



KINDER TORAH

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PARASHAS KEDOSHIM

THE HOUSE OF HASHEM

"Did you hear the news about Mr. Finagler?"

"No, what happened to him?"

"He has been appointed Secretary of State."

"I am sure he is very happy."

"He certainly is. He has been maneuvering in political circles for years to get an appointment like this. He works day and night going to all of the party's functions – dinners, campaigns, and fund raising events. He pushes himself to the limit doing 'favors' for the right people, trying to gain their approval. He has one singular goal in mind – to get close to the president. Now, with all of his efforts, he has reached a pinnacle. He is the Secretary of State."

"It is amazing what people will do to get close to someone in a powerful position. They are willing to sacrifice tremendous amounts of time and effort. Mr. Finagler should be an inspiration for all of us."

"Really? A politician? Inspiration? I would have thought the opposite. The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (1:10) tells us to hate being in a position of power, and warns us not to be friendly with government authorities. Another Mishnah (2:3) heeds us to be careful around government officials. They only act to serve their own interests. Mr. Finagler is the epitome of someone acting only for his own interest."

"True. However, I was speaking about another aspect of his rise to political power. The Chofetz Chaim in his sefer 'Torah Ore,' chapter seven, uses the politician to illustrate an important concept. He begins by elucidating a verse in this week's parasha. 'You shall be holy, for I Hashem am holy; and I have separated you from the nations to be Mine' (Vayikra 20:26). A person's *madrayga* (spiritual level) in *olam habo* is dependent upon how much holiness he acquires in this world. When he sanctifies himself, by learning Torah and performing mitzvos, he brings himself closer to Hashem's holiness, as the verse states, 'You shall be holy, for I Hashem am holy.' How does this work? The Almighty draws us as close to Him as we want to be. As we become holier, He responds in kind by drawing us nearer to His Holiness. The Chofetz Chaim adds, 'You should know that bringing one's soul close to the Almighty is the greatest possible pleasure that can possibly exist in the universe. This is what Dovid HaMelech requested (Tehillim 27:4). "One thing I ask of Hashem; that I shall seek. May I dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to visit His Sanctuary." To sit in Hashem's house and behold His sweetness is the greatest

pleasure of eternal delight. We have no way to measure its value."

"That alone should be motivation enough to get close to Hashem."

"You are right, however, the Chofetz Chaim concludes with the parable of the politician. We see how he works day and night to try to advance himself closer to the president. He pursues even the smallest possibility of success with all of his might. If this is how a person conducts himself with an earthly ruler, who is mere flesh and blood, how much more so should we make our way closer and closer to the King of Kings! We must learn His Torah and perform His mitzvos with all of our might, all of the time. That is the way to move up the ladder into Hashem's inner circle. He will respond in kind by coming closer to us, and in so doing give us the greatest pleasure possible in the universe."



Kinderlach . . .

Who wants pleasure? Everyone. Where is the greatest pleasure? At the top. The top of what? The top rung of the spiritual ladder to success. There you will find the ultimate closeness to the Almighty. Just as the politician puts all of his effort into climbing the political ladder to success, so too we must put our full strength into ascending the spiritual ladder. Just as each step brings the politician closer to the president, so too each mitzvah brings us closer to Hashem. Get to the top, kinderlach, and fulfill Dovid HaMelech's ambition. Dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of your life, to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to visit His Sanctuary.

FEAR

"A man shall fear his mother and his father" (Vayikra 19:3). The root word *yira* (fear) describes the reverence that a person must have for his parents. The Sefer Charedim (9:26) explains that this is a very strong word, used to describe the awe that a person must have for the King of Kings. An absolute ruler can send a person to his death. Therefore, one is in awe of him and fears for his life. This is

the same reverence that one should have for his parents.

Imagine a son who has become a very successful person. He is the head of a well-known organization. He is wearing the finest clothing and presiding at a very important meeting. Into this meeting walk his father and mother. Without hesitation, they approach their son and begin to tear his clothes. Can you imagine the humiliation? Next they proceed to hit him on the head and spit in his face. Their son is in utter disgrace, the laughingstock of the entire organization. Yet he cannot show the slightest sign of anger or take revenge in any way. Rather he must be quiet out of fear of Hashem and the awe of His Greatness (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 240:3). For the Torah equates the fear of parents to the fear of the Holy One.

Kinderlach . . .

We should never suffer humiliation and embarrassment from our parents. That is the ultimate test of fearing them. We face many smaller tests every day. We fulfill the mitzvah of fearing them by not sitting or standing in their regular place, not contradicting or verifying their words, and not calling them by name. In our days, we are familiar with fear. Danger is all around us. Use that emotion constructively, by directing it toward those whom we must really fear. Our parents and Hashem.

Parasha Questions:

- What terrible things happen to a man who gives his son to the idol Molech? (20:2,3)
- Name three types of forbidden mixtures (19:19)
- How do we describe a dayan (Rabbinical judge) who corrupts the din (Torah law)? (Rashi 19:15)
- How do we honor a chochom? (Rashi 19:32)

Important

Announcement

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