

Kinder Torah

Parashas Acharei Mos - Kedoshim

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Avigdor Ben Avraham and Breina Chaya Bas Efraim
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Groffman ז"ל ✦ Yaahrtzeit ז' אייר

Judge Him, Love Him

Chaim, can you go to the grocery store for me?"

"Sure thing, Imma."

"Here is the list of things to buy. *Hatzlachta rabba* (have much success)."

"Thank you Imma."

Chaim approaches the grocery store. He sees his best friend Avi, sitting on the step next to the store. He is deep in thought, with his head resting on his hands.

"How are you, Avi?"

"What? Oh, Chaim, it's you. I didn't notice you."

"I saw that you were deep in thought. Is everything okay?"

"Yes, Chaim. I'm just doing a mitzvah."

"Oh, I'm sorry that I disturbed you. What mitzvah were you doing, learning Torah?"

"No, I was judging someone favorably."

"That's interesting. Why were you concentrating so intensely?"

"I'll explain. A few minutes ago I went into the store to buy a few things for my mother. I saw a boy going around the store, taking groceries off the shelves, and placing them into bags. When he had filled up two bags, he walked straight out of the store without checking out or paying."

"A *ganif* (thief)! Which way did he go? Let's get him and bring back the stolen goods!"

That was my first thought, Chaim. Then I recalled a verse in this week's parasha, 'You shall judge your fellow with righteousness' (Vayikra 19:15). This is the mitzvah of judging the deeds of our fellow Jews favorably, even though it appears that they have done something wrong. The sefer, 'Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'Avodah' - shaar 1, chapter 8, elaborates. When you see your friend do or say something or say something that appears to contradict the Will of Hashem, immediately judge him favorably. Think the following thought, 'Behold I am prepared and ready to fulfill the positive mitzvah of, "You shall judge your fellow with righteousness."' Then put your strongest effort into thinking of a good reason to justify his action."

"Great! What *zechus* can we find for the boy?"

"It could be that his mother phoned in the order to the grocery store and arranged payment. Her son was just picking up the items."

"Excellent, Avi! I have another *zechus*."

"Go ahead, Chaim."

"Perhaps the boy gets the same order every day, and the storekeeper already knows exactly how much it costs. He just writes it down on the family's account."

"Very good, Chaim. I just thought of a different *zechus*. Perhaps the boy is from a poor family, and a *tsedaka* organization pays for the groceries."

"That may be true, but someone would still have to add up the total price of what he took."

"Not necessarily. However, even if the *zechus* is not true, or far fetched, we still get the mitzvah of judging favorably. The Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'Avodah explains that just the effort of trying to think of a *zechus* gives Hashem *nachas ruach*."

"Wow! Listen to this one. Perhaps the boy just forgot to pay, and the storekeeper did not notice him."

"Quite possible."

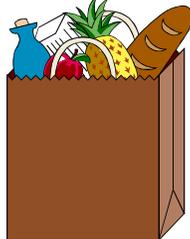
And so, Chaim and Avi go back and forth, thinking of many creative zechuyos for the boy with the grocery bags. They decide to inform the store owner of what happened.

Excuse me sir."

"Yes young man."

"A few minutes ago, I saw a young boy fill up two grocery bags and walk out if your store without paying."

"Nothing to worry about young man. I have a silent partner who owns half of this store. That boy is his son. He regularly takes groceries for the family. When he gets home, my partner adds up the



prices, and we settle up at the end of the month. Thanks for your concern."

"Thank you for removing the suspicion from that boy, sir."

Chaim buys the groceries that his mother needs, and they leave the store.

"You were right, Avi. The boy was not a *ganif*."

"Don't you feel better about him, now?"

Yes. I have gained a new insight. I can see why this mitzvah gives Hashem *nachas ruach*. We are all His *kinderlach*, as the verse states, 'You are children to Hashem your G-d' (Devarim 14:1). A parent will always see the positive in his child. He is happy when others do the same. If he hears about anyone judging his son negatively, he will become angry with that person. How much more so Hashem wants us, His children, to judge each other favorably. When we do that, we receive a special reward, as the Gemora states, 'One who judges his friend favorably receives a favorable judgment from Heaven' (Shabbos 127b)."

"There is another side to this mitzvah, Chaim."

"Please, tell me about it, Avi."

"The Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'Avodah ties it

to the mitzvah - 'You shall love your fellow as yourself.' This mitzvah is so important that Rebbe Akiva called it the fundamental rule of the Torah. Hillel the Elder elaborated: 'What is hateful to you, do not do to others. This is the whole Torah (mitzvos between man and his fellow man). The rest is explanation' (Gemora Shabbos 31a). The Sifsei Chachomim adds that one who is careful to guard the mitzvos between man and his fellow man will surely guard the mitzvos between man and Hashem."

I see. It really makes sense. One cannot truly love his friend if he thinks he is a bad person. If he sees him do something which appears bad, and does not judge him favorably, he will think that his friend is evil. How can he love a person like that? It is clearly impossible. Ultimately we must work hard to prove that he is truly good. Then we will completely love him."

"That is exactly what the Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'Avodah says. These two mitzvos compliment each other. By judging your friend favorably, you will come to love him. Who do we find it the easiest to judge favorably? Our loved ones. The mitzvos build upon each other and create a strong bond of love between people."

"Thank you very much for sharing that with me, Avi. You have really inspired me. I want to change my life. I want to love my fellow Jews and judge them favorably!"

Kinderlach . . .

What do we do when we come to a difficult kasha (question) in a sugya (subject) in the Gemora? We wrack our brains to think of terutzim (answers). We look at the kasha from this angle and find one teretz. Then we look from another angle and find another teretz. The more motivated you are, the more terutzim you will find. Every person is a sugya. Sometimes his deeds present a kasha. We must try to find terutzim. This is an intellectual exercise. We must look at his deed from every possible angle and try to put it in a good light. For every zechus that we find, or try to find, we get a mitzvah. This is not just any mitzvah, but the fundamental rule of the Torah! Kinderlach, get motivated! Put your thinking caps on! The next time you see someone doing something which looks bad, treat it like a kasha. See how many terutzim you can come up with. Judge your fellow Jew favorably, and watch your love for him grow.

Parasha Questions:

- What may we not say to a convert? (Rashi 19:33)
- Which evils result from cheating with weights and measures? (Rashi 19:35)
- What reason does the Torah give for not eating blood? (17:11)
- What is the punishment for eating blood? (17:10)

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