלום, עשה רצונו כרצונך והוא יעשה רצונך כרצונו למלאות נפשך מידיעת השלימות, ויספיק לך זמן המועט להשיג השגות רבות ונשגבות עוד יותר מכדי יכולת שכלך, ועל זה וכיוצא בזה אמרו חז"ל אעפ"י שנמלה הנבואה מן הנביאים מן החכמים לא נמלה, כוונתם כי סוד הליראיו לגלות להם מצפוני ספוני תורתו כרצונם וחפצם ותשוקתם אל ה', ויאר לנו דברים גבוהים ורמים אף מה שלא יגיע אלינו לפי קוצר שכלינו.

(7) כתב סופר בפרשת קדושים: "קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם", במדרש - כשם שאני פרוש אף אתם, כשם שאני קדוש כך אתם, כי קדוש אני. ומפרש כי יש פורש שפורש עצמו מבני אדם ומשלים נפשו ואינו מביט באחרים. ואין בזה חפץ ה', כי אם שישתדל לטובת בני אדם להיטיב להם, וגם להדריכם לעבודת ה'. והנה הקב"ה מביט ומשגיח בתחתונים להיטיב להם, ורצה לזכותם, לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות. וזהו דכתיב "קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות", ומכל מקום "מלא כל הארץ כבודו". וכן ידמה יציר ליוצרו, שיהיה קדוש בעצמו, אבל מכל מקום יהיה מעורב בין הבריות כדי לזכות הרבים. וזהו כוונת המדרש להיות קדוש כמו הקב"ה, וזהו כוונת הפסוק: "קדושים תהיו", על איזה דרך - "כי קדוש אני", כמו שאני קדוש ובכל זאת "ה' אלקיכם", נקרא אלקינו בשביל שהשגחתו פרמית עלינו, כן תהיו קדושים."

## Lesson 12.

### ■ LOVING YOUR FELLOW JEW AS YOURSELF; GIVING REBUKE

#### ■ INTRODUCTION.

Although we would like to believe that it is possible to change another's behavior through criticism, we only truly affect another through love. Only if a person believes that someone likes and cares for him, will he trust his advice.

The מצוה of הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך can only be achieved with ואהבת לרעך כמוך as a prerequisite. Criticism or rebuke will only be effective if it comes from a place of genuine love. A father gives rebuke without showing anger or shaming his child. So too, we should always strive to maintain the self-respect of the person that we must rebuke. If one believes that his criticism will not be accepted, he is absolved from the מצוה.

A sense of belonging is created when one feels part of something greater than himself, such as a family or community. A person is motivated by those things that motivate the group with which he identifies. If the group is held together by a strong bond of love, it will protect its members from falling and being negatively influenced by others, and it will encourage its members to live up to the standards of the group.

It is also a מצוה to love גרים who have become a part of כלל ישראל. Initially, we discourage converts to be sure that their intentions are pure. However, once we are sure that their intentions are לשם שמים, we are obligated to love them.

#### ■ OBJECTIVES.

Students will:

- Differentiate between rebuke that will be accepted or rejected by the recipient.
- Model appropriate ways to address a lack in מצוה observance through role playing.

#### ■ ANTICIPATORY SET: INITIATING INTEREST.

The teacher should open a discussion with his students by asking them if they have ever received criticism that they have appreciated. Why or why not? In general, people do not enjoy hearing criticism, because it feels like a judgment. In order for a person to accept criticism, it must be offered with the benefit of the person in mind. Many times criticism is not presented in this way and is then rejected by the recipient. In order to be received favorably, it must be presented with love and caring.

#### ■ DEVELOPMENT.

The אהרן in משנה אבות tells us to be like the students of אהרן who loved peace, loved all Jews and brought them closer to תורה. The רמב"ם explains that אהרן would greet each person and become endeared to him. The person

## ואהבת לרעך כמוך והוכח תוכיח

would feel that אהרן respected and thought highly of him. He or she would be embarrassed to sin, not wanting to lose favor in אהרן's eyes. "If אהרן thinks so highly of me, then I must be able to live up to his expectations and be capable of so much more." His love was the ingredient that brought others closer to תורה.<sup>1</sup>

The תפארת ישראל suggests that when one gives rebuke he must be sure to protect the person's self-respect and not attack his pride. Rebuke must not be given in anger but gently, with encouragement, as a father to a son. A person will not accept advice from someone who hates him. He will only listen to a person that he feels loves and cares about him.<sup>2</sup>

### STORY #1—THE SOFTEST REBUKE

רב אריה לוי was known in ירושלים as the rabbi of the prisoners, because of the devoted care and loyalty he extended to the young Jewish inmates of the Russian Compound Prison, incarcerated during the British Mandate for their pre-state underground activities. One שבת morning, as רב אריה לוי was chatting as usual with the inmates of the prison in ירושלים during his regular weekly visit, one prisoner came over and told him that he had taken an oath never to smoke cigarettes again on the שבת. When רב אריה asked what had brought about this decision, the man said, "This morning when you came over to me to wish me good שבת, you took my hand and patted it as usual in your own gentle and affectionate way with that heartening smile on your face. Dear Rabbi, at that moment my other hand held a lighted cigarette hidden behind my back where you couldn't see it. I knew well enough that our religious law forbids smoking on the שבת, but it never meant anything to me. At that moment though, I wanted most intensely that you should know nothing of my burning cigarette. I felt as if it were giving me blisters all over my body. One thought burned in my heart, 'is it right that while the Rabbi is holding my hand and giving new life to my spirit, my other hand should hold a lighted cigarette in direct violation of the שבת?'"

Another time, רב אריה לוי was walking to the synagogue late one Friday afternoon, in the midst of the blazing summer heat. He noticed a long stream of customers lined up in front of a store that sold ice cream. Inside he could see the shopkeeper busy serving one person after another with no thought of closing. רב אריה stood still,

debating in his mind, "If I were that shopkeeper," he thought, "and all those people were in my store, could I withstand the temptation? Would I drive them all away and close up, because the שבת was approaching?" He was not at all certain of the answer... there and then he entered the ice cream store, put his streimel carefully on the chair and sat down calmly at a table. The shopkeeper noticed him, and rushed over a little startled. רב אריה asked, "What can I say to you? You are certainly facing a great temptation, nevertheless שבת is שבת." Not one word more did he say, but rose from his seat, put on his streimel and left the store. When he was a bit of a distance away, he turned around, looked back and saw the line of customers dissipating. The shopkeeper was closing his shutters and locking up.

Sometime later, the shopkeeper happened to meet the Rabbi. "Do you know?" he said, "Those few words of yours struck home to the depths of my heart. I realized that you knew and felt just what I was thinking and feeling, and yet you felt pain for the sake of the שבת. Then I thought in my heart, 'A Jew must not be made to suffer pain.' I overcame the temptation and sent those people away."

-A Tzaddik in Our Time BY SIMCHA RAZ

The אורחות צדיקים says that only when one loves and cares for another will he be able to bring him close to תורה. When a person acts with friendship and love towards his fellow, he will be beloved to him. Others will come to trust him and listen to him and ultimately become influenced by him to improve their actions. He will be respected and well-liked, and all who know him will wish to act and be like him.<sup>3</sup>

The רמב"ם explains that the מצוה of ואהבת לרעך כמוך is closely connected to the מצוה of הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך. It is natural for a person to be influenced by the people with whom he spends the most time. Therefore a person should ensure that he befriends and attaches himself to תלמידי חכמים so that he will become like them. All the more so, he should distance himself from those who are wicked.

He continues to explain the מצוה of loving one's fellow Jew and praising him as opposed to the עבירה of hating a fellow Jew. It is forbidden to hold hatred in one's heart; rather we are implored to speak and communicate our feelings, so that the hatred does not grow.

Rebuke should only be given privately so as not to embarrass another. The words should be spoken softly, and the person should understand that he is only being told these things for his own good so that he will achieve the merit of עולם הבא. A careful reading of the רמב"ם shows just how closely these מצוות are intertwined.<sup>4</sup>

רב פאם זצ"ל once shared a thought that he had heard more than sixty years earlier from רב וידעל סעמיאטסקי זצ"ל concerning Jewish children who have become estranged from their roots. The תורה relates: "משה said to him [ה'], 'What is that in your hand?' and he said, 'A staff.' He [ה'] said, 'Cast it to the ground,' and he [משה] cast it to the ground, and it became a snake. משה fled from it. ה' said to משה, 'Stretch out your hand and grasp its tail.' He stretched out his hand and grasped it tightly, and it became a staff in his hand." (שמות ד:ב-ד)

רב סעמיאטסקי then explained the verse in educational terms: If you see children whom you believe have no אמונה, and you decide that there is nothing to work with, you may choose to take these children and "throw them to the ground," declaring, "They have no faith! Let them go wherever they please." Then, they will become "poisonous snakes," something from which to flee. They will become שונאי הדת, haters of religion, haters of Chareidim, a phenomenon we sadly witness in today's secular Israeli camp. Then the verse describes an alternative. If instead of being repelled, you take hold of these children, then they will be transformed into a מטה אלקים, a staff of ה', much like משה's staff. That staff was the medium through which the world witnessed many awesome miracles. If you take the initiative and work with these estranged children, then you will see ניסים ונפלאות, souls which are storehouses of קדושה. -JEWELS FROM THE CROWN / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU

The רמב"ם in הלכות תשובה writes that we must appoint in every congregation a very wise, elderly, and G-d fearing person (from his youth), who is beloved to the congregation, who will be able to rebuke them and bring them closer to ה'.<sup>5</sup>

The חז"ל explains the statement of תפארת ישראל, "ולא הקפדן מלמד", that an intolerant person should not

be a teacher—a teacher has the obligation to have mercy on students who do not have knowledge of the material and those that have strayed to the wrong path. Through words of encouragement and love, he should bring them under the wings of the שכינה, so that they will recognize that he truly loves them and his advice is only for their good.<sup>6</sup>

## STORY #2—SEEDS PLANTED WITH LOVE

It is not always so easy to persuade parents to send their children to Shuvu. After all, they usually know very little about true *Yiddishkeit*, and what they do know has been distorted by the propaganda of the old "beloved Motherland." So when the Pavlovs agreed to send their girls to Shuvu Natzeret Illit, it was a victory indeed. It was a victory for the Pavlovs, their children, and for **בבל ישראל**.

But the victory looked as if it was slowly slipping away. Academic achievement is not the only emphasis of Shuvu; in fact, it is not its main emphasis at all. The slow but loving introduction to Judaism, the opening up to the beauty of our heritage, the sincerely caring staff, this, more than anything else, began to touch the hearts of the Pavlov girls, Anya and Clara. And soon, from their hearts, they desired to live more and more as true **בנות ישראל**. At first, their parents didn't mind. After all, the progress that Anya and Clara were making academically was impressive, and they seemed very happy. But then, like a slowly gathering storm cloud, Mr. Pavlov began to feel that **מצוה** observance was casting dark shadows on his children's lives as well as his own.

His wife felt less pressure to actively respond, but Mr. Pavlov became more and more determined. He argued that the girls could get just as good of an education in public school without all this religion. Many other children did well in the regular school system; why not their children? Why did they, and he, have to be so different? It was just an ordinary morning at the Shuvu School... the quiet hum of activity, the laughter of children at work and at play, the day to day administrative bustle of a school. And then, the knock at the door. "Come in," called Mrs. Tzipporah Ostry, the principal. In came Mr. Pavlov, a little nervously at first.

The principal's warm smile took him by surprise, and almost made him change his mind, but an iron-willed determination to give his children "the best that Israel has to offer" drove him on. "I've come about my daughters," he began. "At the beginning of next semester, they will be going to public school." Mrs. Ostry took a deep breath. This was not the first time that she had heard these words from parents, but usually they came with an introduction, a list of complaints or excuses. This time it was more like a quick spurt from a machine gun, and just as deadly.

With a silent plea for **סעייתא דשמיא**, the dedicated principal began, "But Mr. Pavlov, your daughters are doing so well. Anya is getting almost all A's, and Clara is at the top of her class..." "They can do just as well in public school and without disturbing our lives. No television on Saturday, special food, and who knows what will be next!" The shadow of defeat began to fill the tiny office. This was not just about two Jewish **נשמות** and their parents, but about generations and generations of Jews to come.

"But they are so happy here, and they have so many friends!" "So they will be happy in the new school, and in time they will make new friends," came the response. Mrs. Ostry felt the knot in her stomach tighten. Yes, she thought to herself, new friends, *goyim*, and boyfriends, too. But in the end, it is the parents who decide, and so, within a few short weeks, the Pavlov girls were gone.

The new semester is always a busy time, and, although Mrs. Ostry never forgot "her" girls, she almost lost her balance when, a few weeks into the term, Mr. Pavlov again walked into her office, this time with Anya and Clara in tow. "Good morning, Mr. Pavlov. Good morning, girls." Tzipporah Ostry's face broke into a big smile. "Please, sit down Mr. Pavlov. This is a surprise!" Within minutes the reason for the return was explained. "They went to the public school for only one day," the girls' father began, "but after that they just refused to go again. They said that here in Shuvu their teachers teach with love, and care about them. But there, it is just a job. They have been at home ever since then, until I had no choice but to bring them back to you."

Mrs. Ostry felt a slight dampness in her eyes, and reached for a tissue. Yes, it was true: good *חינוך*, full of genuine *אהבת ישראל*, can reach deep into the hearts and souls of our children.

-*Jewels from the Crown* / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU

During the times when *השגחה פרטית* was visible to everyone and there were constantly revealed miracles, those who went against *ה'*'s ways were looked upon very differently. Then it was clear that *צדיקים* would receive Divine intervention, and *ה'*'s presence was revealed, not hidden.

If after witnessing all of these things, a person went against *ה'*, he would be considered a true *רשע*, and it would be a *מצוה* to punish him, because his *המאים* would bring evil to the world. However, today, when *ה'* is hidden and the truth is not clear, using this same approach would not be of any benefit and would have the opposite effect. It would turn people away from *Yiddishkeit* instead of bringing them closer. Today, we will only succeed by using strong ropes of love, for only love will bring others closer to *Yiddishkeit*.<sup>7</sup>

The *מוסר* in *יבמות* tells us that just as it is a *מצוה* to give

to another when he will listen, it is also a *מצוה* not to say anything if one knows that the person will not listen. In *משלי* we are told, "Don't give *מוסר* to one who mocks, lest he will come to hate you. Rather give *מוסר* to a wise person, and he will love you."<sup>8</sup>

## תוכחה

*תוכחה* or rebuke is a concept that is often misunderstood. It should not be expressed with harshness but rather in a way that will penetrate the heart of the recipient and arouse him to change his ways. In order to give *תוכחה*, a person must be sure that his motivation is true love and concern for the other person and that this message is clearly conveyed to his friend. If this is not the case, it is not a *מצוה*.

## STORY #3—MY WALK THROUGH מאה שערים

After a long plane ride and all the feelings of regret I had for coming to Israel, I told myself, "Laleh, try to make the best of this trip, and if in two days you still don't want to be here, you can book a flight back home."

As the sun was setting that first night in Israel, we finally got to a house in *רמת אשקול*, where I and 23 other girls would be staying.

I woke up and was inspired to have a new attitude. I decided to approach the trip as a journalist, and make it my own Israel learning adventure. This frame of mind gave me the freedom to enjoy the journey of exploring my heritage in a fun, exciting environment. There was no pressure or obligation. It allowed me to open up, learn and understand.

Later that night, the girls and I decided to go to רחוב בן יהודה for a fun night out. בן יהודה is like the Hollywood of Israel. Since it was such a nice warm evening, we decided to walk there, ignoring our *madrichah's* warning not to walk through מאה שערים.

מאה שערים is one of the oldest neighborhoods in ירושלים, and is populated mainly by ultra-Orthodox, *Chareidi* Jews. I had heard rumors that if a woman walked down their streets wearing revealing clothing, she would be stoned.

So there we were, trucking down the streets of מאה שערים.

The religious people started shifting from our side of the street to the other. I started to feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. I felt totally out of place and became very defensive. I was just waiting for some religious man to make a comment about me, curse at us, or throw something at us. I was ready to fight back!

To my surprise, no one made a comment. No one threw rocks at us. In fact, hardly anyone even looked at us. I was shocked. My assumptions about how these Orthodox Jews would treat us were being proven wrong in front of my eyes.

Finally, one person did come up to us—an ultra-Orthodox woman in her 50's. She talked to us for a few minutes. "Shalom, girls," she said, "My name is Shoshana. I just want to let you know that you are all truly beautiful young women. You do not need to dress this way, because you have beautiful souls and if you cover up your physical body, your inner beauty will shine. Please, at the very least, respect our neighborhood."

Now these were not her exact words, but looking back, this was the main message she was attempting to convey to us that night.

But I was furious. "How rude of this woman to tell us how we should dress!"

"Why are you so angry?" one of my friends asked me.

"Why can't these people just leave us alone!" I screamed back. "I don't tell them how to live, and they shouldn't tell me how to live either!"

"Laleh, this woman was not attacking us," my good friend, Sola, said. "She was on our side. She was telling us how amazing we are. She said that we are G-d's children. She was sweet, and actually cared about us."

I calmed down and after a few moments of thinking to myself and examining my feelings, I realized why I was so angry. Deep in my heart, I knew Shoshana was right.

She was trying to show us how much she cared, and I was rejecting her. She was trying to make us feel that despite our level of religiosity (or lack thereof), we are still part of the Jewish family. But I was shutting her out. I was letting my past experiences and assumptions about religious Jews blind me.

I was pushing away the same things I had been searching for throughout my life: acceptance, understanding, and a sense of love and belonging with my fellow Jews.

If anyone was being rude, it was me. I know that when you step foot into another culture, the decent thing to do is to respect their way of life. A journalist is a master of this!



I would never walk into a Japanese family's home without taking off my shoes first. I would never say "no" to the offering of my Persian grandmother's delicious *ghormeh sabzi*, or *chai sheereeni*. I would avoid at all costs the chance of disrespecting their customs, values and norms. I would never be so inconsiderate, so why didn't I understand or accept that I am in an ultra-religious neighborhood, and the right thing to do was to cover up a little more in order to show respect?

I began to realize it was pathetic that my external, physical looks were the initial priority, not my personality, not my intelligence, not my values, not my soul.

The rest of the night I felt naked. I felt cheap. I promised myself that I would respect myself and dress only in clothing that I felt completely comfortable in. I wanted people to see me for my soul, which was the most beautiful part of me. Shoshana was right, and I was touched by her kind words of wisdom. Since then, I challenge myself every morning to dress more modestly and to let my beauty shine from within.

- ARTICLE FROM AISH.COM BY LALEH HAVERIM

In ביאור הלכה it says that one should only give תוכחה to someone to whom he is close. If you are not close to the other person, he may misunderstand your intentions and come to hate you. It is generally recommended not to give מוסר to someone who will not listen to the message and will be upset. The מוסר might cause him to move further away from מצות.<sup>9</sup>

רבי אלקנה בן עזריה comments that there are not many people who know how to accept מוסר. מוסר בן עזריה. מוסר answers that he would be surprised if there are those who

know how to give מוסר.<sup>10</sup>

"הוכח תוכיח את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו (ויקרא יט:יז) תורה The tells us "You shall surely correct your neighbor, but don't bear a sin because of him." It is forbidden to rebuke or correct another person if by doing so you will cause resentment. If correcting your neighbor will cause him to desecrate a מצוה, then it is better to remain quiet or find a more pleasant way to inspire him to change his ways. This is what the חפץ חיים זצ"ל did in the following true life example:

## STORY #4—BUILD ME UP

Once, a burly man who had served in the Russian army entered a Jewish inn and ordered a meal, which he ate in a most disgusting manner. The חפץ חיים זצ"ל happened to be a guest at that inn. He saw the man and approached him. "Is it true that you served in the Russian army?" he asked. "Yes," snorted the man. "Tell me," began the חפץ חיים זצ"ל, "how did you manage to keep your Jewish identity in those circumstances? And when you could have easily gone to any inn, you chose a Jewish one. You are an inspiration. Where did you find the strength?"

The soldier, clearly moved, replied, "It was so hard; they did everything to make us denounce *Tiddishkeit* and forget that we were Jews."

"It is a miracle that you made it through. Now you can begin to learn the תורה and מצות that you were deprived of all these years," said the חפץ חיים זצ"ל.

"But Rebbe, how can I do that?" the soldier, now sobbing, responded.

"It is still possible," said the חפץ חיים זצ"ל. "It is always possible. I can show you how." From that day on, the former soldier began a path to repentance, and later became an observant Jew.

-FROM THE BIOGRAPHER OF THE CHOFETZ CHAIM, RABBI M. M. YASHER



## ■ LIFE LESSON.

Ask the students what it was that the **הפן חיים זצ"ל** did to cause the man to be so receptive to his words. Students should recognize that it was not only the words that the **הפן חיים זצ"ל** used, but, even more so, the respect that he conveyed for this man's difficult plight. The **הפן חיים זצ"ל** had the man's welfare in mind and that was immediately apparent to the soldier.

How might one offer constructive criticism? We can learn from a famous businessman who made a living instructing others how to be successful:

- It is not productive to call attention to a person's mistake. Rather, one can speak about a mistake indirectly by saying something like, "I remember how hard it was for me to remember to... when I first started."
- Tell the person how you made a much worse mistake when you tried to do something similar.
- Rather than tell a person what they did wrong, tell him how you corrected a similar mistake or improved upon something that was not going well in your life.
- Allow the other person to save face without having to admit that they made a mistake.
- Encourage the person by making it seem that whatever he did wrong will be easy to correct.

In **נמרא סנהדרין**, we are told that one who does not try to perfect himself before he tries to perfect others, will not be viewed favorably, and others will not accept his rebuke.<sup>11</sup>

The **בית יוסף** explains that, in general, the **מידה** of arrogance should not be used, because it can affect the user in a negative way. One usually accomplishes much more through softness even when others come to mock him.<sup>12</sup>

## גרים LOVING

The **ספורנו** explains the seriousness of stealing from a **גר**, because doing so profanes that which is holy. A **גר** converts, because he sees the value of sojourning among

**כלל ישראל**. If someone then steals from him, it creates a **מועל בקדשים** and is in the same category of "profaning that which is holy."<sup>13</sup>

The **מדרש** explains that when **יתרו** came to **כלל ישראל** to convert, **ה'** told **משה** to go out to greet him, accompanied by the **שבעים וקנים**, according to great respect to **יתרו**. The **זוהר** explains that **יתרו**'s conversion brought about great **כבוד שמים**, because it showed that someone with the stature of a priest would leave behind his lifestyle for the merit of joining **כלל ישראל**. This created a great **קידוש ה'**.<sup>14</sup>

## ■ ACTIVITY.

I. Using role play, review what you have learned and act out appropriate ways to address the following situations:

- Your classmate eats without saying a **ברכה**
- Your friend is not dressed modestly
- Someone uses language that is not appropriate
- You see someone who is **מחלל שבת**

How would your reactions differ if this was a friend or a stranger?

Have you ever felt angry or hurt when a friend tried to correct you? Were you ever happy to oblige? What caused these differences?

II. Why should we have great respect for **גרים**? Why do we initially discourage **גרים**?

Why does treating people with **אהבה** bring them closer?

## ■ SOURCES.

(1) ובאבות (פ"א מ"ב): "הלל אומר, הוי מתלמידיו של אהרן, אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה. ועי' באבות דר' נתן: "כשהיה אהרן מהלך בדרך פגע בו באדם רשע ונתן לו שלום. למחר ביקש אותו האיש לעבור עבירה, אמר אוי לי, היאך אשא עיני אחר כך ואראה את אהרן, בושתי הימנו שנתן לי שלום. נמצא אותו האיש מונע עצמו מן העבירה". ובפירוש המשניות להרמב"ם שם כתב: "היה מתחיל לו שלום, והיה מתאהב אליו והיה מרבה לספר עמו, והיה האיש ההוא מתבייש בנפשו, ואומר אוי לי, אילו היה יודע אהרן צפון לבי ורוע מפעלי לא היה מתיר לעצמו להסתכל בי, כ"ש שידבר עמי. ואמנם אני אצלו בחזקת אדם כשר, לכן אני אאמת את דבריו ומחשבתו ואהיה חוזר למוטב, ונעשה מתלמידיו הלומדים ממנו.

(2) ובתפארת ישראל שם על מה שאמרו "אוהב את הבריות", כתב: "ותיטיב להם בגופניות וברוחניות, שכשתוכיחם תחוס על כבודם, לא בזעף ובקצף, כי אם בדברי ריצוי בחן וחסד כאב רחמן לבניו, כי רק על ידי זה תקרבם לתורה, דאין אדם שומע עצת שונאו, רק עצת אוהבו" [והוסיף שכתוב כאן "אוהב את הבריות", ולא כתיב "אדם", מלמד שהמשנה מדברת אפילו על עובד כוכבים, שתדבר עמם בנחת וכזה תקרבם לתורה]

(3) וכעין דברי התפא"י מצינו גם באורחות צדיקים, שרק דרך ה"אוהב את הבריות" אפשר "לקרבם לתורה". וז"ל האורחות צדיקים בשער האהבה: "תועלת גדולה למי שנוהג בחיבה ובריעות עם בני אדם. תועלת עולם הבא, מחמת שהוא נאהב לכל אז דבריו נשמעים, ותהיה יכולת בידו להוכיח בני אדם שייטיבו מעשיהם. וגם מתוך האהבה יעמוד בשלום עם הכל, ומתוך האהבה הוא שקט ושלם ופנוי ללמוד ולעשות מעשים טובים. וגם מתוך האהבה יעזרוהו ויעשה מלאכתו ויגנו בעדו, וימצא הרווחה יתירה לעבוד הבורא יתברך, עבודה שלימה. ומחמת האהבה הוא נושא חן בעיני כל רואיו, ומעשיו הטובים יהיו מקובלים לכל, וכל אחד יחמוד לעשות כמעשהו.

(4) והמעין היטב ברמב"ם הלכות דעות (פ"ו ה"א) יראה שהמצוה של ואהבת לרעך כמוך יש לה קשר ושייכות למצות הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך, שמה שהתורה הקפידה על האהבה הוא כדי שיהיה קשר של אהבה בין בני ישראל ויוכלו לקרב אחד את חברו לתורה, ולשמרם שלא ירחקו עצמם מדרך הישר ש"דרך ברייתו של אדם להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר רעיו וחביריו" ודבר זה אנו רואים ברור מכך שהרמב"ם כלל יחד את מצוות האהבה והלאוים של שנאה, יחד עם ההוכחה והזהרה ללכת בדרכי טוב ולא לעבור על המצוות.

וזה לשון הרמב"ם שם: "דרך ברייתו של אדם להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר רעיו וחביריו, ונוהג כמנהג אנשי מדינתו, לפיכך צריך אדם להתחבר לצדיקים ולישב אצל החכמים תמיד כדי שילמוד ממעשיהם, ויתרחק מן הרשעים ההולכים בחשך כדי שלא ילמוד ממעשיהם... ב מצות עשה להדבק בחכמים ותלמידיהם, כדי ללמוד ממעשיהם, כענין שנאמר ובו תדבק... ג מצוה על כל אדם לאהוב את כל אחד ואחד מישראל כגופו, שנאמר ואהבת לרעך כמוך, לפיכך צריך לספר בשבחם ולחוס על ממונו כאשר הוא חס על ממונו עצמו ורוצה בכבוד עצמו. והמתכבד בקלון חבירו אין לו חלק לעולם הבא... ה כל השונא אחד מישראל בלבו עובר בלא תעשה שנאמר לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך, ... ו כשיחטא איש לאיש לא ישטמנו וישתוק כמו שנאמר ברשעים ולא דבר אבשלום את אמנון מאומה למרע ועד טוב כי שנא אבשלום את אמנון, אלא מצוה עליו להודיעו ולומר לו למה עשית לי כך וכך ולמה חטאת לי בדבר פלוני, שנאמר הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך, ואם חזר ובקש ממנו למחול לו צריך למחול, ולא יהא המחול אכזרי שנאמר ויתפלל אברהם אל האלהים"

ומיד בהלכה ז' ממשיך הרמב"ם להלכות תוכחה: "הרואה חבירו שחטא או שהלך בדרך לא טובה, מצוה להחזירו למוטב ולהודיעו שהוא חוטא על עצמו במעשיו הרעים, שנאמר הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך המוכיח את חבירו, בין בדברים שבינו לביןו בין בדברים שבינו לבין המקום, צריך להוכיחו בינו לבין עצמו. וידבר לו בנחת ובלשון רכה, ויודיעו שאינו אומר לו אלא לטובתו להביאו לחיי העולם הבא. אם קיבל ממנו, מוטב, ואם לאו, יוכיחנו פעם שנייה ושלישית וכן תמיד חייב אדם להוכיחו עד שיכחו החוטא ויאמר לו איני שומע וכל שאפשר בידו למחות ואינו מוחה הוא נתפש בעון אלו, כיון שאפשר לו למחות בהם ה המוכיח את חבירו, תחילה לא ידבר לו קשות עד שיכלימו, שנאמר ולא תשא עליו חטא כך אמרו חכמים, יכול אתה מוכיחו ופנוי משתנות, ת"ל ולא תשא עליו חטא מכאן שאסור לאדם להכלים את ישראל, וכל שכן ברבים, אע"פ שהמכלים את חבירו אינו לוקה עליו, עון גדול הוא כך אמרו חכמים, המלכין פני חבירו ברבים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא לפיכך צריך אדם להזהר שלא לבייש חבירו ברבים בין קטן בין גדול, ולא יקרא לו בשם שהוא בוש ממנו, ולא יספר לפניו דבר שהוא בוש ממנו במה דברים אמורים, בדברים שבינו אדם לחבירו, אבל בדברי שמים אם לא חזר בו בסתר מכלימין אותו ברבים ומפרסמים חטאו ומחריפים אותו בפניו ומבזין ומקללין אותו עד שיחזור למוטב, כמו שעשו כל הנביאים בישראל ט מי שחטא עליו חבירו ולא רצה להוכיחו ולא לדבר לו כלום מפני שהיה החוטא הדיוט ביותר, או שהיתה דעתו משובשת, ומחל לו בלבו ולא שטמו ולא הוכיחו, הרי זו מדרת חסידות לא הקפידה תורה אלא על המשטמה."

ורואים להדיא איך ששור ודובר הרמב"ם את הלכות הוכחה עם הלכות אהבת ישראל כאחד, וכן מפליא לראות איך שכל חלקי המצוות האלו יש להם נגיעה זה בזה.

(5) כמו שכתב הרמב"ם בהלכות תשובה (פ"ד ה"ב) "וכן כל הנביאים הוכיחו לישראל עד שחזרו בתשובה, לפיכך צריך להעמיד בכל קהל וקהל מישראל חכם גדול וזקן וירא שמים מנעוריו ואהוב להם שיהא מוכיח לרבים ומחזיר בתשובה."

(6) התפארת ישראל על אבות (פ"ב מ"ה) במשנה "ולא הקפדן מלמד": "שחובת הרב לרחם על הבלתי יודעים ועל התועים שבתלמידיו, וחיכו ישא עלות הנלאים, ובדברי חן ואהבה יקרבם תחת כנפי השכינה, למען יכירו כי אוהבם אמיתי הוא, המיעצם רק לטובתם" ועיי' באבן שלמה פ"ו ס"ח וז"ל נמצאים שני מיני מוכיחים אחד שמוכיח בדברים קשים ומבזה אותם. על כן אין דברים מתקבלים אבל החכם בא בדברים טובים ונחומים ומקרבן לתורה כמו שאמרו באהרן הכהן ואף על פי כן הרשעים אינם נכנעים אלא לפי שעה וכן יש שמוכיח בדברים קשים ואינו אומר איך לתקן המעוות אבל החכם מורה דרך איך לתקן ולרפאות חולי הנפש.

(7) החזון איש (יו"ד סי' ב' אות ט"ז בסופו) בענין דין מורידין: "ונראה דאין דין מורידין אלא בזמן שהשגחתו גלויה, כמו בזמן שהיו נסים מצויין ומשמש בת קול, וצדיקי הדור תחת השגחה פרטית הנראה לעין כל, והכופרין אז הוא בנליזות מיוחדות בהטית היצר לתאוות והפקרות, ואז היה ביעור רשעים גדרו של עולם, שהכל ידעו כי הדרת הדור מביא פורעניות לעולם ומביא דבר וחורב ורעב בעולם אבל בזמן ההעלם שנכרתה האמונה מן דלת העם, אין במעשה הורדה גדר הפרצה אלא הוספת הפרצה, שיהיה בעיניהם כמעשה השחתה ואלמות ח"ו. וכיון שכל עצמנו לתקן, אין הדין נוהג בשעה שאין בו תיקון, ועלינו להחזירם בעבותות אהבה ולהעמידם בקרן אורה במה שידינו מנעת".

(8) יבמות סה: ואמר רבי אילעא משום ר' אלעזר בר' שמעון: כשם שמצוה על אדם לומר דבר הנשמע, כך מצוה על אדם שלא לומר דבר שאינו נשמע. רבי אבא אומר: חובה, שנאמר: (משלי ט') אל תוכח לין פן ישנאך הוכח לחכם ויאהבך.

(9) בביאור הלכה- אבל אם מפורש בתורה וכו' ודע דמסתברא דמה שפסק הרמ"א בדבר המפורש בתורה חייב למחות דוקא שהוא באקראי אבל אלו הפורקי עול לגמרי כגון מחלל שבת בפרהסיא או אוכל נבילות להכעיס כבר יצא מכלל עמיתך ואינו מחויב להוכיחו וכן איתא בתנא דא"ר פ"ח הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך ועמיתך שהוא אוהבך ושהוא עמך בתורה ומצות אתה חייב להוכיח אותו אבל לרשע שהוא שונאך אין אתה חייב להוכיח אותו והעתיק זה הגר"א בקיצור באדרת אליהו ע"ש ולענין אוכל נבילות לתיאבון או מחלל שבת שלא בפרהסיא יש לעיין בדבר: מוחין בידם. עיין בברכי יוסף שמצדד לומר בזה דבר חדש דעד כאן לא אמרין בדבר המפורש בתורה צריך למחות אף שיודע שלא יקבלום היינו רק כשידינו תקיפה על העוברים למחות בהם בחזקת היר אבל כשאין בידינו כח להפרישם אין מחויב להוכיחם כיון שיודע שלא יקבלום אכן מדברי הסמ"ק המובא במ"א משמע דבזה אף שאין נתפס בחטאם מ"מ יש עליו חוב מצד המ"ע דהוכחה: חייב להוכיחו. ובס"ח סימן תי"ג כתב דוקא איש את אחיו שלכו גם בו אבל אם היה איש אחר שאם יוכיחנו ישנאנו וינקום ממנו אין להוכיחו [מ"א בשמו]. וכ"כ בתנא דבי אליהו רבה הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך אוהבך וכו' אבל לרשע שהוא שונאך אין אתה חייב להוכיח.

(10) ערכין טז: - תניא, א"ר טרפון: (תמיהה) (מסורת הש"ס: [תמה]) אני אם יש בדור הזה שמקבל תוכחה, אם אמר לו טול קיסם מבין עיניך, אמר לו טול קורה מבין עיניך. אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: תמיהני אם יש בדור הזה שיודע להוכיח. ואמר רבי יוחנן בן גוריון: מעיד אני עלי שמים וארץ שהרבה פעמים לקה עקיבא על ידי, שהייתי קובל עליו לפני רבן (שמעון ברבי) (מסורת הש"ס: [גמליאל]) וכל שכן שהוספתי בו אהבה, לקיים מה שנאמר: (משלי ט') אל תוכח לין פן ישנאך הוכח לחכם ויאהבך.

(11) צריך לבדוק בעצמו קודם מוכיח אחרים וכמ"כ בסנהדרין יח. קשוט עצמך ואח"כ קשוט אחרים וכמו שמצינו בב"ב דף סז, דאם לא יתקן מעשי עצמו לא יקבל תוכחותיו.

(12) בשו"ע אורח חיים סי' א סע' א' כתב בהגה "ולא יתבייש מפני בני אדם המלעיגים עליו בעבודת השם יתברך" ובמשנה ברורה כתב בשם הבית יוסף "ועכ"פ לא יתקוטט עמהם מפני שמדת העזות מנוגה מאד ואין ראוי להשתמש ממנה כלל אפילו בעבודת השם יתברך כי יקנה קנין בנפשו להיות עז אפילו שלא במקום עבודתו ית'. ובביאור הלכה הוסיף "דע דהבית יוסף לא איירי כי אם במצוה שהוא עושה לעצמו ובני אדם מלעיגים עליו אז בוודאי אין לו לחוש כלל ללעגם ולא יתקוטט עמהם אבל אם הוא עומד במקום שיש אפיקורסים המתקוממים על התורה ורוצים לעשות איזה תקנות בעניני העיר ועל ידי זה יעבירו את העם מרצון ה', ופתח בשלום ולא נשמעו דבריו, כנגד זה לא דיבר הבית יוסף מאומה, ומצוה לשנאתם ולהתקוטט עמהם ולהפך עצתם בכל מה שיוכל.

(13) וכתב בספורנו: "כבר באה הקבלה שזה נאמר על גזל הגר בזמן הבית. כי אמנם הגזל אותו מחלל שם אלקיו בעיני הגר אשר בא לחסות תחת כנפיו, ולכן יקרא מועל בקודש וחייב אשם כמשפט כל מועל בו". והדברים מפליאים, שהמצער גר הרי הוא כמועל בקדשים!

(14) במדרש רבה שמות פרשה כז איתא ההנהגה הראויה עם גרים שבאים לשם שמים: "הקב"ה אמר לו צא "ויאמר אל משה", א"ל הקב"ה אני הוא שאמרת ודיה העולם, שנאמר (תהלים ג) אל אלהים ה' דבר ויקרא ארץ, אני הוא שאני מקרב אני הוא שאני מרחק, שנאמר (ירמיה כג) האלהי מקרוב אני נאם ה'. אני הוא שקרבתי ליתרו ולא רחקתיו. אדם זה שבא אצלי לא בא אלא לשם שמים ולא בא אלא להתגייר, אף אתה קרבהו אל תרחיקהו. מיד ויצא משה לקראת חותנו. אמרו, יצא משה יצא אהרן נדב ואביהוא ושבעים מזקי ישראל, וי"א אף ארון יצא עמהם, לכך נאמר כבוד חכמים ינחלו. [ועיין בבאר יוסף בפרשת יתרו דברים נפלאים, למה בא יתרו מחמת מלחמת עמלק, ולמה ביקש ממשה לכבדו? משום שראה את גודל הריפו של כבוד שמים הבא על ידי מלחמת עמלק, ורצה לחזק את הכבוד שמים, לפיכך בא בפרסום גדול, לפרסם שבא להתגייר אע"פ שהיה נשיא גדול ונכבד].

## Lesson 13.

### ■ KIDDUSH HASHEM THROUGH GIVING

#### ■ INTRODUCTION.

The entire world was created for the **חסד** of **חסד**. **חסד** is so powerful, because it makes such a deep impression on others. A recipient of **חסד** feels the genuine concern, respect, and care that the giver has for him. Modeling the **חסד** of **חסד** will create a tremendous **קידוש ה'** and develop a trust that cannot be easily broken. Treating others with kindness and caring for their physical needs will cause the recipients to entrust their spiritual needs to us as well.

Sincerity without ulterior motives will greatly influence others. **חז"ל** tell us: "דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב" "what comes from the heart is taken to heart."

#### ■ ANTICIPATORY SET: INITIATING INTEREST.

The famous **משנה** in **פרקי אבות** tells us **על שלושה דברים העולם נשען: על התורה, על העבודה, ועל גמילות חסדים (אבות א:ב)**. "The world stands on three pillars: on Torah, on prayer, and on acts of kindness."

Performing acts of **חסד** is a central theme of **תורה** life. It is so central that the **משנה** tells us that it is one of the three pillars that support the world.

The teacher should bring to the students' attention the picture at the end of this chapter depicting **חסד** as one of the supporting pillars of the world. The teacher should ask the students their opinion about why **חסד** is so essential to **תורה** life and then explain that the answer will become clear as we learn the following lesson.

#### ■ OBJECTIVES.

Students will:

- Define the central role of **חסד** in our **תורה** lifestyle.
- List ways in which they can do **חסד** in situations which are familiar to them.

#### ■ DEVELOPMENT.

The **פרישה** explains in his **ספר**, that **גמילות חסדים** is one of the three pillars which support the world, because through our performance of acts of **חסד**, the recipients will recognize that the **חסד** of **ה'** is also **חסד**. This brings great honor to **ה'**, which is the ultimate purpose of creation and the reason we are commanded to go in the ways of **ה'**.<sup>1</sup>

## מידת החסד

### STORY #1—NO ACTION GOES UNNOTICED

The renowned Lomza Yeshivah in פתח תקוה was one of the first yeshivos founded in ארץ ישראל in the style of the great yeshivos of Lithuania. The משגיח, spiritual guide of the yeshivah, was רב אליה דושניצר, a holy man whose piety was matched only by his humility.

This story began on ערב יום כיפור, the eve of the awesome Day of Atonement, when Jews all over the world are filled with genuine trepidation in anticipation of the judgment which is decreed in Heaven. Anxiety intensifies as one draws closer to sunset, when the יום כיפור service begins with the hallowed strains of כל נדרי.

Very late in the afternoon, an irreligious Jew was blissfully strolling down the street right in front of the Lomza Yeshivah, with a lit cigarette dangling from his lips. Striding past the yeshivah, he observed that the toilets were not inside the building proper; rather, they were in a separate facility outside. Additionally, he noticed a very distinguished looking old man, whose face was wreathed with a handsome white beard, acting strangely in the toilet cubicles. He was swiftly moving from one stall to another as if he was servicing them—although he certainly did not look like the janitor. The irreligious passerby was extremely curious what this old man was doing. He discarded his cigarette and approached the man to ask him why he was acting so peculiarly. The old man innocently explained his actions, “On יום כיפור a very large crowd of guests come to pray in the yeshivah for the entire 24 hour period. Understandably, there will be far more people than usual using the facilities, and there will be a necessity for a greater supply of toilet paper to care for all their needs. Therefore, I am cutting and preparing an extra large supply of paper to service the crowds.”

The irreligious Jew was shocked by this reply; “Is this really how much one Jew cares about his brethren? Especially at this moment, just a few minutes before the holiest day of the year begins, when everyone else is thinking about how to save their own souls?” This secular passerby further inquired and discovered that the old Jew he had set eyes upon, was none other than the world-renowned צדיק, רב אליה דושניצר, the Lomza משגיח.

This wayward Jew decided that if the תורה camp had such extraordinary people as this one man, then it was worthwhile getting closer to this group of people. The day after יום כיפור, the man came to the yeshivah and

רב אליה רושניצר took him under his wing. He accepted the Rav's guidance and, slowly but surely, adopted a תורה way of life. Eventually, this man's children studied at the Lomza Yeshivah and established fine תורה families of their own.

It is amazing to contemplate how one humble person can sanctify the Name of ה', and transform many generations of an entire family by performing so mundane an act as cutting up toilet paper!

-AS TOLD BY R' AVROHOM CHAIM FEUER

רש"י comments on the first ברכה of שמונה עשרה: Although we mention all three of the אבות, we end the ברכה with אבות רב אליה לופיאן זצ"ל. מן אברהם explains that all of the אבות disseminated ה' honor and brought others closer to Him, each in his own unique way. יעקב brought others closer through קדושה יצחק brought others closer to ה' through מסירת נפש, and אברהם brought people into his home and cared for their physical needs with חסד. It was only then that he taught them אמונה in ה'.

Ending the ברכה with מן אברהם emphasizes that we exert the most powerful influence on others when we care for their physical needs with חסד. When others are confident that we have their best interests at heart, they readily accept our spiritual guidance.<sup>2</sup>

A simple invitation for a שבת meal can have a profound influence on another.

## STORY #2—COMING HOME ON שבת

The Gorensteins immigrated from Vitavsak to ארץ ישראל when their daughter, Claudia, was only ten years old. They found themselves in a completely foreign country where they couldn't even speak the language. Living in חיפה, where they had been sent by the Israeli Ministry of Absorption, they had to start their life afresh in a totally new environment.

The Gorensteins' top priority was to learn Hebrew fluently, which would enable them to eventually integrate into Israeli society. After doing much research, Mr. and Mrs. Gorenstein finally decided to send their daughter to Shuvu's school, which was renowned for its strong ulpan program, while they themselves went to study in the school's affiliated ulpan program for adults.

Claudia's teachers were immediately drawn to their young student, who seemed to soak up each lesson avidly. Claudia had an unquenchable thirst for *Yiddishkeit*, and displayed a tremendous love for תורה and מצות. She was clearly learning a lot more than just the Hebrew language.

Claudia's fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Markowitz, took a special interest in her, and tried to reach out to her. It began with a friendly chat during lunch, which led to an invitation to come for a שבת פקודת שבת. Claudia was thrilled! Although she had heard so much about שבת from her teachers, she had never actually experienced an authentic שבת. She had never watched her mother light candles, nor heard her father make קידוש. All week long, Claudia waited for Friday to arrive so she could go to Mrs. Markowitz's house for the שבת meal.

On Friday afternoon, Mrs. Gorenstein dropped her daughter off at the Markowitz home. Claudia watched in awe as her teacher lit the שבת candles, and an aura of קדושה enveloped the home. She played with the younger children, and talked with her teacher as they waited for the men to return from shul. She hummed quietly while the men sang "שלום עליכם" and asked questions about the weekly פרשה. Claudia was clearly enjoying every minute.

Suddenly, towards the end of the meal, the tranquility of שבת was broken by the loud honking of a car horn. Realizing the time, Claudia turned red from embarrassment. She had been dreading this moment. Embarrassed in front of her teacher, she jumped up, donned her coat, bid the family farewell, and raced down the stairs to her waiting mother.

As Mrs. Markowitz went out to her front porch, she was overcome with regret. "Why did I ever invite her?" she chided herself, "Now Claudia will be מהלל שבת when she drives home with her mother!"

Mrs. Markowitz watched as the car proceeded to move forward. She was about to turn around to go back inside, when she noticed that the car was driving unusually slowly. That's when she caught sight of something that made her realize that all of her efforts had borne fruit.

Walking beside the car was the lone figure of a young girl, a girl who preferred to make the long trip home by foot, rather than desecrate the holy שבת. Gazing at Claudia in amazement and admiration, Mrs. Markowitz contemplated the strength of character and nobility of spirit of her young student, until she disappeared from view.

Claudia continued to make great strides in her *Yiddishkeit*. Upon graduating from elementary school, she wanted desperately to attend a religious high school. However, she met strong opposition from her parents, who were adamant that she attend a secular public high school (there were no Shuvu high schools as of yet). They finally compromised and agreed to send her to a state religious school. After just one day, Claudia realized that the religious standards of the school were not to her satisfaction. The normally mild-mannered young girl went on strike until her parents finally allowed her to enroll in a בית יעקב. Eventually, Claudia inspired the rest of her family to become בעלי תשובה. Her father underwent a ברית מילה, her mother *kashered* her kitchen, and her parents were remarried according to הלכה. Claudia went on to marry an outstanding young man who was learning in yeshivah. He now learns in a prestigious כולל in יעקב, while she, a devoted wife and mother, is an inspiration to everyone with whom she comes into contact.

-*Jewels from the Crown* / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU

Lasting influence does not come from a speech or giving מוסר רב דפסל, explains. Our message will only penetrate the heart of another and make a lasting impression if the recipient is assured that the giver is sincere and has no personal motive when giving the advice. When a person truly cares for another and his motives are selfless, he will

be successful in influencing others.

Many talented people who give inspiring speeches do not have influence on others, because the recipients sense that they have selfish motives and are therefore suspicious of their agendas.<sup>3</sup>

### STORY #3—NO DISTANCE IS TOO GREAT

In 1942, America had just entered World War II, and Seymour Lederman was stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic training. The small Jewish community in Biloxi arranged a פסח סדר for the Jewish soldiers. The rabbi thanked the local parson's wife, saying that the סדר could not have been arranged without her help. At the end of the סדר, Seymour also thanked her. She told him it was no bother and said, "I love Jews." "Many years ago," she explained, "I worked as an office manager for a hospital. The head doctor told me that there was a widowed Jewish woman



who had run up quite an unpaid bill. I told him that her husband had been wealthy and had surely provided for her.”

“When I went to speak to her, she revealed that the mounting medical bills had eaten up all her savings. She had no money and no hope. I remembered hearing of a prominent Jewish businessman in the region. I called him and gave him the details. We hung up. The next day the man arrived at the hospital. He found the woman and spoke to her with great kindness and respect. He paid her entire bill and told me to send the future bills to him. I was dumbstruck. This man traveled several hundred miles for the sake of a stranger, yet he took care of her like she was a queen. When I saw how Jews take care of each other, I knew that this was a truly special and blessed people. I love Jews.”

-FROM *ShulWeek* BY RABBI BORUCH LEDERMAN

## STORY #4— קידוש ה' THROUGH GIVING

Today I lost a friend, someone who was initially my adversary. הויה לאה בת פייוויל returned her soul to her maker. I miss her already. Our unlikely friendship began five years ago. We were preparing to move into a new home. Right away there was tension, and I had not yet even met my new neighbor. She kept calling the police and the building inspector to say our grass wasn't cut short enough or often enough, or maybe a soda can was left by the painters in the driveway. Every day was a new summons and a new nightmare. Was this how everyone was welcomed to the neighborhood?

When moving day came, my new next-door-neighbor, a woman in her mid-70's introduced herself. “Hi I'm your neighbor, we are not happy with the Orthodox taking over the block. We are Reform Jews. Don't even think of trying to influence us!” She left me with my jaw still on the floor. “Hi... I guess.”

That was just the beginning. The police were called regularly if a ball rolled into her yard, so the kids had to play on the street. Well wouldn't you know it, there is a long lost, rarely enforced ordinance that ball playing on the street is not allowed in my New Jersey town. Guess who made sure it was enforced now?

We lived in constant fear of this woman, never knowing what tomorrow would bring. My husband, who is a lot nicer and more level headed than me, came up with a strategy for defense: *Let's overwhelm her with kindness!*

*You're kidding,* I thought.

“Send her שבת flowers,” my husband suggested, “but have them delivered, because if she catches you on her property...”

Anyhow, we sent her משלה מנות for פורים, invited her to our daughter's wedding and our son's בר מצוה celebration. She had never attended Orthodox celebrations before, and she had so many questions that needed so many answers. She was so taken by the meaning of it all, how everything had significance. She was moved by how Judaism was a way of life for us, in our celebrations, our mourning, even our rituals upon waking up.

Shortly after, she fell ill. She left a message on our answering machine, “I'm sick in the hospital, don't really know who else to call, and thought you may want to visit.”

*Really? You want me... to visit you?*

And so I did. I went to visit her a few times until she returned home. While in the hospital, the Jewish chaplain left several books on my neighbor's bedside on various topics on Judaism. Some were complex, and she asked me to



explain these concepts to her. Once she returned home, I would try to go over each day to bring some meals and provide some good cheer, but she wanted me to explain to her the concepts in these books. It came to the point that if I was not able to make it one day, there was a message on my answering machine, "Where are you? I need my fix of תורה." We learned the weekly תורה portion and the wonderful lessons gleaned, we discussed the purpose of life, the soul after death, the reasons for certain customs, studied the meanings of various prayers, about the holidays, and any questions that came to her mind. As she recovered, we had her and her husband over for שבת meals.

"Your children sit with you at the table for three hours every week?" she asked in astonishment. "They sing and laugh together every week? Your six-year-old knows the פירוש each week?"

I explained that the secret is the שבת itself. My neighbor became a regular at our home every Friday night, on time to light the שבת candles with me and to study the weekly תורה portion. I would take her to various תורה classes in the neighborhood that I thought would be of interest to her. My new friend left no stone unturned; never left a question unasked. The police were never again called, and my children became her "adopted grandchildren."

This is the story of my friend who spoke with ה' each day. My friend, who sought to help others, to cheer up everyone she met, and to enlighten them by urging them to consider the higher purpose for which they were created. My friend who got sick and told me she sees the hand of ה' is with her every moment. We said the שמע together when she could barely speak anymore. My friend, I will miss your messages on my machine and joining us on Friday nights. You studied so hard to make up for all the years you did not know. And now you know. Now it's all clear to you. When we started you didn't understand that the end of this life is the beginning of something in an even higher realm. Now you know.

My dear reader, perhaps you have a neighbor, a coworker or relative who seems antagonistic toward Judaism and observant Jews. They may actually be calling out to you. They may see the beauty in the life you lead and yearn for it too. See past their anger and sarcasm. Reach out to them.

הוה לאה בת פייזל נשמה OF נשמה

-My friend BY ROCHEL FELD FROM AISH.COM

## ■ ACTIVITY.

We are commanded to do חסד; it is a central theme in the life of a Jew. There are many levels of doing חסד—from the simple act of sharing your snack with a friend to doing a great חסד anonymously. The greatest חסד cited in the תורה is חסד של אמת, caring for the needs of a מת who will never be able to repay in any way the חסד that was bestowed upon him.

Try to remember times in your life when someone did a חסד for you. Think of the circumstances and how you felt after the חסד was done. Many people do not wish repayment when they do חסד for another. From our side however, the way to repay a חסד is to learn from the giver to "pay it forward" or to take those positive feelings and do חסד for another.

Think of a kindness that was done to you. How did you feel as the recipient?

## STORY #5—A KINDNESS REPAID

גורע ביהודה, better known as the רב יחזקאל לאנדאו, was walking in the streets of Prague one evening when he chanced upon a ten-year-old non-Jewish boy sitting on the street crying. רב יחזקאל לאנדאו asked the boy what was wrong. The

boy told him that his father was a baker. Every day, the boy would sell rolls and give the money to his stepmother. Today, he had been mugged, and his rolls were stolen. Now his family would have nothing to eat. He was afraid to face his stepmother with the truth.

Without batting an eyelash, רב יהוקאל לאנדאו reached into his pocket and gave the boy the money he would have earned. The boy just sat there, astonished.

Eight years later, רב יהוקאל לאנדאו answered a knock at his door. A tall young man stood at the door. "I know that your Passover holiday ends on Monday. The non-Jewish bakers in this town are plotting to kill the Jews. They have poisoned the bread. I am sworn to secrecy. So Rabbi, please don't let your people eat the bread. Do not let anyone know why, or they will kill me."

רב יהוקאל לאנדאו looked at the young man incredulously. "Why? Why did you tell me?"

"Do you remember a little boy who sat on the street crying about eight years ago? Do you remember how you helped him? Well, I do. That little boy was me, and I'll never forget you. You, Jews, are compassionate and good people, and I know that. This is my way of saying thank you!"

רב יהוקאל לאנדאו issued a decree that he had made a mistake in the calculation of the calendar and that the Jews must celebrate another day of פסח and not eat bread yet.

The Prague bakers lost money (they couldn't sell the poisoned bread to anyone else). They complained to the local authorities that this רב יהוקאל לאנדאו had caused them monetary loss. An investigation ensued and the poisoned bread was discovered.

-THE *Noda B'Yehuda* R WEINGARTEN: D. SCHULMAN CIS PUBLISHING 1991

## ■ ACTIVITY.

Acts of חסד can have a profound effect on the actual recipients of the חסד as well as those who observe the carrying out of the חסד, as we witnessed in the previous stories. Give examples of ways that you could do חסד in your daily lives and the impression that these acts of חסד might have on others. Example of scenarios might be:

- In a parking lot
- Playing sports
- In school at lunch
- On the bus
- During General Studies

- At home, etc.

The teacher should ask the students if they have ever experienced or witnessed an act of selfless חסד. (A stranger who gives money to someone that didn't have bus fare, or one who volunteers to help a sick person they don't even know, etc.) Let students share some of these acts that impressed them. What are some of the thoughts of someone who observes a selfless act of חסד?

There are many levels of חסד and all חסד makes a lasting impression. The highest level of חסד is doing it in such a way that no one will ever know that you were the one who did the act. When a person accustoms himself to do חסד with no personal gain in mind, others sense his selfless intentions and will be open to his influence.



## ■ SOURCES

(1) הפרישה בחו"מ (סי' א') כתב דהטעם שגמילות חסדים הוא אחד מהדברים שהעולם עומד עליהם, משום "שעל ידו יוכרו דרכי ה' כי חסד המה [והעולם נברא לכבודו], ועבור זה ציוה בה את עבדיו שילכו בדרכיו".

(2) על הפסוק "ואעשך לגוי גדול ... והיה ברכה", הביא רש"י דברי המדרש שאנו מתפללין אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק ואלקי יעקב, אבל חותמים רק באברהם. בלב אליהו (ח"א דף רמז) כתב שלכל אחד מהאבות היה אופן אחר איך לקרב אנשים לעבודת ה' ולהרבות כבוד שמים בעולם. אברהם עשה הכל מתוך מידתו שהיא מידת החסד, והיה מכניס אורחים כדי לתת להם את הטעם של מידת החסד של הקב"ה. יצחק הראה לעולם את המידה של יראה ומסירות נפש והיה מקרב בעצם הדוגמא שנתן לכל העולם, שראו גדלות כזו ונתפעלו. ויעקב הראה את המידה של אמת וקדושה.

ועל זה אמרו חז"ל שאינם חותמים אלא כך, כלומר הכל הולך אחר החתום והוא מדת החסד כי בזה היה יכול אברהם אבינו להשפיע ביותר על אנשי העולם שיכירו וידעו את השם יתבי, כי הבריות אין מכירים – ואין להם ענין להכיר בן אדם במעשיו והנהגתו כלפי שמים, כי מה להם ולדרכיו של פלוני במה שהוא בינו לבין קונו? אבל מה הם מכירים? במה שנוגע להם לעצמם ולבשרם. בטובה אשר הם מקבלים. והוסיף ר' אלי' וכן נאמר לנו היום (יום כפור) הכל הולך אחר החתום שזה יהיה הקבלה בשבילנו לשנה הבאה עלינו לטובה להרבות בחסד ולהטיב עם הבריות, וכשנבא לבית יש לזכור לעזור להורים ... שלא יגרום ח"ו לאמו לומר אהה! מיום שחור בני מהישיבה נעשה אי סדר בבית... "הדלת תסוב על צירה והעצל על מטתו" וכי כך התלמד בישיבה. ואכן מה נורא חילול השם אשר בידו של זה חלילה.

(3) ספרי דברים יא – ללכת בכל דרכיו. אלו דרכי הקב"ה שני (שמות לד) ה' ה' א-ל רחום וחנוך ארץ אפים ורב חסד ואמת נוצר חסד לאלפי' נושא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקמה. ואוי' (יואל ג) "כל אשר יקרא בשם ה' ימלט". וכי היאך אפשר לו לאדם לקרא בשמו של הקב"ה? אלא מה המקום נקרא רחום וחנוך אף אתה הוי רחום וחנוך ועשה מתנת חנם לכל... לכך נאמר כל אשר יקר' בשם ה' ימלט ואומר (ישעיה מג) כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו ואוי' (משלי מז) כל פעל ה' למענהו: שהכבוד שמים בא על ידי המדות של ה' הניכר בישראל וכאילו נקרא בשם ה'!

ובמכתב מאלהו (ח"א דף קלח) מוסיף "שלמדנו מכאן יסוד גדול כי לא בדרשות אפשר לקרא בשם ה' ולהשפיע, כי אין בדרשות שום כח שהרי השומע נוגע הוא לרצונותיו וא"כ איך יקבל דברי הדורש שהם נגד רצונותיו הלא השחד יעור עיני חכמים. אך במעשים, במעשים גדולים ורבים בחסד לכל צד, בשלילת אהבת עצמו והנמילה לגמרי, רק באלה הוא כח ההשפעה. רק מי שהוא מצבא בוראו, אשר כל שאיפתו לרבות כבוד שמים ולהתחסד עם קונו אשר יעבוד בכח הנתינה ממש ומוסר נפשו לעבודתו מבלי התחשב עם פרטיותו, כבודו, פרנסתו ושאר עניני עוה"ז שלו, רק הוא יכול להשפיע. ובעינינו ראינו בני אדם לומדים גדולים ובעלי כשרון נשגבים שומרי תורה ומצוה ובעלי מחשבה מעולה, ואעפ"כ לא ישפיעו בישיבה להכניס רוח בן תורה בתלמידים כדבעי. והוא משום שיעסקו בישיבה לשם משרה, פרנסה, וכבוד. כאלה לא יפעלו מאומה. וענין זה הוא שגדרו חז"ל באמרם דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב. כל אדם אפילו הנוגע ביותר יבחין בדברים היוצאים מן הלב מהרגש פנימי של חסד אמיתי ואין בכח שום נגיעה לעמוד נגדה, כי במקום אשר אור האמת מגיע, ירגיש החושך התבטלותו לגמרי".



## Lesson 14.

# ■ HOW OUR PRAISES OF HASHEM IMPACT THE WORLD

### ■ INTRODUCTION.

As human beings we have been gifted with the power of speech. The words that a person uses reflect his true beliefs, the things that he truly considers important. The speech of a Jew, the words that he chooses, and the things that he values, should reflect his belief in and appreciation of ה'. When a Jew refines his speech, he creates a קידוש ה'. Others become aware that his words reflect a set of beliefs which stand apart from the norm. By using our speech to praise ה' and share the wonders that He enacts, as well as speaking about the השגחה that He brings into our lives, we make a קידוש ה'.

### ■ OBJECTIVES.

Students will:

- Identify incidents of השגחה פרטית in their lives and share them with their classmates.
- Differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication and how it affects those around them.

### ■ DEVELOPMENT.

The רבינו יונה tells us in שערי תשובה that a תורה observant Jew's every word and every movement should reflect

the idea that the entire purpose of man, and the most precious thing that he can do, is to serve ה' and fear Him, as it says (קהלת יב) "כי זה כל האדם" "Because this is the entire (purpose) of man."<sup>1</sup>

Learning תורה is valued above all else in our תורה lifestyle. Those who engage in תורה study increase the knowledge of ה's ways in the world. One should be exceedingly careful about the way that he speaks about תלמידי חכמים and those that engage in תורה study. Speaking negatively about those who spend the majority of their time learning תורה creates a great חילול ה' and lessens the importance of their service to ה'. It is through their diligence in learning תורה that תורה is never forgotten from כלל ישראל. We should be careful to give them honor for their important job.

By praising תלמידי חכמים and exhibiting excitement in our עבודת ה', our enthusiasm will be contagious, and others will be motivated to follow our ways.

## קידוש ה' בשבח והודאה

### STORY #1—I WANT ONE, TOO

The security guard sat in his little booth outside the Shuvu school in ראשון לציון, keeping an eye on all of the comings and goings of the students and staff. He was an inquisitive person by nature and enjoyed all the action typical of this religious “Russian” school. Although he himself was not observant, he had come to respect the staff for their hard work and devotion, and he had really grown to like his job.

One afternoon, on the day before מוכות vacation, he noticed something unusual. All the children had lined up in front of the school, in eager anticipation. Teachers stood at the front of the line, handing out packages to each child. At one point, it became obvious that there would not be enough packages to go around. When that became apparent, the children tried to shove themselves towards the front of the line, so that they too would be able to receive the coveted item. Those who managed to obtain a package before the supply ran out were ecstatic, while those who had to be turned away were devastated and cried inconsolably.

The guard watched curiously. What special prizes were being distributed by the teachers? Were the children receiving Game Boys? Walkmans? Perhaps candy for the upcoming holiday?

The guard inched closer to see for himself what the commotion was all about. Proud little children carrying tall green bags and small white boxes explained to him that they were holding sets of the ארבעה מינים.

“ארבעה מינים?” questioned the guard. “What’s that?” The children were only too happy to share with him all that they had learned about this special מצוה.

“If this is what made you children so excited,” said the guard, “then I must get a set, too!”

After all the children of Shuvu had left at the end of the day, the security guard left, as well. But he did not go in the direction of his home. Instead, he went to find a store where he could buy his very own set of ארבעה מינים. As a direct result of Shuvu’s influence, that יום טוב, the security guard from ראשון לציון joined the long list of people who *bentched* לולב and אתרוג.

We can only hope that his interest in this מצוה will spark further interest in *Yiddishkeit*. Perhaps he will follow in the footsteps of the previous Shuvu security guard, who was so inspired by the Shuvu children that he became fully תורה observant, and left his job to move to a more religious community.

-*Jewels from the Crown* / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU

It is written (תהלים ל"ד): "גדלו לה' אתי וגורמנו שמו יחדו" "Declare the greatness of ה' with me, and together let us exalt His name." When a person is the recipient of a great חסד or salvation from ה', this פסוק teaches that he should publicize his gratitude for the great deed that ה' has done for him, in order to teach others to also praise the greatness of ה'.

Saying ברכת הגומל when surviving a great tragedy, or making a סעודת הודאה when someone recovers from an illness, brings honor to ה' and strengthens אמונה in His Divine Providence.

Generally, we do not boast about the kindness that ה' has done for us, because that would seem conceited. However, דוד המלך explains that if one's intention is לשם שמים, in order to bring others closer to ה', one should indeed publicize the kindness.<sup>2</sup>

רב דסלר explains that we bring honor to ה' in two ways: the first by choosing to follow the ways of ה' תורה, and the second by using our power of speech to praise ה'. Man is called "נפש חיה" — a living soul, because only he has been given the ability to use his power of speech to praise ה'. By praising ה', man is able to reveal the honor of ה' that is hidden in creation.<sup>3</sup>

רב מתתיהו סלמן שליט"א explains that it was only when we went into exile that we became known as "יהודים." That is why we see the term "יהודי" in מגילת אסתר, in ספר דניאל, and in עזרא ונחמיה. The non-Jews who first encountered us in גלות recognized that we were a nation that gave thanks

to ה' for all the good that we received even during the time that we were in exile. (הודאה)

In contrast to all other nations, it is our badge of distinction that we are not overcome by our difficulties, trials, and even suffering, and that we continue to cleave to and praise ה'.

In פרשת יתרו it is written, (שמות י"ח): "ויספר משה להתנו" "And משה told his father-in-law everything that ה' had done." (בריסקער רב) derives an important and fascinating lesson from these words. During the שבוע ברכות for one of his sons, the ה"ח was miraculously saved from a life threatening situation. רב סולבייצק (known for his tireless dedication to learning תורה) chose to spend the entire day recounting the miraculous events that occurred to his son. By retelling and reliving these miraculous events רב סולבייצק fulfilled the injunction, "ספרו בכל נפלאותיו..." "recounting the miracles that ה' had done for him."

We learn this from משה רבינו, who recounted to יתרו all the miracles that had occurred for בני ישראל. Since all of בני ישראל had witnessed and experienced the amazing miracles, משה had no one to whom he could retell these miraculous occurrences. משה was not merely relating simple stories, but rather, he was expressing gratitude and eagerly praising ה'. The word "כל" is mentioned twice in the פסוק to tell us that משה wished to tell יתרו "all" — every last detail and salvation that ה' had wrought on behalf of בני ישראל.

## STORY #2—A TRIGGERED MIRACLE

A week after פורים at the Shuvu School in פתח תקוה, parents and teachers assembled for a PTA meeting. Mrs. Yaffa Goldstein, the fourth grade teacher, welcomed each mother individually, and described her child's achievements and contributions to the class. Yevgeny Borenstein's mother entered the classroom clutching a small shopping bag. She had a story to tell.

"Mrs. Goldstein," she addressed the teacher. "I must tell you this! Something unbelievable happened to Yevgeny!"

Mrs. Goldstein smiled to herself in anticipation. Yevgeny, an impish ten-year-old, was a challenging, yet enjoyable, pupil. He asked clever questions and was an enthusiastic learner. Though his parents were not religiously observant, they tolerated his adherence to מצוות. They were pleased that he was receiving a solid education in a



refined environment, and were proud of his high marks in math and science. They were also happy that he was supervised and occupied at school until the late afternoon, which was when they returned home from work.

Mrs. Borenstein continued: "It happened last Tuesday, two days before the פורים holiday. Yevgeny left for school at the regular time, and I rushed to finish getting ready to leave for work. All of a sudden, I heard a knock at the door. I was surprised to see that Yevgeny had returned.

"Yevgeny, you should be halfway to school already! Why did you come back?"

"אמא," he replied. "I forgot my ציצית."

I got very upset. "Yevgeny! I'm going to be late for work! ציצית? You'll wear ציצית tomorrow. What difference does it make! Please go to school now like a good boy!"

But Yevgeny insisted and went into his bedroom to rummage for a pair of ציצית. I gave in and remained in the kitchen, puttering around while waiting for him to leave so I could lock up. He took off his t-shirt, carefully put on his treasured ציצית, and then hurriedly jerked his t-shirt back on. Suddenly I heard an explosion coming from the bedroom!

"אמא!" Yevgeny screamed.

I dropped the dish I was holding and ran to Yevgeny! He looked frightened, and his t-shirt was smoking! The פורים cap-gun that he kept in his pocket had gone off, and burnt a hole in his shirt! I feared that he had suffered terrible burns."

Mrs. Borenstein reached for the shopping bag and removed a crumpled t-shirt. She showed the astounded teacher the large hole in the t-shirt. Then she removed a pair of ציצית, completely intact.

"Mrs. Goldstein, these are the ציצית my son was wearing! Not a scorch mark! And Yevgeny didn't have any burns on himself, either! It's a miracle!"

Mrs. Borenstein's eyes were glistening with tears as she continued in a hushed voice. "The A-lmighty saved my son through His מצות, and I want to say, 'Thank you.' Please tell me where I can learn more about Judaism. My husband and I have decided to keep a תורה home. ציצית will be just the beginning of our מצות observance. We want to do more! This year we want to celebrate פסח properly and relate to our entire family the miracle that the Almighty performed especially for us!"

-*Jewels from the Crown* / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU.

## ■ LIVING EXAMPLE.

פוטיוף, one of פרעה's chief officers, and יוסף's master before he rose to greatness, recognized יוסף's unique and close relationship to ה'. This was because he saw that יוסף constantly mentioned the name of ה' in his daily speech.

It is for this reason that יוסף was so successful in מצרים.

In the same way, רב ירום explains that we are commanded to make ברכות, because through our acknowledgment of ה's kindness, we bring ourselves and others more

awareness of ה' and give honor to Him. In this way we fulfill our purpose in creation and ensure that our partaking of ה's bounty is not stealing.

We often do not realize the impact of our actions on others. When a non-observant person watches a frum Jew make a ברכה with the proper בונה, it can have an astounding effect on him and cause him to come closer to ה'.

### STORY #3—BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

Sasha navigated the narrow hallways of the elementary school in אשקלון. Being a gangly 6'2", he felt a bit like Gulliver in Lilliput among the small desks, chairs, and other paraphernalia of small children littering the hallways. He didn't remember ever being so small. No doubt he would have drawn a lot of stares in his soldier's uniform, but classes were in session, and he was left to wander around without attracting much attention. He knew, more or less, where his brother Dima's second grade classroom was from the vivid description of absolutely everything and anything that had to do with Shuvu. Sasha had once quipped that shuvu didn't mean *lashuv al* (repeat) everything about the school, but, perhaps because Sasha was so tall, the pun sailed right over Dima's head.

Sasha didn't want to disturb the class, so he made his way to the school office instead.

"My brother, Dima, is in the second grade here; would I be able to speak to his teacher for a moment?" he asked the woman behind the desk. "Her name is Morah Pesi." Sasha added, realizing with some bemusement that he had no other way to refer to, or address, the teacher. Dima mentioned Morah Pesi at least once a day, but he had never used her last name. Clara, the school secretary, willingly obliged the soldier's request by calling the teacher out of class.

"Excuse me for disturbing you, Morah Pesi," Sasha said, suddenly feeling awkward, but determined to fulfill his mission.

"Yes," the teacher smiled, surprised at the unusual visitor. "How can I help you?"

"Well, it's about my brother, Dima..." Sasha began uncertainly. "You see, um... well, when I come home from the army, I'm very hungry." He paused. The teacher nodded, obviously wondering where this was going. "When I come home, I take something out of the refrigerator to eat, and no sooner do I take a bite and Dima starts yelling at me, 'Thief, thief!'"

"That certainly doesn't sound like Dima," Morah Pesi said, concerned.

"So after a while I asked him what in the world he's talking about, and the kid gave me a whole lecture about how I'm stealing food from G-d; that eating without making a ברכה was like taking something without permission and we need to say a ברכה to show our appreciation, to say 'Thank you.' He said you were the one who taught this to him. Let me tell you, Dima has a very good memory. By the time he was done, I knew all the ברכות over food, which to say and when to say them and how and why..." Sasha took a breath. "The thing is my brother wouldn't only insist I say them at home; he insisted I say them when I eat in the army as well. Now, let me tell you something about army food, they should bless us for eating it." He grinned ruefully. "But Dima seemed so sincere, it seemed so important to him. And after all, I do owe a thank-you to G-d. So I agreed.

"I pretty much was doing it automatically by then, because whenever I'm home, if I take a bite to eat without a blessing, Dima shows up shouting 'Thief!' I was sure the guys in my unit would have a field day making fun of me. But they didn't. They started saying them, too. And a couple of the guys even carry around *כיפות* to put on their heads when they eat.

"I told Dima this, and you should have seen how excited he was. So I thought you might also want to know that not only did you teach Dima the *ברכות*, you also taught an entire army unit, and I'm sure my little brother is not the only one in class passing the blessings on.

"And you know something," he added conspiratorially. "The food in the army doesn't taste so bad anymore... Anyway," Sasha said sincerely, "I thought I should come and tell you how much you've done...."

With that, Sasha turned and left as unexpectedly as he had appeared. Morah Pesi, misty-eyed, watched Sasha head down the hallway and then turned back to her own unit of ה's little soldiers.

*-Jewels from the Crown 3 / WITH PERMISSION FROM SHUVU*

## ■ ACTIVITY.

- The things that we value and speak highly about reflect who we are. By directing ourselves to think about the people who are truly exalted, such as our *ראשי ישיבה*, our *רבים*, and our *מורות*, appreciating their *יראת שמים*, and praising them accordingly, we can greatly influence others. Ask the students which topics get them excited about *Yiddishkeit*.
- Have students break into groups and choose an example of ה's kindness that affected at least one of them personally (a personal or family story, a miracle, or special *brachah*). Have each group present their example as a skit, poem, poster, artwork, or some other creative form. You may want to have students write up a personal story for homework, first. This will give them time to think and research the story's details.
- Ask students to recall incidents when they were witness to ה's guiding *השגחה* either to themselves, their relatives, or friends. The students may write about these stories, act them out or simply share them with the rest of the class.

- Discuss the *הכמה ה'* that can be observed throughout the human body or within the intricacies of creation. This will cultivate an appreciation of ה' great wonders. *מילר's* books are a wonderful source to aid in this project.

## ■ FINAL NOTES.

It is easy to be excited about the worldly events that happen around us, but it is our job to generate enthusiasm and excitement over *מצות* and *תורה*.

Helping children to find excitement and fulfillment in their *מצות* and *תורה* is a challenge that we as educators face on a daily basis. Teachers should discuss with their peers and administrators how to create programs to generate this excitement. When we create an honor roll or contest for those that participate in learning outside of school as well as in school, and encourage students to bring in pictures about their *מצות* observance, or give prizes and encouragement for participation in *חסד* programs etc., we create an atmosphere that values *תורה* principles over the secular.

## ■ SOURCES

(1) בשערי תשובה (שער שלישי אות קמח) כתב: "ויש עוד טעם נכבד עולה על כולם, ואליו רמזנו בפתח דברינו בענין הכתות הרעות הנוכרות. כי הדבר ידוע כי מדרכי קידוש השם יתברך להודיע בכל מבטא שפתים, ובכל אשר ירמזון עינים, ובכל הנהגה ופועל ידיים, כי יסוד לנפש האדם וצבי עדיו והטוב והעיקר והתועלת והיקר אשר בו – עבודת השם יתברך ויראתו ותורתו, כמו שכתוב (קהלת יב): "כי זה כל האדם". ודבר זה כבוד השם יתברך. והמבזים לתלמיד חכם ויראתו מבטלים הידיעה הזאת, ומראים ההפך בהנהגתם, וכאילו אומרים אמור כי אין העבודה עיקר, וכי שורש הדבר נמצא מבלתי עבודת השם יתברך. והם מחללים את התורה, על כן יאבדו מתוך הקהל ויכלו בפיהם, כי הם עובדים את ה' מבלי עסק התורה. הלא הדבר ידוע, כי אין העבודה מתקיימת בלתי על ידי לומדי התורה אשר יהגו בה יומם ולילה, כי הם יורו דעה ויודעי בינה לעיתים לדעת מה יעשה ישראל, והם יעמידוהו בישראל לבלתי תשכח מפי זרעם, ובמקום שאין עוסקי תורה ירבו המכשולים, וישר באדם אין, על כן יכבדו עבדי השם יתברך את חכמי התורה לכבוד השם יתברך, ולהודיע כי עבודתו לכבד עיקר הנמצא".

וממשיך שם רבנו יונה: "ואחרי אשר התברר שהכל ברא השם יתברך לכבודו, חייב האדם לשום לבו בכל עת לכבד את ה' ולקדשו בכל דבריו ולרוממו, להודות לו ולברכו תמיד, כמו שנאמר (תהלים לד ב): "אברכה את ה' בכל עת, תמיד תהלתו בפני". וכאשר יתיצב בתוך העם וידבר עם חבריו, יתבונן בינה וידקדק וישגיח בכל מוצא שפתיו לקדש את ה' בדבריו, ולדבר בשבח עבודתו ותהילת יראתו, ולשבח עבדיו ויראיו, ויזכה בזה בהגיון לבו ומבטא שפתיו בלא יגיעה ופועל כפים זכות גדולה עד לשמים, כי זה מעיקרי יצירת האדם".

(2) ומצינו הרבה פעמים בתהילים את הענין הגדול לפרסם את כבוד ה' בשירות ותשבחות ברבים. בפ' כו (ז): "לשמע בקול תודה ולספר כל נפלאותיו... במקהלים אברך ה'". ופ' המלבי"ם: "שהעיקר הודאה הוא מה שאוכל לספר נפלאותיו, שעל ידי כן יראו בני אדם גדולת ה'". ועוד איתא שם בפרק לד (ב-ד): "אברכה את ה' בכל עת תמיד תהלתו בפני: בה' תתהלל נפשי ישמעו עניים וישמחו: גדלו לה' אתי וגרוממה שמו יחדו". ופ' האבן עזרא: "בה' – בו אתהלל עד שישמעו עניים תהלתו וישמחו. "גדלו" – כאילו ידבר עמהם וביקש מהם שיעזרוהו לגדל את השם. וראיתי שזהו המקור לברכת הגומל, שמבקש מהציבור שיעזרוהו להלל את ה'. ובפ' לה: "אורך בקהל רב בעם עצום אהללך".

ונראה שכל התהילות של דוד המלך הם לצורך התכלית הזו, כדי לגדל את שם ה' בעולם. ועי' עוד בפ' מ (י): "בשרתי צדק בקהל רב, הנה שפתי לא אכלא, ה' אתה ידעת: צדקתך לא כסיתי בתוך לבי, אמונתך ותשועתך אמרת. לא כחדתי חסדך ואמתך לקהל רב". ובמלבי"ם מפרש שם: "מהראוי לשלמים להסתיר צדקתם ולא להתפאר בו לפני המונים, שאז מורה שצדקתם היא שלא לשם ה' רק להתפאר, על זה נאמר כי ה' אתה ידעת האמת שהיה כוונתי שידעו הכל צדקתך... שיתקדש שם שמים על ידי זה, ויראו רבים וייראו ויבטחו ויאמינו בה". וממשיך דוד לבקש מהקב"ה שיחשוב לו את הדבר הזה לזכות, "אתה ה' לא תכלא רחמיך ממני". ועיין באבן עזרא על "לא כחדתי": "לא מנעתי מלספר חסדך לקהל רב בכדי להמשיך לבם אחרך".

(3) וראיתי בשם הגרא"א דסלר, בקונטרס שיצא לזכרו (הובא בספר ממעקים על ויקרא דף 181-180) שתוכן הבריאה כולה הוא גילוי כבודו יתברך על ידי האדם, ויש שני פנים לגילוי זה: א' ע"י בחירה בטוב בלב ובמעשה, שמגלה כבוד ה' על ידי עצמו. וב' ע"י שירות ותשבחות של נפלאות מעשי ה', והגילוי הזה נעשה על ידי הדיבור דוקא. ולכן האדם נקרא הנפש החיה שבכל העולמות, כי כל תוכן העולמות יצא לפועל על ידי פיו. וזהו הביאור של התרגום "נפש חיה – רוח ממלא", שהאדם הוא הרוח הממלא של כל הבריאה להוציא ממנה את הכבוד שמים שטמון בה, וזהו החיות של הבריאה שיש ממנה כבוד שמים.



## Lesson 15.

### ■ AVOIDING SUSPICION AT ALL COSTS: FOLLOWING SOCIETAL NORMS

#### ■ INTRODUCTION.

It is important that we always consider how our actions are viewed by others. One should be exceedingly careful to avoid suspicion that we are involved in something that we shouldn't be, or be accused of something that we haven't done.

In addition, we should be careful about doing things that are not forbidden but would be looked down upon by others—such as not using proper etiquette and refinement.

#### ■ OBJECTIVES.

Students will:

- Identify and present various situations in which one's actions could be misinterpreted.
- List ways in which the customs of a particular place may render normally accepted behaviors as inappropriate in other places.

#### ■ DEVELOPMENT.

Before בני ישראל began their conquest of ארץ ישראל, the שבטים of ראובן and גד asked משה for permission to settle their families in the land of גלעד on the other side of the ירדן. They wished to settle there instead of actually in ארץ ישראל, because the land was fertile and fit for raising

cattle, which was ראובן and גד's occupation. משה granted their request, but told them that they must take part in conquering ארץ ישראל, before they returned to their families. משה explained that this is so that והייתם נקיים מזה - "You shall be free of reproach (lit. 'clean') before ה' and ישראל." Why did משה add the words "and ישראל" (their fellow Jews)? Certainly if ה' would consider them virtuous, the rest of the Jewish people would not question their motives?

The חתם סופר explains in his תשובות<sup>1</sup> that sometimes it is more difficult to appear virtuous to other human beings than it is to be seen as honorable to ה'. Human nature is such that people are suspicious of others even when these suspicions are completely unfounded and nonsensical, and ה', Himself, would find no fault!

The חתם סופר further explains that even if only indecent people consider another person guilty of sin (without proper evidence), he may still be considered to have transgressed the איסור of חילול ה'. It may be for this reason that ראובן and גד were the first to have been exiled. Even though they fulfilled משה's instructions completely, their fellow Jews may have considered it unfair that ראובן and גד had left their families in a safe location while the rest of the nation was at war. They may have been punished, because they were not "נקיים" (free of reproach) in the eyes of their brothers.

## והייתם נקיים

The משנה tells us that the person who collected funds in the בית המקדש to purchase קרבונוֹת was not allowed to wear a garment in which it was possible to hide stolen money. Should he become wealthy, he might be suspected of stealing money from the treasury, and should he become poor, it might be thought that he was being punished for having stolen. The משנה concludes that just as a person must be free of any suspicion before ה' so must he be free of suspicion before others. Even משה רבינו wore garments

that had no folds in which anything could be hidden during the עבודה of the inauguration to avoid any hint of suspicion.<sup>2</sup>

We learn from this that we must be exceedingly careful not to do anything (even if it is permissible) that would be viewed as improper.

These concepts even apply to business, as we see in the following story:

### STORY #1—BIG SAVINGS, BIGGER LOSSES

A certain store advertised a sale on a Jewish product in order to bring more Jewish customers into the store. A woman went to the store to purchase that product, but, when she arrived, she was shocked to find that the entire stock of the product had already been purchased. When she expressed her surprise, the cashier said in a tone of annoyance, "The first few Jews that came into the store bought the entire stock and our sale was ruined!"

Although the storeowner should have been wiser and placed a limit on the amount of product that each customer could buy, the customers should have given the matter some thought and showed respect for the store owner's obvious intentions. Many times customers will try to get around the rules and take advantage of store owners and their promotions. It is important for us to ask ourselves, "Is the small advantage that we receive with our cleverness worth the negative impression that we make on others?"

-HEARD FROM THE PROTAGONIST

upheld and would constitute a lack of קידוש ה'. *davened* to ה' after the מרגלים sinned, asking Him to forgive the sins of the Jewish people. משה urged ה' not to destroy His nation, because then the גוים would claim that ה' did not have the power to defeat the 31 kings of כנען. How was it possible that any of the nations might make such a claim after witnessing the miraculous salvation that ה' wrought in מצרים? דעת תורה explains that even if just a few coarse and foolish people would come to such a conclusion, it would mean that ה' honor had not been

upheld and would constitute a lack of קידוש ה'.

It is for this reason that the סופר התם explains that even though modesty is a tremendous virtue in our תורה learning and מצוה performance, as it states "הצנע לכת עם אלקיך" (מיכה ו:ח) "Walk in modesty with your G-d"<sup>3</sup>, certain מצוה should be performed publicly. Thus, others will not mistakenly think that one was not performing the מצוה, thereby causing a חילול ה'.

## STORY #2—GREAT LOSSES, GREATER GAINS

An elderly couple once expressed their wish to bequeath their entire estate, which was worth a considerable sum, to a struggling yeshivah in ירושלים after their deaths. The ראש ישיבה, however, suggested that the couple leave half of their estate to their only son, who lived abroad and had severed ties with his parents. The wife passed away shortly thereafter, and the husband's health deteriorated to the point that he needed constant care until his death a few years later. The yeshivah shouldered the burden of all the funeral and medical expenses, while the son remained out of contact, not even attending his mother's funeral.

After the husband's death, the couple's estranged son finally came to ארץ ישראל—to claim his parents' entire estate. The yeshivah administration urged the ראש ישיבה to fight the son's efforts in court, but the ראש ישיבה, an august תורה personality, flatly refused . . . fearing the חילול ה' that might result. The son was certain to forcefully resist any efforts the yeshivah might make to stake a claim to the estate. He would be very likely to fabricate accusations, perhaps claiming that the yeshivah had somehow convinced the couple to write a will in their favor, and that they had aided his father for ulterior motives, in order to later claim his property. The situation was liable to turn into a scandal, besmirching the name of the yeshivah and the תורה world. For that, the ראש ישיבה was willing to forego a vast sum of money that could have rescued his struggling institution from financial distress.

-Aleinu Leshabeach, PARSHAS VEZOS HABRACHA

A person should explain his actions to others if his actions could be misinterpreted. If one *davens* with another מנין, and not his regular shul, he should explain this to his

colleagues, so that they should not think that he is not *davening* with a מנין.

## STORY #3—WHAT TO DO?

רב פאם was asked the following question: what should one do if when on the way to a מנין, he is asked to come into a different מנין to be the tenth person, and the מנין *davens* at a pace that he dislikes? Would it be permissible to turn them down? רב פאם answered that the people wouldn't understand, and they would feel that it was wrong that he was not willing to help another Jew. Therefore, he suggested that the man take another route to his מנין, in order to avoid this predicament.

-Rav Pam BY RABBI SHIMON FINKELMAN



## FOLLOWING SOCIETAL NORMS

The רמב"ם explains that even if one would not commit an עבירה by acting in an unrefined way, such as spitting or coughing without covering one's mouth, one should respect those around him and refrain from such behavior.

One should be careful to respect the customs of the place in which he may find himself. For example:

- יעקב, an aggressive city driver, must be aware that his driving habits will earn him reproachful glares from local inhabitants when he is visiting a quiet neighborhood in the country.

- If שמעון attends an out-of-town wedding, he must be aware that answering his phone in the middle of a חופה will be viewed as extremely disrespectful by the town's guests.

- ראובן, visiting the States from ארץ ישראל, must realize that shoving his way through a crowd is not accepted in America.

While none of the people in the above examples actually violated any אסורים, nevertheless their actions could be viewed as causing displeasure to others.

## STORY #4—YOU ARE BEING WATCHED

רב יששכר פרנד tells the following story: A little while ago, while I was traveling on a plane, I saw that there was another observant Jew among the passengers. As the plane landed, the flight attendant made the announcement we all know by heart, "Passengers, please remain seated until the plane comes to a complete stop and the pilot has turned off the 'fasten seat belt' sign."

As often happens in the big city airports, the plane was delayed on the runway, and the seat belt sign remained on longer than expected. So did the people follow instructions and wait in their seats or not? All of us remained seated except for one man. I'm sure you can guess who it was (and it was not me). That's right. While the plane was still taxiing on the runway, this highly recognizable observant Jew stood up and started getting his things together. I didn't watch him, but I did watch the faces of the other passengers. Believe me, it was a real חילול ה' in their eyes, this man represented תורה, and he brought it dishonor.

I once heard something very disturbing. I don't know if it's true or not. But if such a story is making its rounds, something is dreadfully wrong. They say that a Tower airplane once landed in ארץ ישראל towards the end of December. About half the passengers were Jews and the other half were Christian Yuletide travelers. This plane was also delayed on the runway, and by the time it reached the terminal, many passengers were pulling out their carry-on luggage from the overhead bins. The stewardess got on the public address system and said, "To all of you who are standing, we want to wish you a 'Happy Chanukah', and to all those seated, we wish you 'Season's Greetings.'"

Obviously, there's a perception out in the world that there's something out of line with Orthodox Jews. What do people think of us? That we're rude and grasping? What a horrendous חילול ה'!

-Listen to your Messages RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

הלכה קידוש ה' generally refers to our mission of observing הלכה to the highest degree and avoiding any action that could be viewed as improper. It is important to be sensitive in all situations so that we do not offend others who have

different customs and ways than those that we follow. קידוש ה' demands that we avoid behavior or any situation that evokes disapproval from other people even though it does not necessarily violate הלכה.

## ■ LIVING EXAMPLE.

רבי שלמה בן רבי שמעון דורן, commonly known as the רשב"ש, was once asked about a shul in Algiers founded by Jews who had come from Spain, in which some of the מתפללים wanted to insist that anyone entering the shul remove their shoes, in keeping with the custom of the local Muslims, who removed their shoes before entering their own houses of worship. These מתפללים viewed it as an expression of disrespect for the shul when congregants entered with their shoes on. Incredibly, the רשב"ש agreed with their position. "It is known that a shul should be glorified, exalted, honored, and protected from any disparagement.

**'Honor'- is whatever people consider as honorable...."**

The רשב"ש wanted to show that it would not be considered disrespectful to wear one's shoes in a shul located in a

Christian country, since their society does not view such conduct as demeaning. However in a Muslim land, where the societal norm was to remove one's shoes as a sign of respect for any house of worship, or before meeting any important person, it is certainly required to show the same respect to a shul, the "house" of ה'.<sup>4</sup>

A similar question arises regarding whether one is allowed to smoke in a shul. רב דוד צבי הופמן prohibited smoking, because it is known that non-Jews refrain from smoking in their houses of worship. If we were then to allow smoking in our shuls, it would be considered a חילול ה' and seen as disrespectful.<sup>5</sup> Again, this emphasizes the importance of being sensitive to the circumstances and the surroundings in which we live.

## STORY #5—GOOD MORNING TO YOU

רב משה שרר passed away in 1998. The following year, אגודת ישראל dedicated their annual dinner to his memory. Before the dinner, ר' שמשון, רב משה שרר's son, visited the אגודה headquarters in lower Manhattan. In the lobby of the huge office building sat the receptionist, a gentile woman. ר' שמשון wished her a good morning and asked whether she had known his late father, רב משה שרר, former president of אגודת ישראל.

"Did I know him?" the woman responded. "I smile every day because of him. You know, רב משה שרר was always the first to arrive for work every morning. He always entered the building briskly, as if he was in a hurry to do something important. He would press the button for the elevator, and as he waited for it, he would hurry across the lobby to my desk. 'Good morning,' he would say, 'and keep on smiling'. And I knew that he meant it!

"I feel tears welling up in my eyes as I tell you this. Sometimes, when life is rough, I remember your father's words – and I smile." The story reminded ר' שמשון of walking with his father through Boro Park on שבת morning, as a young boy, as they made their way to shul. רב משה שרר wished "גוט שבת" to every Jew he passed, and "Good morning" to every gentile.

One שבת morning, ר' שמשון asked his father, "Daddy, are you running for President? Why must you say 'Good morning' to every single person we pass?" רב משה שרר replied, "As you know, when I was a תלמיד at Mesivta Torah Vodaas, I had the great privilege of serving as an assistant of sorts to the גאון and צדיק, רב אלהן וואסערמאן, when he visited America in 1938. I first met רב אלהן when I reported to his room one morning at the Broadway Central Hotel. I greeted him with a "שלום עליכם", and then we headed for the elevator.

"As we waited for it, רב אלהן turned to me and asked, "*Vi azoi zogt men 'Gut morgen' oif English?*" (How does one say 'Good morning' in English?)" I answered, "Like we say it in Yiddish – 'Good morning'."

“רב אלהנן” then began to pace back and forth, saying ‘Good morning, good morning.’ When we entered the elevator, he turned to the gentile attendant and said, ‘Good morning.’ Then he turned to me and asked, ‘*Hob ich gut gezogt?* (Did I say it well?)”

A thoughtful word at the right time can make such a difference to a person. A simple ‘good morning’ can boost a person’s self-esteem, and change their mood for the day. As *Yidden*, we have to be conscious of the impact of our behavior on others. A positive word can make you an “ambassador” of ה' and His תורה.

You can create a great קידוש ה' in such a simple way.

## ■ ACTIVITY.

The teacher may choose one of the following activities or divide the class into groups and assign a different activity to each group:

- Keeping in mind that people judge us by their own set of standards, think about situations in which someone may be judged incorrectly, even when they are not

technically doing anything wrong. Act out the scene showing what he is doing and how he is being judged. Then act out the scene again, showing how the person could have been more careful in order to avoid being judged negatively.

- Act out scenes which model proper etiquette and promote קידוש ה'. Examples would be: Saying “excuse me” if you bump into someone; tipping someone for a service they have performed for you, etc. Act out scenes which show improper behavior and then scenes that depict the proper behavior.

- Show how behavior that may be accepted in one place may be offensive in another. For example, act out a behavior that is accepted in-town, and then how it is viewed out-of-town or in another environment, i.e. honking, not mowing your lawn, bargaining, etc.

## SOURCES

(1) חושן משפט, לקוטים #59

(2) תאנית 11

(3) מיכה ו

(4) שו"ת הרשב"ש, סי' רפה; הובא בברכ"י קנא, ח

גם רבי שלמה ב"ר שמעון דוראן, המכונה רשב"ש, נשאל על בית הכנסת שנוסד באלג'יר ע"י יהודים שבאו מספרד, שחלק מהמתפללים דרשו שלא להיכנס לבית הכנסת בנעלים, כמנהג המקום, שהיא מדינה מוסלמית שתושביה נוהגים לחלוץ נעליהם לפני כניסתם לבית תיפלתם, ורואים פחיתות כבוד בכניסה למקום קדוש בנעלים, ויהודי הסכיבה נהגו אחריהם במנהג זה. הרשב"ש השיבם: "דבר ידוע שבית הכנסת ראוי לפארו ולרוממו ולכבדו ולהרחיק ממנו כל בזיון. אמנם הכבוד הוא כל דבר אשר נחשב אצל בני אדם כבוד... והכבוד והבזיון האמיתי הוא כפי מחשבת בני אדם וכפי המקומות... והנה בארצות הנוצרים, שאין אצלם בזיון כשנכנס אדם ואפילו לפני מלכם במנעל אם נכנס כן בבית הכנסת בעירם אינו בזיון. ובארצות אלו (האיסלם) שהיא בזיון ליכנס לפני גדוליהם, וכש"כ לפני מלכם, במנעל, אסור ליכנס בעירם לבית הכנסת במנעל... על כן טוב הדבר אשר רצו לעשות להסיר חרפת האומה אשר חרפנו". הוא מדגיש שתקנה זו נתקנה בידי אביו – הרשב"ן – בעירו אלג'יר. למעשה הוא מסיים: "איך אפשר שבבית ישמעאל אחד פחות שבפחותים לא יוכל אדם ליכנס במנעל, ובבית אלקים יכנס? איזהו כבודו ואיזהו מוראו? ואפילו לא היה הדבר איסור, היה ראוי לעשות תקנה בדבר משום חרפת האומה".

(5) שו"ת מלמד להועיל או"ח סימן טו

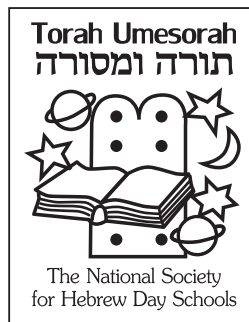
באותו סגנון כתבו כמה מן האחרונים בענין עישון בבית הכנסת. רבי דוד צבי הופמן נמנה בין האוסרים, ומעמו ונימוקו הוא חילול השם: "ועוד דידוע שהנכרים מדקדקים מאוד ואוסרים העישון בבתי תפלות שלהם ומעתה יהי ח"ו חילול השם, אם אנו נתיר זאת, ועל כן פשיטא דאסור" (שו"ת מלמד להועיל או"ח סימן טו). באותו סגנון מתמרמר רבי עובדיה הדאיה ותמה על בני תורה המזלזלים בקדושת בית הכנסת, וכה הוא כותב בשנת תשי"ח: "הרי אפילו בבתי המשפט של הגוים לא מרשים לעשן לפני השופט. ואני זוכר בימים הראשונים גם כן בן אצל אביו לא היה מעיז לעשן לפניו, וגם רבים מבעלי הנימוס, אם הם נמצאים אצל איזה אדם גדול לא היו מעיזים לעצמם לעשן לפניו, בלתי אם יקחו ממנו רשות. וכמה רע עלי המעשה של החרדים ובעלי תורה מעשנים בגלוי בבית הכנסת בלי שום בושה" (שו"ת ישכיל עבדי, ח"ו, אה"ע סי' א).



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