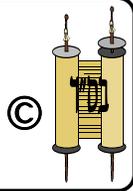




Kinder Torah

Parashas Va'eira



In memory of Moshe ben Dov Baer ❖ Beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather ❖ From the cousins

Admit It!

"Isn't this forest beautiful, dear?"
"Yes, so quiet and peaceful."

Mr. and Mrs. Shafer are enjoying their walk through the woods. Suddenly, whoosh! A medium-sized rock whizzes by Mr. Shafer's face.

"What was that? A rock! Who threw it?"
"It was one of those two young boys over there, dear. I saw them."

Mr. Shafer looks up and sees the two boys laughing. He slowly walks over to them.

"Boys, that rock flew right by my face. Another two inches and it could have landed in my eye. This is a serious matter. Now please, tell me which one of you threw it."

The boys look at each other and smile.

"Not me," the first one said.
"Me neither," chimed in the second one.
"Boys, this is no joke. My wife saw one of you throw the rock. Now, the guilty one must admit his mistake."
"You are the one making a mistake, mister. We didn't throw any rock."

Mr. Shafer is undaunted. There is an important message that needs to be heard here. He calmly continues.

"Boys, nothing bad will happen to you. In fact, there is something very good and valuable to be gained from admitting your mistake. Now, I ask you again, who threw the rock?"

Mr. Shafer looks into the eyes of the boys. First the first one, then next the second one. Back and forth he looks at them. A few minutes pass. Finally, the face of one of the boys begins to soften. His eyes fall. He opens his mouth to speak.

"I did it sir. I threw the rock."
"I see. First of all, young man, I want you to know that I forgive you completely. I was startled and frightened by the rock, but I hold no grudge against you."
"Thank you very much, sir."
"Secondly, I want you to know that your confession has accomplished something very important."
"What, sir?"

"It has made a positive impression in the Heavenly Worlds up above."
"Really? How do you know that, sir?"
"We learn it from this week's parasha, young man. Paroh and his nation were in the midst of being bombarded by the plague of hail. Ice on the outside, fire on the inside, these ancient ballistic missiles were the size of watermelons! They landed on trees and knocked them down. They cracked open and the fire inside burned everything that it touched. People and animals were also struck down by the huge hail balls. They wreaked total havoc

upon the land of Mitzrayim. What was Paroh's reaction to all of this?"
"He sent for Moshe and Aharon. When they arrived he confessed (Shemos 9:27)."

"Excellent! He said, 'I have sinned this time. Hashem is the Tsaddik and I and my nation are the evil ones.' Do you know what reward he earned for that confession?"
"Please tell me, sir."
"Rav Zalman Sorotzkin points out that the Mitzri soldiers who drowned in the Yam Suf received *kevura* (burial) in the merit of Paroh's confession. The nation of Mitzrayim murdered and tortured the Jews in the cruelest possible way. Paroh sheched Jewish babies and bathed in their blood. He threw them into the river and he built them into the walls in place of bricks. He worked his slaves day and night, forcing them to sleep in the fields



to make their quota of bricks. He gave women's work to men and vice versa."
"Oy va voy."
"Now look at Paroh's confession. He confessed under extreme duress - in the midst of a terrifying destructive plague. After the plague ended, his heart hardened and he returned to his evil ways. How much was such a half-hearted confession worth?"
"Apparently a lot."

"Yes. The soldiers of this cruel nation merited burial after their death in the Yam Suf. Such is the power of confession. Young man, you have earned for yourself something truly great."
"Thank you so much, sir. May I ask you something?"
"Yes. Please do."
"Why is confession so great? What gives it such power?"
"Excellent question, young man. Before one confesses, he realizes that he has done something wrong. That is the first step in solving problems. That is the first

step in self-improvement. That is the first step in rising to higher *madraygos* (spiritual levels) in Avodas Hashem. That is the first step to greatness."
"Wow!"

"We were all sent down to this earth to work on ourselves. Hashem wants us to work hard to become the best that we can be. To do that, we need to realize our weaknesses. We have to admit our mistakes. If a person thinks that he is always right, he will never improve. He will be stuck forever in the same place, repeating the same avevros over and over again. After 120 years, what will he have to show for his life?"

"Not much."
"Exactly. Fortunate is the person who realizes his mistakes, admits them, and works on correcting them. He is fulfilling his purpose in this world. He deserves all of the blessings."
"Thank you so much sir. You have taught me so much. You have changed my whole outlook on life."
"May Hashem bless you with much success young man. May you rise to the highest levels and become a big tsaddik!"
"Amen!"

*Kinderlach . . .
We make mistakes. It is a part of life. We were sent down to this world to perfect ourselves. An important part of this is correcting our mistakes. The first step is realizing that we have erred. How fortunate are we when someone points out a mistake to us! He is doing us a big favor! We should thank him! Then we should admit that we are wrong. We should deeply regret what we have done. Sometimes an apology is necessary. The next time that we pray Shemoneh Esray we can formally confess to Hashem in the blessing of "se-lach lonu." We can complete our teshuva by resolving to never repeat the avevra again. This is the path to greatness, kinderlach. Grow from your mistakes. Admit it.*

- Parasha Questions:
- Why was the barley destroyed by the plague of barad? (9:31 and Rashi)
 - Why was the wheat and spelt not hit by the barad? (9:32 and Rashi)
 - Why did Moshe not pray in the city? (Rashi 9:29)

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