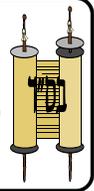




Kinder Torah



Parashas Chaye Sara

A Good Environment

The young couple stood outside the door of the home. They were both nervous; however, they mustered up the courage and knocked. A moment later, the door opened, and the Rav stood there, smiling at them.

"Shalom aleichem. Are you the *chossan* and *kallah* that called to make an appointment?"

"Yes we are, Rabbi."

"Please come in and make yourselves comfortable."

The couple entered the Rav's study and seated themselves in two comfortable chairs. The distinguished Rav, sat behind his desk, leaned forward and asked, "How can I help you?"

"We are planning to get married in a few weeks, *b'ezras Hashem*. We are about to begin looking for a place to live. We would like the Rav's advice and guidance on choosing the right neighborhood."

"That is a very good question. I must tell you that you are not the first young couple to ask this question. Your place of residence is an important decision. I give you a lot of credit for seeking the advice of the Torah in this area. No less of a person than Avraham Avinu dealt with this issue when seeking a wife for his son, Yitzchak."

"Really?"

Yes. Rav Moshe Feinstein, points out this fact in his *sefer*, *Darash Moshe*. It began when Avraham Avinu gave instructions to his servant Eliezer to choose a wife for Yitzchak from the city of Nachor. The *kallah* must come back to Avraham's home in Canaan to marry Yitzchak and live with him there. Under no circumstances would Yitzchak be allowed to marry a girl who refused to live near Avraham Avinu."

"Rabbi, what you are saying is almost unbelievable. Rivka, the young woman, was truly a *tsadekes*. She had superlative *middos*, foremost among them was her *chesed*. It is hard to imagine that Yitzchak would find a more suitable wife amongst the daughters of Canaan, where Avraham lived. Yet, if she refused to go, the marriage would not take place. How can it be?"

"That is precisely Rav Moshe's point. We learn from this the supreme importance of choosing the right place to establish one's home. You must live in close proximity to *tsaddikim*. Even a man such as Yitzchak Avinu and a woman such as Rivka Emainu could not be allowed to leave the company of the *tsaddik*, Avraham Avinu. So too it is with us. We must live in an area where *talmidei chachomim* live, emulate them, learn from them, and drink in their words. You must live near the Yeshiva. If I am not mistaken, my wife knows about an apartment that is one block away from the Yeshiva. It may just suit your needs."

"Rabbi, thank you so much. You have shed much light on the issue. When can we speak to the *Rebbetzin* about the apartment?"

"Right away."

The young couple did in fact rent the apartment and set up their home in a makom (place) of Torah. They raised a fine family,

imbued with Torah and Yiras Shomayim (fear of Heaven).

Kinderlach . . .

Where do you want to live when you get married? In a makom of Torah. Why? Because it is full of talmidei chachomim. You can learn from them. You can attend shiurim that they give, or learn privately with them, or ask them questions on Torah subjects. You can also learn from them informally by observing how they conduct themselves. Why wait until you get married? Learn from them now! If your Rebbe gets on the bus, sit next to him and discuss a Torah subject with him. Sit close to the Rav in the Beis HaKinesses and watch how he prays. Listen carefully to your shiurim from your Rebbees and learn as much as you can. Drink in their words, as a thirsty man drinks water. This is the way to become great. Stay in the company of talmidei chachomim.



Don't Brag

The man and woman stood at the entrance of the Rav's house. They had stood there once before - fifteen years ago. They knocked on the door. A few moments later, the Rav opened the door, smiling at them just as he did when he first met them.

"How are you?"

"*Boruch Hashem*. Does the Rav remember us?"

"Of course I do. You are the couple who came to me fifteen years ago to ask where you should live. My wife found you an apartment near the Yeshiva."

The couple was amazed at the Rav's memory.

"We came to thank the Rav for his advice. After that first apartment, we bought a home near the Yeshiva. My husband arranged a *chavrusa* with one of the *talmidim*. He also attended *shiurim*. Our sons learn in the Talmud Torah and the Yeshiva, and our daughters in the Beis Yaakov. My husband gradually found more and more time to learn with *chavrusas*. Today, fifteen years after we came to the Rav, he has made a *siyum* on *Shas* and has learned through the entire *Mishna Breurah*."

The husband smiled, a bit embarrassed.

"*Mazel tov!*" said the Rav. "You have taken advantage of living close to the Yeshiva, and learned a lot of Torah. Additionally, you are such a humble person. You would not brag about your spiritual accomplishments. Your wife had to tell me about them. Do you remember that I quoted you a *drasha* from Rav Moshe Feinstein to answer your question about where to live?"

"Yes. I remember it as clearly as if it was

yesterday."

"Rav Moshe has another *drasha* on the same parasha - *Chaye Sara*. The Torah, in very end of the parasha, relates the age of Yishmael - 137 years' (*Beresheet* 25:17). Why does the Torah take the trouble to write this seemingly insignificant fact?"

"Rashi answers that question. With this information we can calculate how many years Yaakov Avinu learned Torah with Shem and Ever."

"Very good. However, Rav Moshe is puzzled by this answer. Why did the Torah relate this information in such a roundabout way? Why did it not just say straight, 'Yaakov learned Torah for fourteen years with Shem and Ever?'"

That is a puzzling question."

"The answer is a lesson in humility. One should not brag if he learned a lot of Torah, for this is what he was created for (*Pirkei Avos* 2:8). The Torah itself does not 'brag' so to speak, by mentioning Yaakov Avinu's accomplishments directly. Instead, it humbly hints to them in a roundabout way. You embody this humility. You must have learned this *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos* very well, because you do not brag about it."

"Rabbi, my Torah learning, as well as everything else that I have accomplished is a *chesed min HaShomayim* (kindness from Heaven)."

"May Hashem continue to grant you such *chassadim* and even more."

"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

Our story speaks about not bragging about the Torah that you learned. This concept can be broadened to include all types of bragging. Talking about your accomplishments for no constructive purpose stems from the bad middah of gaava (pride). Gaava is one of the three bad middos that takes a person out of reality. It can cause another person to feel low, resentful, or jealous. This can lead to loshon hora, machlokes, sinas chinam, and all sorts of terrible aveyros. Kinderlach, stay far away from bragging. Instead, take quiet satisfaction in enjoying all of the good that Hashem has done for you.

Parasha Questions:

- Did Yishmael do teshuva? (25:9 and Rashi)
- What did Avraham give to Yitzchak? (Rashi 25:5)
- Who was Keturah? (Rashi 25:1)

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