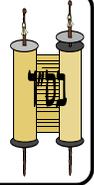




# Kinder Torah

Parashas Shemos



## The Perfect You

"I'm hungry Imma. What's for dinner?"

"Let's begin by washing for bread, Avi."

"Okay, Imma. Those slices of challah left over from Shabbos look delicious. May I have a few pieces?"

"Sure, Avi. However, first make your bracha of 'hamotzi' on this."

*Avi's mother hands him a small roll of dark bread. It looks a little old. It is certainly not as nice and tasty as the challah.*

"Imma, I would much rather make my bracha on the yummy challah than on this old dark bread. Are we not supposed to make our bracha over the food that is more choshuv (important)?"

"True, Avi. However, this dark bread has a very big maaleh (advantage) over the challah. It is shalem - a complete loaf."

"Yes, but the challah has many other points that are superior - taste, aroma, appearance."

"You are right, Avi. Therefore, we must look at how Hashem defines chashivus (importance). What is more choshuv in His eyes? He looks at shelaymus (completion) as the most important thing when making a bracha of hamotzi. It outweighs taste, freshness, and all of those other features."

"Amazing, Imma."

"Avi, I will tell you something even more amazing, Avi. Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l uses this example (which is from the Alter of Kelm) to teach us an important principle in avodas (serving) Hashem. The most significant thing that you can achieve in life is shelaymus. Spiritual perfection is life's greatest accomplishment. We see this point brought out in the parasha. The verses list the Jews who went down to Mitzrayim with Yaakov. Then it states that Yosef was in Mitzrayim (Shemos 1:5). Rashi points out that we already know this fact."

"Why does the Torah have to repeat it?"

"Rashi answers that Yosef remained a tsaddik in Mitzrayim. Despite all of the tests, he stood fast in his righteousness. He achieved shelaymus."

"How can we relate to spiritual perfection, Imma? Physical things are real to us. If you tell me I have to build a perfect building, I can relate to that. I must start by digging the foundations correctly. Then I must build the structure. I have to install the plumbing and wiring. The last step is the finishing. If everything is done exactly according to the plans, it is shalem. However, if you tell me that I have to do a mitzvah perfectly, my first instinct is to begin looking for shortcuts."

"Wonderful, Avi! Rav Yerucham stresses the exact same point! What is the solution? We have to work hard at keeping reality in perspective. The spiritual world is the real world, and perfect mitzvos are life's greatest achievement. Don't let other things cloud your view."

"Do you have a thought that I can focus on - like a motto to remind me what I should be doing?"

"Yes, Avi: *yiras chet* (fear of sinning). Rav Yerucham says that this will bring a person to shelaymus. One who is fearful of ruining his beautiful pure neshama (soul) will not sin."

"What a beautiful thought, Imma. Besides that, a person should be afraid of the punishment that he will receive for his aveiyros (sins). We see people suffering because of aveiyros throughout the Torah. We see a lot of suffering during the slavery in Mitzrayim in this week's parasha."

"Excellent, Avi. You are a very smart boy if you use this as a motivation to keep you from sinning."

"I want to be shalem, Imma. Just like Yosef HaTsaddik. I want to be the best me that I can be."

"You are off to a great start, Avi."



simple interpretation of the verse implies that the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu had killed an Egyptian, was now public knowledge. The day before he had seen the Egyptian beating a Jewish man. He struck down the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. The next day he saw two Jews quarreling and tried to make peace between them. The wicked one said to Moshe, "Do you propose to murder me as you murdered the Egyptian?" Moshe thought, "Indeed, the matter is known" (Shemos 2:14).

Rashi offers a deeper explanation of the verse from the Medrash. Moshe Rabbeinu was wondering why the Jewish people were subjected to such slavery, hard labor, and torture. When he heard the words of loshon hora spoken by the wicked man, he understood that this was the reason for their suffering. The Chofetz Chaim points out that they had committed other very serious sins. They worshipped avodah zara (foreign gods). Yet, until they spoke badly about their fellow Jews, the Satan (Evil Angel) could not speak badly about them. That is the tremendous destructive power of loshon hora. It allows you to be punished for other sins.

Kinderlach . . .

*We are all striving to do as many mitzvos and as few aveiyros (sins) as possible. Why? Because we know that we will receive reward for the mitzvos and punishment for the aveiyros. However, we learn something very important here. Our bad speech gives the accuser the power to speak badly about us. If we do not speak loshon hora, the news of our aveiyros will not reach Hashem's ears. Therefore, this one mitzvah can help us avoid punishment for all of our aveiyros.*

Parasha Questions:

- What reward did the Jewish watchmen receive for taking the lashes instead of forcing their brethren to make more bricks? (Rashi 5:14)
- What was Paroh's response to Moshe's request to free the Jewish people? (5:2)
- What new decrees did he issue as a result of the request? (5:6-13)

Kinderlach . . .

*What does shelaymus mean? Being the best you. Everyone is different, born with different talents. Your job in this world is to use what you have to the maximum. Build a beautiful perfect spiritual building. How do you do this? By staying far, far away from aveiyros. They will weaken your building, and eventually knock it down. Keep in mind that aveiyros are terrible for you. They ruin your life, and you receive very unpleasant punishments for them. If you do this, you are on your way to perfection. It is a life-long job. Start now, kinderlach. Set your eyes on life's greatest goal - perfection!*

### Now It Is Known!

"Indeed, the matter is known" (Shemos 2:14). What was known? The

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