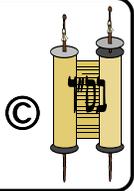




Kinder Torah

Parashas Mishpatim



מוקדש לעיני רוחמה בת יצחק הלוי ע"ה * נלב"ע ה' באדר א' תשל"ו

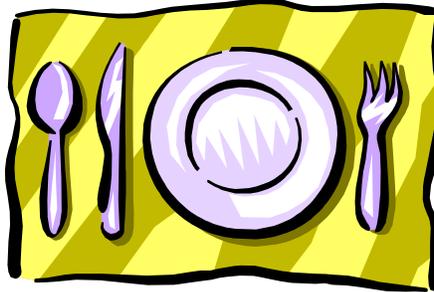
The Set Table

"It's late, dear."
 "I know."
 "Are you going to sleep soon?"
 "I hope so, dear."
 "Why do you have to stay up so late?"
 "I am struggling with this *sugya* (subject) in the Gemora."
 "Is this the first time that you are learning the *sugya*, dear?"
 "No, I have actually learned it about twenty five times."
 "And you are still struggling with it?"
 "This is the first time that I am teaching it. Tomorrow, b'ezeras Hashem, I will be giving a *shiur* on this *sugya* to the boys in the Yeshiva."
 "But you know the *sugya* backwards and forwards."
 "True, dear."
 "Can't you just teach it to them straight?"
 "There is a little more to it than that, dear. Come, let's have a look at this week's parasha and I will show you what I mean."
 "I'm all ears."
 "The first verse states, 'And these are the judgments that you shall place before them' (Shemos 21:1). Rav Shmuel Hominer zt"l, in his sefer Eved HaMelech, points out an important mitzvah that we learn from this verse. The words of the verse say, 'place before them' – the interpretation is that they should be placed like the setting on a table. When a man teaches his son or his student Torah, he has to take the trouble to explain the *sugya* to him in an organized fashion. It has to be arranged logically and neatly, like a set table."

"Amazing."
 "Yes. There is more. The verse uses the word, '*lifneihem*,' which has the same root as the word '*panim*' - 'face.' The Gemora (Eiruvin 54b) relates that the Rebbe must show his face to the students."
 "That seems so simple. No one would teach with his back toward the class. What is the Gemora telling us?"
 "The Torah Temima elaborates that the Rebbe must explain the subject. He cannot just teach the dry *halacha*, and leave the talmidim to figure out the logic on their own. Rather he must explain the give-and-take of the *sugya*. This dynamic interaction gives the students the '*taam*' – the taste of the Torah. The Rebbe must see to it that the Gemora is sweet in their mouths. They have to see the beauty and taste the sweetness of Hashem's wonderful Torah."
 "I never realized."
 "You may know the *sugya* backwards and forwards, however, if you do not present it in a clear, orderly fashion, you have not fulfilled your obligation. Even if it is clear, if it is dry, you are still lacking. The *sugya* must be alive for them. It must

be dynamic! It must be wonderful! Sweeter than the sweetest candy!"
 "That is wonderful, dear. Now I see why you are up so late. May Hashem give you the *Siyata Di'Shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance) to teach this *sugya* in all of its depth, beauty, and clarity."
 "Amen!"

Kinderlach . . . Hashem's Torah is the most beautiful thing in the world. It is deeper than the deepest ocean, and sweeter than the sweetest candy. It is complicated and involved, however with enough work it can be understood clearly. Hashem gives you a Rebbe to teach you the Gemora. He works very hard to learn and understand the sugya. Then he works even harder to present it to you in a clear, organized, and interesting fashion. Listen to him. Learn from him. Take the time and effort to understand what he is saying. If you do, the Torah will be alive to you. You will see its beauty and taste its sweetness. You will also learn how to understand and organize the sugya on your own. Then you will have acquired something more valuable than gold, silver, and diamonds. The skill of learning Torah. Divrei Elokim Chaim – the words of the Living G-d. This will give you reward and pleasure – forever.



Two for One

"It is freezing in here."
 "What do you expect? It is the middle of the winter and there are no windows. When are they ever going to finish this Beit HaKineset?"
 "They need money. Widows cost money."
 Just then the Gabbai clops his hand on the bimah. Everyone focuses their attention on him.
 "I know that everyone is very cold in here. I have a solution to the problem. I have spoken to a contractor who puts in windows. Normally he would charge \$10,000 to put all of the windows in this Beit HaKineset. However, if we deliver the money to him in cash by the end of the week, he is willing to do the job for \$5000. That means that every dollar that you give this week, is really like giving two dollars. It's two for one. Who wants

to be the first one to grab this mitzvah?"
 "I'll give \$100."
 "Me too."
 "I'm colder than you. I'll give \$200."
 "I wish that I could afford \$100."
 "Give what you can afford."
 "Okay, I'll give \$50."
 "Seventy two dollars!"

And so it went. Little by little the money added up. By the end of the week the congregation had donated . . . \$5000. And the windows were installed the next week. Everyone could now relax and pray in comfort. One of the congregants approached the Gabbai to express his hacoras hatov (appreciation).

"Where did you get the idea of two for one? It is absolutely brilliant! Now we can all pray in a nice warm Beit HaKineset. Thank you very, very much."
 "You're welcome. Actually the idea came to me when I read a verse in this week's parasha."
 "Please share it with me."
 "The verse states, 'You shall be holy people to Me' (Shemos 22:30). The Rambam in his Sefer HaMitzvos (Shoresh 4) quotes the Mechilta who explains this verse as follows. Every mitzvah that Hashem gives to Klal Yisrael adds *kedusha* (holiness) to them. The Rambam elaborates that a mitzvah does not just stand by itself. Rather it carries along with it another mitzvah – to be holy. One who fulfills a mitzvah is called holy. Therefore, he also fulfills the mitzvah of 'You shall be holy' (Vayikra 19:2). There is no difference between commanding a Jew to be holy, or to do mitzvos. They are one and the same. Therefore, for every mitzvah that a person does, he fulfills two mitzvos. The mitzvah itself and the additional mitzvah of 'You shall be holy.'
 "That's two for one!"
 "Exactly. That is where I got the idea from."
 "When I gave a dollar, and got credit for giving two dollars, I also got the mitzvah of being holy because I performed the mitzvah of giving tzedaka. That's three for one!"
 "Now you're really talking!"

Kinderlach . . . Everyone is looking for a good deal. The Torah gives us a great deal – two for one. We do one mitzvah and automatically get another one. What is that second mitzvah? Holiness. This idea is expressed many times in our prayers, "Make us holy with your mitzvos." The mitzvos have the power to make us holy. This is one of the greatest things that a person can accomplish. As the verse states, "You shall be holy, for I Hashem, your G-d am holy" (Vayikra 19:2). We can be like Hashem Himself. Grab the holiness kinderlach. Do mitzvos. You get a good deal. Two for one.