

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Behar

Leiv Tahor

“Excuse me; can you please direct me to Rechov Leiv Tahor?”

The man opens his eyes. He was enjoying a nice afternoon nap in the beautiful public park when this stranger came along.

“What? Which street do you want?”
“Leiv Tahor.”

“He has some nerve,” the man thinks. “He wakes me up to ask me directions. Doesn’t he see that I was sleeping? I will fix him good. I will give him directions to a street so far away that he will be lost for hours.” He stands up to point the man in the wrong direction.

“Let’s see - Leiv Tahor.”

He repeats the words to himself. “Leiv Tahor”. “Leiv Tahor”. Leiv tahor means pure heart. Am I really doing this with a pure heart? I am taking revenge. I am giving someone bad advice. That is onas devarim (wronging him with words). Perhaps he did not realize that I was sleeping. Even if he did, perhaps there was no one else around to ask. He may be under pressure to make an appointment. Why should I take revenge? He did not do anything wrong. I am going to give him the answer with a pure heart.

“Rechov Leiv Tahor. I am going that way myself. Follow me.”



The Torah prohibits wronging a person with words as the verse states, “You shall not wrong your fellow (Jew) with words, and you shall fear your G-d” (Vayikra 25:17). Rashi asks the following question: If someone gives bad advice, who will know if he really intended to wrong the person? Perhaps he just made an honest mistake. Therefore, the verse states, “You

shall fear your G-d.” He knows your thoughts. He knows the intentions of your heart. He cannot be fooled.

Kinderlach . . .

Onas devarim is a sin of the mouth and the heart. The mouth should never utter words that hurt one of our fellow Jews. However, even if these words are spoken there is another partner in the crime - the heart. Did the speaker really intend to hurt the person? Only two individuals know the answer to that - Hashem and the speaker. The Almighty cannot be fooled. He knows everything. Do not try to fool yourselves either, kinderlach. Do not try to convince yourselves that you are right, when you know in your heart that you are wrong. Keep your hearts pure. Serve Hashem with a leiv tahor.

He’s Taking Care of Us

“Chaim, you’re not going to believe this.”

“Believe what, Avi?”

“Believe what my teacher taught us today about the Shmitta (Sabbatical) year.”

“Is that the year where the farmer is forbidden to work the land?”

“Correct, Chaim. Once every seven years the land is allowed to rest.”

“What’s so unbelievable about that? Crop rotation is supposed to be a good thing.”

“My teacher quoted Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt”l, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva.”

“What did he say?”

“Those who observed the Shmitta year were like heavenly angels. Their strength was unfathomable. How can it be that a person can achieve such great things from the mitzvah of Shmitta?”

“Let’s think about this a minute, Avi. Let us try to imagine ourselves back in the days of the Beis HaMikdash (Holy Temple).”

And so, Chaim begins to tell a story.

“Abba, thank you so much for taking such good care of us. Boruch Hashem, we have a nice farm, and every day you go out and work the fields. You plow, plant, and tend to the crops. When they are fully grown, you pick them and bring them to Imma to cook into the delicious meals that we eat. We are so fortunate that we have such a farm and that it is able to provide food for our family.”

“Kinderlach, do you know what next year is?”

“What, Abba?”

“The Shmitta (sabbatical) year. Next year I take a big vacation – no plowing, planting, cultivating or working the land. We will see what will grow by itself. Even those crops will not be ours. They are hefker (ownerless) and free for anyone to take.”

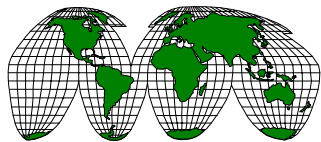
“But Abba, what will we have to eat next year? If you do not work the land, and anyone can take what grows by itself, we will have hardly any food.”

“Kinderlach, the Torah asks the exact same question in Vayikra, chapter 25, verse 20. The answer is that Hashem will provide for us. This year He will give us enough food to last until after the Shmitta year.”

Kinderlach . . .

That is the way it was. There are no records of any famine ever occurring amongst the Jewish people in Biblical times as a result of keeping the Shmitta year. In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, farming was the main occupation of the Jewish people. Without the crops of the farm, there would be literally no food to eat. Observing the Shmitta was therefore a very big test of one’s trust in Hashem. That is why Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says that those who observe Shmitta were compared to heavenly angels who have no desire to go against Hashem’s will. That is the strength of their trust in Him.

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