

## Self Control

"That's it! I've had it! I am fed up with my *bad middos* (character traits). I am going to do something about them. From this moment onward, I will never become angry again."

Avi's mother smiles warmly.

"That is very admirable, Avi dear. However, do you think it is really practical? A bad *middah* has become habitual. Bad habits do not vanish overnight. They take time to break."

"You're right, Imma. What shall I do? I want so badly to get rid of this anger."

"Take a tip from the *nozir*, Avi. The *nozir* took a vow to refrain from wine products, haircuts, and *tomei mes* (impurity from contact with a dead body). The *Sforno* (Bamidbar 6:2) explains that as a result of this, he was able to control his desires and break his habit of indulgence in worldly pleasures."

"Imma, there are so many worldly pleasures besides wine and haircuts. How would these small gestures help him?"

"Excellent question, Avi. The *Sforno* continues. The *nozir* should not go to an extreme by fasting and separating himself from the pleasures of eating completely. That would weaken his body, and he would not be able to serve Hashem. Rather, refraining from just wine will reduce his desires considerably, and leave him strong to serve The Creator."

"The *nozir* cut back a little and learned how to control himself. That gave him the strength to continue."

"Precisely, Avi. That is what you should do. Choose one half-hour of the day when you will not become angry. You can manage that. It will give you the skill and confidence you need to expand that time period. Pretty soon you will be calm, cool, and collected all day."

"B'ezrat Hashem, Imma."

"Amen, Avi."

*Kinderlach* . . .

Now is the time to learn to control yourselves. Develop good habits. Eat one less piece of candy. Wear those old shoes that are still in good condition. Eat Imma's dinner even if it is not your favorite food. Let someone go before you in line. Give up your comfortable seat on the bus. These are all small sacrifices. They lead to big things. Good middos. Don't be a slave to the pleasures of the world. Control yourself.

## Repetition

"Good morning Chaim, my wonderful *chavrusa* (study partner). How are you this morning?"

"Fantastic, Simcha. How are you?"

"I am feeling great, ready to begin a productive morning of learning. What would

you like to do first - review yesterday's *Gemora*, or learn today's new *Gemora*?"

"We worked hard on the old *Gemora* yesterday and understood it well. Why review it?"

"It is true that we understood it, Chaim. However, our sages (Bamidbar Rabba 13) say that there are 70 facets to the Torah. We have only seen one. Every review brings a new understanding. Let us review first."

"That is a beautiful thought, Simcha. I believe that we see that idea expressed in this week's *parasha*."

"Really? Where?"

"At the end of the *parasha*, the Torah lists the *Korbonos of the Nesiim* (offerings of the Princes of the Tribes of Israel) at the inauguration of the Mishkan. There were twelve *Nesiim*, and each one brought his own set of *korbonos*."

"Does the Torah



list all of them?"

"Yes, each and every one."

"They must have all brought different *korbonos*. We know that the Torah does not waste even one word. If they were the same, the Torah could have stated, 'This is the *korbon* that all twelve *Nesiim* brought.'"

"That is a possibility, Simcha; however the Torah lists all twelve - 72 verses in total - even though they are exactly the same."

"Hmmm. There must be some deep meaning here, Chaim."

"There is a very deep meaning. Look in the *Medrash Rabba*. Each *Nasi* had a completely different *kavannah* (intended purpose) for his set of *korbonos*. For example - the first *Nasi* was Nachshon ben Aminadav, Prince of the Tribe of Yehuda. The Royal Dynasty of Dovid HaMelech descended from his tribe. Therefore, he offered his *korbonos* on behalf of the Kingship. Nesanel ben Tsuar, Prince of the Tribe of Yissacher brought his *korbonos*

on the second day. His tribe loved Torah more than any other; therefore he brought his *korbonos* for the sake of Torah learning."

"That is fascinating, Chaim."

"Take a look at the *Medrash* yourself, Simcha. You will see how it describes each item if the *korbon* - silver plate, censure, grain, gold spoon, cows, sheep, and goats, in detail with its *kavannah*."

"Wonderful. I think I see your point, Chaim. By reviewing each set of *korbonos* twelve times, each one with its own meaning, the Torah is showing that re-viewing your learning brings out new meanings."

"And I see your point, Simcha. We should review yesterday's *Gemora*. We will surely see *chiddushim* (new Torah thoughts)."

"B'ezrat Hashem."

"Amen."

*Kinderlach* . . .

*Shavu'os* is coming in two days. It is the day that the Torah was given on Har Sinai. We know that the words of Hashem's Torah are sweeter than honey, as Dovid HaMelech states in *Tehillim* (19:11). When do we taste this sweetness? After review. When we learn a *Gemora* the first time, we are working hard to understand the *p'shat* (simple meaning). The review goes a little easier, and we begin to see things that we missed the first time. Another review reveals even more of the Torah's secrets. We begin to make connections between different *Gemoras*. Each successive review brings a deeper and more thorough understanding. Quite simply, when you review something you know it better. However, Torah is *min HaShomayim* (from Heaven). It is the word of Hashem. It is completely different from any other subject of study. When you show Hashem that you love His Torah by reviewing it over and over again, He gives you special *Siyata Di'shmaya* (Heavenly Assistance) in your learning. Your knowledge and understanding increases exponentially - out of proportion to the effort that you put in. You receive Heavenly Wisdom. Put all of your *koach* (strength) into your learning and reviewing this *Shavu'os*, *kinderlach*. May you all merit tasting the sweet honey of the words of Torah.

Parasha Questions:

- What was Gershon's job in the Mishkan? (4:24-28)
- How many of Kehas were counted in the census? (4:36)
- How many of Gershon were counted in the census? (4:40)
- How many of Merrari were counted in the census? (4:45)
- Where is each type of *tomei* person sent to? (Rashi 5:2)