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ט"ז שבט תשע"א

פרשת יתרו

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Dvar Torah - Derech Eretz Kadma L'Torah (Part II) by Rabbi Mordechai Palgon



The Mishna in Pirkei Avos states "Derech Eretz Kadma L'Torah," treating others with proper respect comes before Torah. From this week's Parsha, we can gain deeper insight into this adage.

The Pasuk states (19:21), "Reid, ha'ed b'am...". Hashem told Moshe, "Go down from the mountain and warn the nation that they should not ascend or get near the mountain." Moshe responded (19:23), "No need to warn them. You have already warned them (not to ascend)." Subsequently, Hashem commands Moshe (19:24), "Go off the mountain and bring Aharon back up with you." After this, Hashem delivers the Aseres Hadibros.

This entire strange dialogue between Moshe and Hashem is annotated by the Medrash Rabbah (28:3). Hashem did not want Moshe on the mountain during the actual transmitting of the Aseres Hadibros. Having him there would create room for heretics to question the Divine authenticity of the Ten Commandments. After all, some might say that Moshe delivered them on his own.

At the same time, Hashem did not want to embarrass Moshe by telling him directly that he wasn't wanted on the mountain, so he hinted to him with an unnecessary instruction to descend and warn the people. Moshe did

not "get it", and therefore responded, "You already warned the people!" At this point, Hashem contrived another "excuse", telling him, "Go down and bring Aharon back with you." When Moshe went down, the Aseres Hadibros were given.

When we analyze this scenario, an amazing lesson emerges. The stage was set for the most auspicious moment in history: Hashem's declaration of the Aseres Hadibros. Heralded by an awesome display of thunder, lightning, smoke, shofar blasts and fire, Hashem's presence descended upon Har Sinai. This was THE moment that fulfilled the purpose of the entire creation of the world.

Yet, the entire moment is put on ice so that Hashem could minimize some hurt feelings of Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was the *anav mi'kol adam*, the most humble of men. Moshe was the leader of the Jewish People and Hashem's *eved ne'eman* - loyal servant. Certainly, under the circumstances, to prevent heresy and bolster *emunah baShem*, he would have gladly descended the mountain. At worst, there could only have been a small trace of hurt feeling, so what was the problem?

We see from here the amazing *chashivus* that Derech Eretz has in the eyes of Hashem. Even a small, questionable hurt feeling is worth delaying the giving of the Aseres Hadibros. We often write off these small "indiscretions" as no big deal; they'll get over it. We especially justify hurting someone's feelings when we have lofty objectives, even for Torah causes!

The lesson this Parsha teaches us is Derech Eretz Kadma L'Torah. Derech Eretz takes precedence because the Torah itself was delayed in its transmission to display proper Derech Eretz! May we all be *zocheh* to bolster our *bain adam l'chaveiro*, and in this merit, be *zocheh* to Torah itself!

Dvar Halacha – Using Food as a Garnish

The Sefer HaChinuch writes that the Torah forbade wasting food and other items to teach people to love and respect good things, and to keep away from bad, destructive things. Generally, it is forbidden to ruin food without a constructive purpose. Even with a constructive purpose, the Mishna B'rura (171:4) rules that one may only do so if it is *derech ha'olam*, the general way

people act with that food item. An example would be wasting food by using it as a table decoration in a way that will cause the food to be thrown out uneaten. Even though the food is being used in a productive way, if that is not the general *derech ha'olam*, one would not be permitted to waste food in such a manner.

YTC Spotlight

The Weekly Quiz

For how long is it Shabbos on planet Earth?

Answers or ideas for future questions may be submitted in writing to the Spotlight office or emailed to Quiz@ytcteam.net. The first correct answer submitted will be announced in the next Spotlight. You need not be a student to participate. Hatzlochah!

Answer to last week's question:
Q. In which tefilah do we say 24 words in a row that end with the letter "ך"?"
A. Kiddush Levana
Mazel Tov to Eli Hersher and Mr. Stuart Silverman, Esq. for being the first two to submit the correct answer.

11th Grade Finds Ways to Avoid "Test Stress" by Shmuel Goldis, Grade 11

This word sends chills down peoples spines and is generally feared by most; especially the student body. The word is "test". However, here in Yeshiva Toras Chaim, we are always finding ways to make student assessment a more fun and enjoyable process. Rabbi Palgon's 11th grade shiur has devised a plan that has accomplished this goal.



A chazara session at Nativei Ezra in Aventura

As the date of a test nears, days and nights are filled with stress, ardent studying and cramming. To eliminate these problems, reviewing one's learning on a regular basis helps. That is why Rabbi Mordechai Palgon's 11th grade shiur always studies in depth as a group before every exam. Before every *bechina*, a time and date is chosen for the

class to meet, learn and study the enjoyable way, preparing for the *bechina* over refreshments.

The class has taken these after-school learning sessions to a new level by meeting in various shuls around South Florida. Sessions have taken place in Aish Hatorah of Hollywood,

members of the class. Sessions have also taken place in Boca Raton and at the Miami Beach Kollel, and *be'ezras Hashem*, many more learning sessions are still to come.

So why stress over a test when a fun and easy alternative is present? The 11th grade *chazara* system enjoyable and productive for everyone to be successful!

If you would like to sponsor a learning session in honor of a loved one, or just "stam azoi," please call the Yeshiva office at 305-944-5344.



K' h a l Chasidim of North Miami Beach and Nativei Ezra of Aventura, each being "home" to

The Bostoner Rebbe, שליט"א, recently addressed the *Motzei Shabbos* אבות ובנים - Father & Son Learning Program at YTC.

