

Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Shemini

With Ability Comes Responsibility

"How was school today, Avi?"
"Great, Abba!"

"I am so happy to hear that, Avi. Tell me something that you learned."

"The Rebbe sent us home with a *kasha* (question). What was the sin of Nadav and Avihu that caused them to die?"

"That is a very deep *kasha*, Avi. Many *meforshim* answer it in many different ways. Some say that they entered the Mishkan after drinking wine, or that they did not wash their hands and feet properly. Some claim that they were not wearing all of the *Bigdei Kehuna* (Priestly Garments). Some say that they died because they decided *halacha* in front of Moshe Rabbeinu, and others explain that they were jealous of him and Aharon. Some even say that their death was a punishment for the *Chet Ha'egel* (Sin of the Golden Calf)."

"That sure is a wide variety of answers, Abba."

"Yes, Avi. This shows that their sin was so fine that it is barely recognizable in our eyes. If the Rabbinical geniuses of the past 3000 years do not clearly agree to their sin, then it must have been something that appears very slight to us."

"Abba, why were they so severely punished for something so subtle?"

"That is an even deeper *kasha*, Avi. People still puzzle over that question in our days, when they see righteous people suffering. The Avi Ezer has a very practical answer."

"Please tell me, Abba."

The greater a person is, the more Hashem expects from him. Hashem blesses a person with great *seichel* (common sense). Therefore, He wants him to use that *seichel* to make the correct decisions. What is right in one situation may be wrong in another case."

"That is a frightening thought, Abba. There are so many complicated decisions in life. How can we know what is the right choice?"

"The Avi Ezer explains, Avi. If a person will always fuse *seichel*, holiness, and fear of Hashem together when making decisions, he will never go wrong. Hashem created the person with a 'straight head'. His *seichel* works perfectly. It is man's job to guard it. Our fear of sin should motivate us to stay away from impure influences that corrupt our *seichel*. Then it will stay as straight as the day we were born."

"Abba, why were these righteous people punished?"
"The Avi Ezer relates that their *seichel* and righteousness were so great, that they were capable of achieving the highest levels of closeness to Hashem. Therefore, even the slightest mistake (in our eyes) was punished. That is why the verse

states, 'I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me' (Vayikra 10:3). Hashem is strictest with those who are closest to Him."

"I see, Abba. Hashem never gives us a test that is too difficult. If He presents us with a complicated problem, then He must give us the *seichel* to make the right decision."

"Correct, Avi. Sometimes the right decision involves asking someone who is older and wiser than you are. Do not worry. If you fear Hashem, and guard your holiness, He will always steer you in the right direction."

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem has given you a wonderful gift – seichel. Guard it with purity and fear of Hashem. Use it. Don't be lazy. When Hashem presents you with a difficult challenge, do your best to analyze it with your seichel. If the answer is not clear, then seek the help of older and wiser people. B'ezras Hashem you will rise to higher and higher madraygas (spiritual levels), and become very close to The Holy One.



The Shadow Knows

"I see you, Chaim."

"No you don't, Avi."

"Yes I do, Chaim."

"How can you see me, Avi? You are looking behind me. You don't have eyes in the back of your head."

"Correct."

"Do you have a mirror in front of your eyes?"

"No."

"I know, Avi. You have an electronic camera eye hidden in your clothing, and you are watching me on a miniature screen."

"You really have a vivid imagination, Chaim. However, I have no mini-screen."

"How about a fiber-optic lens viewer?"

"When you hear the answer, Chaim, you are going to plotz."

"Please tell me Avi. I'm plotting already."

"I see you by looking at your shadow. When you lift up your hand, your shadow lifts up its hand. When you take a step, your shadow takes a step."

"Aha! You don't really see me, Avi. You see what I am doing."

"Right, Chaim. Your shadow reveals what you are doing. Just like Hashem shows a person what he is doing."

"That's a big jump, Avi. From my shadow to Hashem."

"The Torah Temima makes this jump, Chaim, on this week's parasha."

"Now you really have my curiosity going, Avi. Where?"

"Chapter 11, Verse 43 repeats the word *tumah* (spiritual impurity) twice. The Gemora (Yuma 39a) uses the extra word for a *drasha*. If a person makes himself a little impure, Hashem adds on much more impurity. If a person defiles himself down here, Hashem defiles him from Up Above. If a person corrupts himself in this world, Hashem corrupts him in the next world."

"That looks like a bleak picture."
"Yes, but the converse is also true. The same Gemora interprets the very next verse to show that when a person comes to purify himself, he gets Heavenly assistance."

That is very reassuring, Avi. But what does this have to do with my shadow?"

"The Torah Temima uses a shadow as a parable to Hashem's relationship with a person. Dovid HaMelech writes, 'Hashem is your shade at your right hand' (Tehillim 121:5). The Torah Temima explains in the name of the Medrash that a person's shadow reflects his movements. Up, down, smile, frown; the shadow shows what the person does. So too, the Almighty shows a person what he does, by helping him along the direction that he is going. If a person is on his way up (in levels of *kedusha*) Hashem helps him rise higher."

"I see. Hashem is my shadow. He knows where I am headed."

"That's right, Chaim. 'The Shadow knows.'"

Kinderlach . . .

How are you doing in your Avodas (service of) Hashem? Are you moving in the right direction? Hashem will show you by helping you. If you are on the way up, Hashem will give you a lift. If you are learning well He may give you a good Rebbe and a good chavrusa. Try to be a good friend, and see if He sends you good friends. Pay attention, and you will see His Hand assisting you. Kinderlach may you always be moving upwards, and merit Siyata Di'shmaya all the way.

*(For further explanation see Nefesh HaChaim 1:7)

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