

Kinder Torah

Parashas Behaalosecha

Celebrating the Nine Year Anniversary of Kinder Torah

Always Speak Softly

"Shulie, you have fifteen minutes until bedtime."

"Thank you for reminding me, Imma."

Fifteen minutes pass, and Shulie is not ready for bed.

"Shulie, it is now your bedtime and you are still not ready. I have warned you about this many times. I have also told you about the consequences. For every minute that you are late, you will go to bed one minute earlier tomorrow night. I am now beginning to count the minutes."

Shulie's mother calmly looked at her watch. Shulie rushed to put on her pajamas, wash her face, brush her teeth, and prepare the water for washing her hands in the morning. She folded her clothes and lay down in bed.

"How much time did I take, Imma?"

"Ten minutes, Shulie. Tomorrow you go to bed ten minutes earlier."

"I should have listened to you fifteen minutes ago, Imma. I really want to thank you for not getting angry with me. You could have easily gotten upset by my not listening."

"I learned to have patience from my mother, Shulie. She hardly ever got upset. I also had many teachers in school. Some got angry with the class, and some did not. I have to struggle to remember the words of those who became angry. However, the teachings of the soft spoken teachers are still with me."

"I see."

"I once asked a teacher how she managed to remain calm. She pointed me to the Sifsei Chachomim in this week's parasha."

"Can you please share it with me, Imma?"

"Yes, Shulie. The Torah is relating the episode where Miriam spoke loshon hora about Moshe Rabbeinu (Bamidbar 12:1-16). Hashem summoned Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam to the Ohel Moed. He spoke to Aharon and Miriam saying, 'Please hear My words.' The Sifsei Chachomim explains that Hashem only requested that they listen to Him. Although He was angry (so to speak) with them, He spoke with *nachas* (pleasantness). If He had spoken angrily, His words would not have been heard. *Kal v'chomer* (how much more so) a person, who is only made of flesh and blood, must speak softly."

"I hear those words clearly, Imma."

"The Ramban wrote a famous letter, Shulie on the evils of anger and the benefits of patience. All sorts of *gehennom* rule over one who becomes angry. It is truly horrible."

"We see what an ugly *middah* anger is even in this world, Imma."

"Yes, Shulie. The Ramban advises, 'Accus-

tom yourself always to speak all of your words softly to everyone, at all times, and in this way you will be saved from anger.' The Ramban does not make any exceptions - always, all of your words, to everyone, at all times. By constantly guarding the tone of your voice, you will learn to control your anger. And you will be saved from *gehennom*, a fate too horrible to describe. In addition, your words will be heard. Therefore speaking softly is more effective than raising your voice."

"Wow, Imma. You convinced me. I'm going to listen to the words of the Ramban and do my best to follow them."

"Hashem should bless you with great patience, Shulie."

Kinderlach . . .

Speaking softly is a great middah. It leads to something even better - patience.

Wouldn't it be great to never get upset?

You can do it! Follow the words of the Ramban. Speak softly always, all of your words, to everyone, at all times. The Ramban himself advises reading his letter once a week, in order that the words enter your heart. You can do it kinderlach. Read the Ramban's letter each week. Speak softly. Always.



How Do You Ask?

"Imma, I'm home from school and I'm starved. Give me food!"

*Chaim's mother is a bit startled by her son's abruptness. She realizes that Chaim needs a lesson in how to make a request. However, first things first. When a person is hungry, it is more difficult for him to hear words of *tochacha* (correction). She put the food in front of him, he made his blessings, and hungrily ate.*

"Mmmm, these hamburgers are delicious, Imma. Thank you very much. I was so hungry."

"My pleasure, Chaim. May I share a few words of Torah with you from this week's parasha?"

"I always love your Divrei Torah, Imma."

"Thank you, Chaim. We know that Miriam was stricken with *toraas* because she spoke loshon hora about Moshe Rab-

beinu. Moshe was concerned for her, so he offered a short prayer for her recovery. 'Please Hashem, heal her now!' (Bamidbar 12:13). Moshe could have just said the words, 'Heal her now.' Why did he add, 'Please Hashem'? Rashi answers this question with the words of the Sifrei. The Torah is coming to teach us *derech erez* (proper conduct). Before asking someone for something, one should say a few words of supplication. The Even Ezra comments that Moshe was praising the Almighty. 'You, Who have the power to do so, please heal her now.' The Sforno explains that he was making a humble request. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin interprets this as a plea for mercy. The Ohr HaChaim calls it an appeal to Hashem's attribute of kindness. The common denominator of all of these *meforshim* is that a person should humble himself before making a request. This is very sensible, because the person making the request is lacking something. The other person can provide it for him. In that way, the provider is his superior. Should he not humble himself before one who is greater than he is?"

"I

understand, Imma. And I get the message. I am sorry. I was abrupt when I came in the door a few minutes ago. You always make such delicious and nutritious food for me. I really appreciate it. Please forgive me."

"I forgive you 100%, Chaim. And I admire you for recognizing your mistake. You have shown me that you possess real *derech erez*."

"Thank you Imma. I learned it from you."

Kinderlach . . .

How do we ask for things? With derech erez. A few words of humility should precede the request. "Please may I have..." "You are so kind..." "I appreciate what you do

for me..." Derech erez is a way of life. It applies to everything we do. An ehrlich (refined) person does everything with derech erez. The way he walks, speaks, prays, eats, handles business affairs, and relates to his family, colleagues, neighbors, and friends all show his consideration. Kinderlach let us all work on making derech erez our derech in life.

Parasha Questions:

- How was Miriam honored for her waiting for Moshe by the river when he was an infant? (Rashi 12:15)
- Why did Moshe not pray for a long time for his sister Miriam? (Rashi 12:13)
- Why is Tsipporah called Cushis? (Rashi 12:1)
- Who was the lad who informed Moshe that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp? (Rashi 11:27)

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