

Behar-Bechukosai 2017

Shalom bayis

“Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow, and you shall fear your God; for I am Hashem, your God.” (25, 17)

"ולא תונו איש את עמיתו ויראת מאלהיך כי אני יקוק אלהיכם."

Rashi points out that financial oppression and abuse was already related (25, 14). This pasuk refers to verbal abuse. One mustn't verbally pain others nor offer bad advice. Hashem knows our true thoughts. Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein (Aleinu L'shabayach 466) suggests preparing before entering into one's house. We must make sure that we are in a proper state to greet our family members.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach lost his wife (Rebbetzin Chaya Rivka) that he was married to for fifty four years. They raised children in an apartment that was only a room and a half! Before thousands of people who gathered to pay their last respects to her, Rabbi Auerbach eulogized her at her funeral, on 12 Teves 5744 (1983). **Rabbi Auerbach concluded his eulogy by saying 'although it is customary to ask for forgiveness from a deceased at one's funeral, I will not do so now. This is because we lived our years together in total peace, without either of us ever having in the least hurt one another. Throughout our entire marriage we never offended or hurt each other. We conducted our lives according to the Shulchan Aruch. I have nothing for which to ask my wife forgiveness.'**

How is it possible to merit such a level to never upset one's wife? This can be answered based on another story about Rabbi Auerbach. Once, a young man accompanied Rabbi Auerbach to his home in the Shaarei Chessed neighborhood of Jerusalem on a very windy day. The wind had made him look slovenly. Before he entered his home, he smoothed and tidied his beard and clothes. The young man asked him if he was expecting guests at his home, in whose honor he was tidying himself. Rabbi Auerbach replied that he wasn't expecting any guests. Rather when he enters his home to meet his wife, he considers it equivalent to receiving the Divine Presence. The Gemara in mesechas Sota (17a) relates that if a man and a woman are worthy, Hashem's Divine presence is amongst them. (דריש רבי עקיבא איש ואשה, זכו שכינה ביניהן, לא זכו אש אוכלתן. רש"י כתב, שהרי חלק את שמו ושיכנו ביניהן יו"ד באיש וה"י באשה.) He therefore groomed himself, straightened his hat and fixed his suit in her honor. He said that **we have a good marriage; there are no arguments between us. Thus the Shechina is in our home. I am preparing myself to be in the presence of the Shechina. He added 'a wife doesn't need to see her husband untidy and unkempt. When a man enters his home, he should be neat and orderly with an affable expression on his face.' After fifty four years of marriage, he was still considerate to show a happy and illuminating smile to his wife. This was a great person. **A husband who consistently enters his house with the attitude that he is greeting the Shechina when he greets his wife will certainly and understandably not need to ask for forgiveness from his wife even after fifty four years of marriage.****

The virtue of loving and chasing after peace is very crucial. What many unfortunately commonly forget is that peace is pertinent and very important at home between husband and wife, and amongst siblings. It is obvious that Rabbi Auerbach and his wife didn't forget this. Another important lesson that we could derive from the way Rabbi Auerbach acted is as follows; a wife should never see her husband with a frowning or angry face. Negative emotions change a person's appearance for the worse.

An important postscript to this eulogy must be added. A certain young man who was very close to Rabbi Auerbach got married. He had been privileged to receive personal guidance from Rabbi Auerbach about how to build a Jewish home. Several months after the wedding, he met Rabbi Auerbach, who asked him how things were going. The young man answered 'everything is going well, Baruch Hashem. Our home is peaceful and calm, and we do not have any disagreements.' With a puzzled look on his face Rabbi Auerbach asked the young man, 'tell me, did you divorce your wife? Or did she die chas v'shalom?' The young man was aghast. 'It is not possible to live with a woman without having disagreements. If everything is peaceful and calm as you said it is as though you are not living together.' The young man responded 'but the Rosh Yeshiva himself said at the Rebbetzin's funeral that he had no reason to ask for forgiveness from his wife.' Rabbi Auerbach then explained what he meant. **The natures of man and women are very different, and Hashem created the world in such a way that what one person wants, the other person does not necessarily want. It is inevitable, therefore, that there should be disagreements in a home. But that does not mean the couple has to fight. If there is a disagreement, it does not have to become bitter. It should be handled calmly and peacefully. Two people can contend, and they each can, and should, state their opinion unabashedly. That is no contradiction to a husband standing over his wife's grave and saying outright that he has nothing to ask forgiveness for, because any disagreements that arose were handled peacefully, not bitterly, with each person yielding to the other.'**

The River the kettle and the bird page 143. The Garden of peace pages 275-276. Along the maggid's journey pages 103-104. Tiferes Avos pages 30-31. Great Jewish Speeches pages 294-296. Aleinu L'shabayach chalek gimal page 256.

Kelalos

"If you consider My decrees loathsome, and if your being rejects My ordinances, so as not to perform all My commandments, so that you annul My covenant etc." (26, 15)

"ואם בחקתי תמאסו ואם את משפטי תגעל נפשכם לבלתי עשות את כל מצותי להפרכם את בריתי."

The Chafetz Chaim explains that some people are so afraid of hearing musser to the extent that they leave Shul when the tochacha is being lained. Or sometimes the bal koreh lains this section in a low voice and fast. This is analogous to someone who was warned not to go on a certain path because it is thorny. Going through this path blindfolded won't help either.

The Beuri Hachasedus Lenach (page 128) relates a fascinating story. Once, the Sefas Emes was late to the shiur of his illustrious grandfather, the Chidushei Ha'Rim. The Chidushei Ha'Rim harshly rebuked his grandson. The Sefas Emes stood there silently. The only reason why the Sefas Emes was late to the shiur was because he was absorbed in a sugya (in depth Torah topic)

and lost track of time. One of the Sefas Emes's friends questioned why he remained quiet, after the fact that he had a completely valid excuse. The Sefas Emes explained himself and responded 'the pasuk in Mishlay says "My child, do not despise Hashem's discipline (mussar), and do not despise His reproof, for Hashem admonishes the one he loves." (מוסר ה' בני אל תמאס ואל תקוץ) "ביתוכחתו. כי את אשר יאהב ה' יוכיח." **Getting rebuke from the Chidushei Ha'Rim is incredibly important. Even if the mussar is unjustifiable, it is a special opportunity and should be attentively listened to.**' בעל השפת אמת בצעירותו איחר פעם אחת לשיעור למוד של זקנו בעל חידושי הרי"ם, והוא הוכיח אותו הרבה בדברי מוסר על ביטול תורה, הלה הקשיב ולא ענהו כלום אף שבאמת לא ביטל כלום וישב בביתו ולמד כל הזמן. חבריו שידעו מזה שאלוהו למה לא ענית לו דברי אמת? ענה להם "מוסר ה' בני אל תמאס." Furthermore, this musser that is currently inapplicable could be relevant in the future. Why is making a chason and kala happy such a big mitzvah? The Gemara in Berachos (5b) relates the punishments that befall one who doesn't make a chason and kala happy. It would seemingly be more logical to bring them joy later on in their marriage, for example, five years later when they are going through a hard time. Why then are we obligated to make the chason and kala happy specifically when they are getting married? There are many answers to this question. One of them is as follows. Rav Pam explains that we want them to store their simcha. Meaning, they don't currently need the simcha that results from four hundred mazel tovs. Rather, this simcha should be stored for the future when things are not going so smoothly. This is similar to a bank account. (Atara L'melech page 201-202) The same applies to listening to musser which is currently inapplicable; it should be stored for the future.

Sweetness of Torah

Tiferes Shimshon pages 333-338

"If you will follow My decrees." (26, 3)

"אם בחקותי תלכו."

This pasuk can't be referring to mitzvos because the continuation of the pasuk says this. Rather, Rashi quotes the Toras Kohanim that explains that this pasuk is referring to toiling in learning. The mitzvah of learning Torah differs from all other mitzvos. It is unique. By other mitzvos there is a specific time to perform them. Learning differs in this regard. Learning Torah is above time. Any time we are able to learn we must learn. (See Shavuot 2013)

The Rambam (Talmud Torah perek alef) writes that every Jew is obligated to learn Torah. It is irrelevant how wealthy one is or how poor one is. Similarly, it doesn't matter if one is sick or not, he is obligated to learn. We are obligated to learn till the day we die. In perek gimal the Rambam elaborates on how important it is to learn. One who wants to merit the crown of Torah must minimize other physical pleasures. He should not divert his mind to other matters. He should make his learning priority one and his work secondary. He shouldn't say when he has more time he will learn, because perhaps he won't have more time to learn as stated in Avos. The Mishna in Avos (perek gimal) relates that one who is walking and interrupts his learning to comment on the beauty of a tree is chiev misa (as if he bears guilt for his soul). (רבי שמעון אומר) המהלך בדרך ושונה ומפסיק ממשנתו ואומר מה נאה אילן זה ומה נאה ניר זה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו מתחייב. **The Or Hachaim Hakadosh has no less than 42 explanations of the pasuk "If you**

will follow my decrees etc.” One of his explanations is; even when we are on the way and not in Yeshiva, we must continue to learn. This is why the pasuk uses a language of halicha/going.

Just as the reward destined for one who learns is great, so too, the punishment for one who doesn't learn is also great, as stated in the beginning of Yerushalmi Paya. Every morning we recite birchas HaTorah and say 'ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצבותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.' 'Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to engross ourselves in the words of Torah.' How could we get to this level of being engrossed in the words of Torah? The answer lies in the continuation of the beracha. 'והערב נא ה' אלהינו את דברי תורתך.' 'Sweeten please Hashem our God the words of Your Torah.' **If the Torah learning is sweet then we will want to learn more.** The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (Devarim 27,11) writes **if people would feel and recognize the sweetness, beauty and geshmak from learning, people would go crazy like mad men. People would run after it and push through any obstacle to learn. People wouldn't think about money or anything else because they would crave and desire Torah! The Torah encompasses all good.** (אם היו בני אדם מרגישים במתיקות ועריבות טוב התורה היו משתגעים ומתלהטים אחריה ולא יחשב בעיניהם מלא עולם כסף וזהב למאומה כי התורה כוללת כל הטובות שבעולם.)

The Chazon Ish (igros, chalek gimal egra alef) writes that **a prerequisite to acquiring Torah knowledge is having a longing, yearning and desire to learn Torah. The dearer the Torah is to us, the more our brains will open up to receive the Torah. This will then lead to proper diligence and toil.** The Radak comments on the pasuk in Tehilim (119, 16) and says when he thinks about Torah he becomes very happy. **One who enjoys learning will tend to learn more than one who doesn't enjoy what he is learning. Furthermore, one who enjoys what he is learning will tend to remember that which he learnt more than one who doesn't enjoy what he is learning.** This is why the Gra was able to learn for long uninterrupted periods of time unlike others. It is because he realized how sweet the Torah is! Rashi (Shemos 19, 5) says **if a person accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah it will become sweeter than honey, but as the Mechilta says, all beginnings are hard.** (אם עתה תקבלו עליכם יערב לכם מכאן ואילך, שכל.) **That's why we say והערב נא in the middle of birchas HaTorah! We are davening for sweetness in learning because many times in the beginning it can be difficult! This is analogous to a very cold pool. In the beginning it is freezing, but after a few minutes of swimming we will warm up.** We won't feel the geshmak immediately; only after we persist we will feel and taste the sweetness from the Torah learning. The yeitzer constantly tries to distract us and prevent us from learning, but we ask Hashem to make it sweet for us to be able to overcome any obstacle! **We must be patient. Just as a physical tree doesn't grow over-night, so too, spiritual trees don't grow over-night.** The Torah is referred to as a tree, as stated in the pasuk in Mishlay (3, 18) "עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה." "it is a tree of life to those who grasp it." **Becoming a talmid chacham takes time.**

The pasuk in Mishlay (27, 7) says "The sated soul will trample a honeycomb; but to the hungry soul, all bitter is sweet." The Gra explains that one who doesn't desire to learn will probably trample on its sweetness. However, one who is hungry and wants more Torah will be hungry even for a bitter Torah topic. Meaning, even though the topic at hand isn't so interesting and relevant, nevertheless he would enthusiastically learn that topic. The Mishna in Avos (perek alef)

states, drink from their words thirstily. (והוי שותה בצמא את דבריהם.) The Rabbeinu Yona explains the aforementioned pasuk in the following way. Someone who thinks he is satiated from learning will not appreciate the best devar Torah. Dissimilarly, one who desires to learn Torah will appreciate even the most basic idea.

Why is Torah knowledge acquired specifically through toiling? There are four different levels. דומם (something inanimate, such as a rock), צומח (something that grows such as a plant), חי (something that is alive such as an animal), מדבר (something that speaks aka humans.). The Kuzari says that there is a fifth level, us, the chosen nation, the Jewish people. Just like there is a big difference between צומח and חי, so too; there is a big difference between the rest of the world and the Jews. Rabbenu Yerucham says that there is actually a sixth level, those who toil to understand Torah. The Mishna in Avos (perek gimal) says beloved is man, for he was created in God's image; it is indicative of a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in God's image etc. Beloved are the people of Israel, for they are described as children of Hashem etc. Beloved are the people of Israel, for a cherished utensil was given to them etc. (הוא היה אומר חביב אדם שנברא בצלם חבה יתירה נודעת לו שנברא בצלם שנאמר (בראשית ט) "בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם." חביבין ישראל שנקראו בנים למקום חבה יתירה נודעת להם שנקראו בנים למקום שנאמר (דברים י"ד) "בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם." חביבין ישראל שניתן להם כלי חמדה חבה יתירה נודעת להם שניתן להם כלי חמדה שבו נברא (העולם שנאמר (משלי ד) "כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורת אל תעזובו.") This Mishna relates three categories; people, Jews and Jews who the Torah was given to. We clearly see that there is a difference between Jews and the Jews who toil to understand the Torah. Just like animals can't understand humans, so too; those goyim can't understand Jews. Just like goyim can't understand Jews, so too; those who don't toil to understand Torah can't understand those who toil to understand the Torah.