



פרשת משפטים

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ראשי הישיבה

Issue 9

Dvar Torah – The Transformational Power of Torah by *Rabbi Naftali Kalter*

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Parshas Mishpatim begins with the laws of Jewish male and female indentured servants – מצות עבד עברי. The ספר החינוך in explaining the main purpose of these commandments, writes:

זו: שרצה הקל שיהיה עמו ישראל...מלא ומעטר בכל מדות טובות ומעולות...והחסד והרחמים מן המשובחות שבעולם, ועל כן הזהירנו לרחם על אשר תחת ידינו ולגמל לו חסד.

The ספר החינוך is saying that Hashem wants us to be filled and crowned with good and lofty character traits. The most praiseworthy of those lofty character traits are kindness and compassion. In order to develop those traits Hashem gave us a commandment that trains us to be kind and compassionate toward those who are weak and dependent upon us.

The poor individuals whose life circumstances tragically forced them to sell themselves or their daughters into servitude are weak and helpless. We have great power over their lives and quality of life. The mitzvos of עבד עברי train us to treat them with utmost compassion. Our obligations to them are so great that say, "הז"ל, "מי שקנה קנה אדון לעצמו עבד", He who acquires a servant has acquired a master for himself.

The reality of human nature is such that it is said, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The challenge of having power and not being corrupted by it, or not abusing that power, is one

of the greatest tests a human can have. The Torah commands a king to have a ספר תורה by his side twenty four-seven and to be constantly learning from it in order to remind the king to Whom he is ultimately accountable. דוד loved him so much that דוד could not criticize him and wouldn't stop him from doing wrong. Therefore, he thought he could make himself king while דוד was still alive, knowing that דוד wanted to be king. He had the subtle power of being able to manipulate the weakness of his father's love and used that to rebel against his father. The challenge to not abuse the power we have over others in our relationships with them is overwhelming. We do it without even realizing we are doing it.

On the other hand, the Torah is showing us that if we live by the Torah we can actually rise to the level of becoming exceptionally kind and compassionate toward those over whom we have power. The very circumstance within which human nature, bereft of Torah direction, would make us into cruel and exploitative people, through the Torah and its mitzvos transforms us into people who are filled and crowned with the loftiest character traits of kindness and compassion.

Learning Torah and living by its commandments should be a transforming process that elevates us and develops G-d-like qualities. The ספר החינוך says that by crowning ourselves with these good and lofty character traits, "מתוך כך תחול הברכה עליהם" - in this way the blessings of Hashem will be bestowed on ישראל. May we all merit the fulfillment of this ברכה.

Dvar Halacha – Brachos by a Storm by *Yitzchak Elephant, 10th grade*

Our minhag is to say two separate brachos upon seeing lightning and hearing thunder. One says osa mosa bereishis after seeing lightning, as it demonstrates Hashem's active role in creating and running the world. When hearing thunder we say shekocho uguroso malay olem, because it demonstrates Hashem's great might and strength. In reality the brachos are interchangeable because both

lightning and thunder are manifestations of Hashem's active role in the world and of His might. Therefore, if one mixed up and recited the opposite bracha on lightning or thunder he is still yotzai bidieved. Additionally, if one heard thunder and saw lightening both at the same time he should only recite the bracha of osa maasa bereishis to cover both of them.

The Weekly Quiz

Q: In which word in Tehillim is a letter written three times consecutively? (Answer must include where the word can be found)

Answers or ideas for future questions may be submitted in writing to the Spotlight office or emailed to Quiz@ytcteam.org

The first correct answer submitted will be announced in the next Spotlight. You need not be a student to participate. Hatzlochah!

Answer to last issue's question

Q: In which paragraph of the weekday Shemoneh Esrei is a grandfather and grandson mentioned but no father and son mentioned?

A: אתה חונן, because it says the words *Adam* and *Enosh* which correlate to the people; *Enosh* was the grandson of *Adam*

Yasher Koach to Moshe Levy of the 11th grade for being the first to submit the correct answer.

R' Malkiel Kotler visits YTC by Moshe Talmi, 11th grade

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Last week, our Yeshiva had the zchus to daven with Hagaon Harav Malkiel Kotler Shlit" a, Rosh Yeshiva of Bais Medrash Gevohah in Lakewood - one of the largest, if not the largest, yeshiva in the world. Not only that, but after davening, Rav Malkiel addressed the entire Yeshiva with his words of chizuk towards learning Torah. Rav Malkiel was introduced by our own Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Luban, who mentioned how this Yeshiva really branches from the same roots as the Lakewood Yeshiva and that we, therefore, owe gratitude and Hakaras Hatov to Rav Malkiel who leads Klal Yisroel in our learning. After this introduction, Rav Malkiel



stood up and dove straight into Torah. He began one of his points by quoting a Mishna in Avos that says "Marbeh Yeshiva, Marbeh Chochmah" which seemingly means that in order to become a Talmid Chochom, one simply needs to increase the amount of time he spends learning Torah. But then, Rav Malkiel brought a Gemara in Niddah that concludes that a person also needs to also Daven for support in becoming a Talmid Chochom. However, even that wasn't enough, and after a strong Kashya and Teretz, Rav Malkiel gathered from the Gemara that it is the love and passion for Torah which is behind the davening that really makes the difference on the road to becoming a Talmid Chochom, because it expresses the fact that we are learning in order to become close to Hashem. Not only did Rav Malkiel use the Gemara and Mishnayos to

enlighten us and bring out his point, but, as a Talmid in the audience, one could see how he lived by his words and was really dedicated and passionate towards Torah himself. Later, in the culmination of his Shmuz, Rav Malkiel finished by giving the Bnei Yeshiva a Bracha that we should be Zoche to reach that level where we will be passionate about Hashem's Torah and therefore become great Talmidei Chochomim. Then, Talmidim were able to go over to Rav Malkiel personally and say "Shalom Aleichem" or even ask whatever question they had. Having one of the Gedolei Hador give over Divrei Torah to our Yeshiva was a unique and powerful experience that was meaningful for all our Talmidim in their Torah learning.



Learnathon by Shragie Jaskiel, 10th Grade

This year, Yeshiva Toras Chaim will be hosting its 17th annual Learnathon. Every year, the students eagerly await this incredible event. This year, like every year, the Learnathon will IY" H be held on Presidents Day, February 18, 2013. The program includes a vast number of unbelievable shiurim given by rebbeim currently in the yeshiva as well as those in the community. Also included will be a one-on-one chaverusa learning session. The Learnathon gives students the opportunity to learn an extra five hours throughout the program, in addition to their regular morning shiurim. Phone calls are being made as

students seek out sponsorships for this amazing feat which will provide the Yeshiva with funding in order to help enhance learning and extracurricular activities for the students. This event is open to the community and promises to be an unforgettable experience. It will surely instill further inspiration and love for Torah within the Yeshiva and beyond.

17th Annual Learnathon
25 Speakers & Topics throughout the Day

Monday, February 18, 2013
(Presidents Day)

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