

# Kindert Torah

בס"ד

## Parashas Emor

### Honor His Torah

Rebbe Akiva had 12,000 pairs of talmidim (students) from the city of Givas to Antifras. They all died within a short span of time (during *sefiras ha'omer*). Why? Because they did not honor each other. (Gemora Yevamos 62b). The Maharsha explains that they did not honor each other's Torah. What does that mean? Is not honoring your friend's Torah a crime that carries the death penalty? The Maharsha goes on to explain that the Torah is our life. As the verse states, "Ki hou chayecha" (Devarim 30:20). Negating someone's Torah makes his life worthless in your eyes. That is a serious crime indeed.

The talmidim of Rebbe Akiva were on a very high *madrayga* (spiritual level). What was considered a serious *aveyra* (sin) for them might not even be noticeable to us. Yet, we can still learn an important lesson from them. We are now in the period of *sefiras ha'omer*. We have an opportunity to work on honoring our friend and his Torah. The following story illustrates one aspect of *kovod* (honoring) Torah in our times.

"I don't agree with you. That is not the *p'shat* (basic explanation) of this gemora."

"And I don't agree with you. You do not understand the *p'shat*."

"We seemed to have reached an impasse here. What should we do?"

"Let's go to the Rosh Yeshiva. He will tell us who is right."

The two talmidim approach the Rosh Yeshiva.

"May we ask the Rosh Yeshiva a question?"

"Of course. Go right ahead."

"My *chavrusa* (study partner) and I disagree about the *p'shat* in this gemora. Can the Rosh Yeshiva tell us who is right?"

The Rosh Yeshiva smiled. He saw an opportunity to teach these two students an important principle.

"Yes, of course. Moshe, how do you understand this gemora?"

Moshe proceeded to carefully explain the *p'shat*, as he understood it.

"Very good, Moshe."

"Am I correct?"

"I'll tell you in a minute. First, Yaakov, can you please explain what Moshe said?"

"I don't agree with Moshe's *p'shat*. I want to say my own *p'shat* in the gemora."

"I understand, Yaakov. I want to hear your *p'shat*. And I am sure that Moshe also wants to hear your *p'shat*. But first you have to understand your *chavrusa's p'shat*."

"I see. Can you please repeat what you said, Moshe?"

And so, Moshe carefully repeated his *p'shat* in the gemora. Yaakov listened carefully, understood, and repeated Moshe's *p'shat* to the Rosh Yeshiva.

"Excellent Yaakov. Now, let's hear your *p'shat*."

And so, Yaakov explained the gemora, the way he understood it.

"Very good Yaakov. Now, Moshe, can you please explain Yaakov's *p'shat* in the gemora."

Moshe proceeded to explain the gemora according to Yaakov's understanding.

"Can the Rosh Yeshiva please tell us who is right?"

"With pleasure. But first, can you both tell me precisely on which point you disagree?"

The two talmidim thought for a long time. Finally, Moshe spoke up.

"Excellent, Moshe. That assumption is precisely your point of disagreement with Yaakov. Now, are you correct in your assumption?"

Moshe thought again for a long time.

"No, I am not. There is a verse in the Torah which explicitly contradicts my assumption."

"Wonderful, Moshe. You really know your Chumash."

"Thank you very much, Rebbe. You really taught us an important lesson."

"Thank you Yaakov and Moshe. You are both excellent talmidim. You both know how to learn well, and have important insights in the gemora. It gives me much pleasure to see you listening carefully and trying your best to understand your *chavrusa's p'shat*. That is the way to honor your friend's Torah."

Kindertlach . . .

Torah is our life. Your *chavrusa's* Torah is his life. Listen to him. Understand him. Respect his opinion. Respect his Torah. This is our *avodah* (spiritual work) during these days of *sefiras ha'omer*. We are working to prepare ourselves for receiving the Torah on *Shavu'us*. Hashem gives Torah to those who love it and honor it. Honor your friend's Torah. Hashem will repay you.

### The City of Happiness

"I am really exhausted," the man thought to himself. "I worked so hard this Erev Shabbos. I hope I have enough strength to concentrate on my *tefillos* (prayers). Oy am I tired. How am I going to conduct the Shabbos table? Will I have enough patience? What will I do if the children don't behave? I know. When I walk in the door, I will tell everyone how I feel, and ask them to please be sympathetic. Hmmm. Will that really work? It does not sound too promising. Little children cannot behave perfectly the whole

evening. Oy, what will I do?"

The *tefillos* finished and the man begins walking home. The crisp cool night air fills his lungs. He takes a few deep breaths, and speaks to himself.

"I am so fortunate. Hashem has given me a beautiful family. They are all waiting for me to come home with a smile on my face, to begin the Shabbos table."

His mood begins to perk up.

"I have my health. I have a good livelihood. We have such nice neighbors."

He takes more deep breaths, gaining strength with every step.

"We live in a beautiful neighborhood. I have time to learn Torah. I have a good *chavrusa* (study partner). Hashem is so good to me. How can I be in a bad mood?"

The man reaches the front door of house. He knocks, then opens the door with a big smile on his face.

"Good Shabbos everyone!"

"Good Shabbos Abba."

"These are Hashem's appointed times" (Vayikra 23:4). The Torah goes on to describe the cycle of the Jewish year, with all of its festivals, and many of their mitzvos. Later in Parashas Re'eh (Devarim 16:14-15) the Torah lists more mitzvos relating to the holy days. "You shall be happy on your festival . . . you will be completely happy." We have a mitzvah, which commands us to be happy. Can it be? Can Hashem obligate us to control our mood and our frame of mind? Yes. Therefore, it must be possible. He never commands us to do the impossible.

The Pele Yoatz discusses techniques to bring one to a state of happiness. Imagine that you just found a huge sum of money. Would anything interfere with your joy? When you are learning Torah and doing mitzvos, you are receiving a reward far, far greater than all of the money in the world. At these times you should be elated! What if you were saved from a threat of certain death? Your joy would be endless. How happy you would be to thank the person who saved you. Hashem brings you your food every day. Without it you would surely die. How thrilled you must be to thank Him when saying your blessings. His gifts are endless.

Kindertlach . . .

Don't wait around for happiness to come to you. Go get it. Make a list of ten things that give you pleasure. Imma's delicious cooking. Imma's warm smile and hug. Getting 100% on a test. Going on a nice vacation. Making Hashem happy. Don't you feel happier already? It's all up to you. Remember that the City of Happiness is in the state of mind.

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