



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

Learn Your Friend

Tsedaka (charity), tzedaka, please give me tzedaka."

The man was disturbed by the interruption. Why did these collectors always come when he was trying to learn Torah? He reached into his pocket and took out a small coin. "This will get rid of him," he thought. He handed the poor man the coin, barely looking up from his Chumash. The poor man took it, thanked him, and left.

"Now, where was I?" the man thought. "Right here. 'When you lend money . . . to the poor person who is with you' (Shemos 22:24). Good. Let's see Rashi's commentary on this verse. 'You should look at yourself as if you are poor.' I wonder why?" the man thought. Why does one have to see himself as being poor, in order to help a poor person?"

The Rav was sitting in the front of the Beis HaMedrash learning. The man approached him.

"May I ask the Rav a question?"

"Surely."

"What is the *pshtat* (simple explanation) of this Rashi?"

The Rav read the Rashi, thought for a moment, and responded.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l speaks about this Rashi in his sefer, 'Daas Torah'. He explains that in order for a person to properly learn and fulfill the laws pertaining *bein adam l'chaveyro* (between man and his fellow man), he must first learn his friend. Your fellow Jew is a *sugya* (subject) to be learned, just like any other subject. When a doctor studies anatomy from a textbook, at the same time he studies a cadaver. Without seeing the body, the textbook learning is incomplete. So too here, with out learning and understanding your fellow man, the study of the laws pertaining to him are incomplete."

"Can the Rav give an example of this?"

"Rav Yerucham himself explains that you must feel the distress of the poor person who comes to ask for money. He is also a human being. His flesh is cold and hungry. He suffers from poverty. If you do not perceive this, then he is just like a dry piece of wood to you. Even if you give him money, you are not fulfilling the mitzvah in its entirety."

"I think I understand what the Rav means. We take great pains to fulfill other mitzvos properly (Chanukah lights, lulav, etc.). The mitzvos *bein adam l'chaveyro* are no different. They also need great effort to learn and do them right. Part of the mitzvah is feeling the pain of the other person."

"Exactly."

Kinderlach . . .

"Young man can you give me a hand with these boxes?" The young man was on his way to play with his friend, which was a lot more fun than lifting boxes. He was about to say, "No, I don't have the time," but then he looked at the man. There were beads of sweat on his face. He was huffing and puffing from the hard work of carrying those boxes. He was really suffering. The young man felt his pain, and realized that he needed help. "Of course sir. My pleasure." "You really saved me, young man. Tizke Li'mitzvos (you should merit to fulfill mitzvos)." "Bi'shlaimusam (in their entirety), Amen."



Your Friend's Honor

Okay class, who knows the answer to this question? If a man steals an ox, then sells it and gets caught, how much does he pay the owner?"

A bunch of eager hands go up.

"Yes Yankie. You raised your hand first."

"Five times the value of the ox, Rebbe."

"Excellent. Next question. If he steals a sheep, then sells it and gets caught, how much does he pay the owner?"

Again, the hands go up.

"Yes, Benny."

"Four times the value of the sheep, Rebbe."

"Right, again. Now, this question is a bit harder. What is the reason that he pays less for a sheep than an ox?"

After some careful thought, Chaim's hand shoots up.

"Yes, Chaim."

"Rashi (Shemos 21:37) explains that Hashem was concerned about a person's honor. An ox walks on its own legs, and the thief did not have to humiliate himself

by carrying it on his shoulders when he stole it. Therefore, he pays the full penalty - five times the value of the ox. The sheep, however, is different. The thief carried the sheep on his shoulders when he stole it, thereby embarrassing himself. Therefore it is sufficient for him to pay only four times the value of the sheep."

Excellent, Chaim. I see that you really studied Rashi. However, just think for a moment about what you said. Did anyone ask this man to steal the sheep?"

"No."

"Did anyone tell him to carry it on his shoulders?"

"No."

"Then whose fault is it that he was embarrassed?"

"His own."

"Was he embarrassed for a good cause?"

"No, he was embarrassed while he was committing a crime."

"Who would think that we have to worry about the shame of such a person, a criminal who brings humiliation upon himself during the act of committing a crime."

"It does sound far fetched, Rebbe."

"That is Hashem and that is His Torah. Now we see how much we need to be concerned about our fellow man and his self respect."

Kinderlach . . .

The Rav stood up to leave the home of his friend. "I came in here with a scarf, but I cannot seem to find it. If you see it, please return it to me." One of the young sons, Moishie, thought to himself, "The Rav is an honorable person. He cannot go looking around our house for his scarf. It would be embarrassing for him. I'll try to save him." Moishie got down on his hands and knees and began looking under the sofa. Yes, he saw something in the back. He reached his hand all the way under, getting full of dust. He pulled out a black object. "Is this your scarf?" "Yes it is, Moishie. Thank you so much. Because you were concerned with the honor of your fellow Jew, may Hashem bless you with much honor in your life." "Amen."

Parasha Questions

- What does the master do to an Eved Ivri who does not want to leave? (21:5,6)
- What must a man who injures a fellow Jew pay? (21:19 and Rashi)
- What happens to someone's animal that kills a person? (21:28 and Rashi)
- How many times must an ox gore in order to become muad? (Rashi 21:36)
- When is a paid watchman exempt from returning the animal that he is watching? (Rashi 22:9)