

Kinder Torah®

בס"ד

Parashas Vayetze

Thirteen Tools

"It seems that we have finished the *Korbonos* section of the morning *tefillas* (prayers), Abba."

"That is correct, Avi."

"Why do we now add on Rebbe Yishmael's *braysa* of the Thirteen Middos? It teaches us the thirteen tools that we use to *darshen* the Torah. That is an entirely different subject from the *Korbonos*."

"You are very perceptive, Avi. That is an excellent question. Do you remember the three *Bircas HaTorah* that we recited back in the beginning of our morning *tefillas*?"

"Yes, Abba."

"They are *bircas ha'mitzvos*, recited before performing the mitzvah of learning Torah. In order to prevent any interruption between the *bracha* and the mitzvah, we immediately learn *pesukim* (verses from the written Torah), *mishna*, and *gemora* (from the oral Torah) after the *brochos*. This is a *halacha* in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 50:1). The *parasha* of the *Korbon Tomid* is from the written Torah (Bamidbar 28:1-8). We follow it with the *mishna* of "Ayzehu Mikoman" (Zevachim 5:1-8), and finish up with the *braysa* of Rebbe Yishmael (Introduction to Sifra – Torahs Kohanim)."

"But Abba, we already learned *pesukim*, *mishna*, and *gemora* immediately after the *Bircas HaTorah* earlier in the *tefillah*. We recited the *pesukim* of *Bircas Kohanim* (Bamidbar 6:24-25), the *mishna* from the beginning of Peah, and the *Gemora* (Shabbos 127a) which speaks about those mitzvot which we benefit from in this world, while the principal reward is reserved for *Olam Habo*."

"That is a phenomenal question, Avi! You are extremely astute! You give me such nachas! Learning those passages is actually a custom mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 47:9). The source (as cited in the Siddur Shaar HaRachamim) is Tosafos (Gemora Brachos 11b). Studying both sets of Torah, *mishna*, and *gemora* is not a contradiction, rather a thorough way to make sure that we learn Torah after the *brochos* according to all opinions. The Mishna Breurah (50:2) adds that merely reciting the passages from the Oral Torah without understanding them does not qualify as learning Torah. One must know what he is saying."

"I see. I have some work to do. Can we study the *braysa* of Rebbe Yishmael together, Abba, so that I can understand it and learn it every morning?"

"With pleasure, Avi. First, let me give you some background information. Moshe Rabbeinu received the written Torah and the oral Torah on Har Sinai. Hashem used these thirteen principles to *darshen* from the written Torah. They are rules of logic and construction that instruct us how to relate the words and concepts contained

in the verses of the written Torah. We have no authority to use them on our own; rather we apply them as Hashem instructed Moshe. They were subsequently handed down through the generations until they were written down as the *braysa* of Rebbe Yishmael."

"That is so interesting, Abba."

"Okay, Avi. Let us begin with '*kal vichomer*', where we apply a law from a '*kal*' (lenient case) to a '*chomer*' (strong case). If the strict law applies to the '*kal*', then surely – '*kal vichomer*' – it applies to the '*chomer*'. For example, Shabbos is more '*chamur*' than Yom Tov. On Yom Tov one may cook and prepare food, while this is forbidden on Shabbos. Picking a fruit from a tree is forbidden on Yom Tov (the '*kal*') – '*kal vichomer*' – it is forbidden on Shabbos (the '*chomer*')."

"Fascinating."

"The next *middah* is '*gezayra shova*', where we apply the laws from one principal to another one by virtue of the fact that they share a common word in a verse. For example, we learn out the laws of marriage using money from the laws of purchasing a field with money. The word '*kicha*' appears in the verse of marriage (Devarim 24:1) and also in the verse of



Avraham's purchase of a field from Effron (Bereshis 23:13). Therefore, the laws of marriage using money are derived from the laws of purchasing a field using money because they share a common word in each of their verses."

"Please teach me more, Abba."

"The next *middah* is '*binyan av*' from one or two verses. This *middah* is very easy to understand. When Hashem wants a particular principal to be used throughout the Torah, He needs to write it only once. It is derived from one verse. A '*binyan av*' teaches us to apply this principal to all cases that logically appear to be similar. Sometimes Hashem writes the principal in a combination of two verses, each of which shed light on the other, to complete the understanding of the principal."

"So far, I understand everything, Abba."

"Now we come to '*klal u'prat*'. Avi. When a generality (*klal*) is followed by a specific detail (*prat*), the law is applied only to the specific detail. '*Prat u'klal*' is the reverse. When a specific detail (*prat*) is followed by a generality (*klal*) the law is applied in general, and not just in the specific case. '*Klal u'prat u'klal*' presents an apparent contradiction between two

general statements and a specific one. The conclusion is that everything is included, provided that it is essentially similar to the detailed item."

"This is getting complicated, Abba."

"I agree, Avi. It gets even more complicated. The next *middah* teaches us that the rules of '*klal u'prat*' do not apply if the *klal* is needed to clarify the *prat* or vice versa. *Middah* number eight applies when a specific detail is included in a general category, and subsequently singled out from that general category in order to teach something; its teaching applies to the entire general statement. Following that, we have *middah* number nine – when a specific detail is included in a general category, and subsequently singled out in order to teach something similar to the general category, its teaching is '*lihakei*' (to be lenient) and not '*lihachmir*' (to be strict). However, if it is singled out to discuss something not similar to the general category, its teaching is '*lihakei u'lihachmir*' (number ten)."

"Phew, this is getting very involved, Abba."

"Let's keep plugging, Avi. We are up to *middah* eleven. Anything that was included in a general statement, but was singled out as a new case, cannot be returned to the general statement unless the verse does so explicitly. Next we come to a *din* that is learned from the context of the verse(s) in which it is written. For example, the Torah commands, 'Do not steal' (Shemos 20:13). Stealing itself is not a punishable with death; however, the commandment is listed after the capital crimes of murder and immorality. Therefore, it must be referring to kidnapping a fellow Jew and treating him like a slave, an *aveya* which carries the death penalty. Similarly, the meaning of the *din* may be inferred from the end of the verse. This brings us to the final *middah*, Avi, two verses that are seemingly contradictory, may be resolved by a third verse which comes to reconcile them."

"This is fantastic, Abba! I will *bli neder* study these *middos* in order to learn them every morning. There will also assist my understanding of the *gemora*, as we encounter them all the time in our learning. Thank you so much for sharing them with me!"

"My pleasure, Avi. Learn the well, and become a big *talmid chochom*!"

*Kinderlach . . .
Rebbe Yishmael's braysa marks the end of the Korbonos section of the morning prayers. It contains the principles that are used to darshen the verses of the Torah. It is worthwhile to invest the time to learn them, review them, and know them. They complete your learning after Bircas HaTorah. They are also used throughout Shas and will enhance your understanding of the gemora. They are thirteen invaluable tools that will help you every day.*