

Kinder Torah®

Parashas Vayakhel

בס"ד

Give and Take

"Welcome, welcome. We hope you enjoy your stay here. How was your trip?"

"A bit rough, especially at the end."

"Boruch Hashem, it is over."

"May I trouble you for a hot drink?"

"I'm sorry but we do not serve hot drinks here."

"Really? Well, I'll just go and get one myself. One minute, where is my wallet? Did you see my wallet? It seems to be missing."

"No, I did not see it."

"It's not important. I can use my credit card. Oy vey, I seem to have lost my credit cards also. This was really a rough trip."

"I wish I could help you."

"Can you order a hot drink for me from the nearest restaurant, and I will reimburse you?"

"I'm afraid that I can't do that."

The man begins to get upset.

"What is going on here? All I want is a simple hot drink. Now why can't you give it to me?"

"Ummm."

"Do you realize who I am? I am a multi millionaire. I own real estate in every major city in the world. I have a fleet of cars and a private plane. If you don't give me a hot drink, I am going to phone my attorney and sue you. I can buy and sell this place ten times over."

The man behind the counter looks through his records.

"Here is your file. I see your account balance."

"Good. Now you can see how wealthy I am. Now please, order a hot drink for me."

"Your account is a modest sum, but it certainly is not millions."

"What!?! Let me see that record. There must be some mistake. What is going on here?"

The man looks the newcomer in the eye and began to explain.

"Sir, you have arrived here because your life on earth has ended. You fulfilled your mission down there and therefore you were summoned here. You do not bring your earthly possessions with you here. All of your cars, planes and millions are gone."

The man thinks for a long time, letting the impact of the words sink in.

"I see. This is it. Olam Habbo."

"Yes."

"But you said that I have a bank balance here. I thought that I could not bring any money with me."

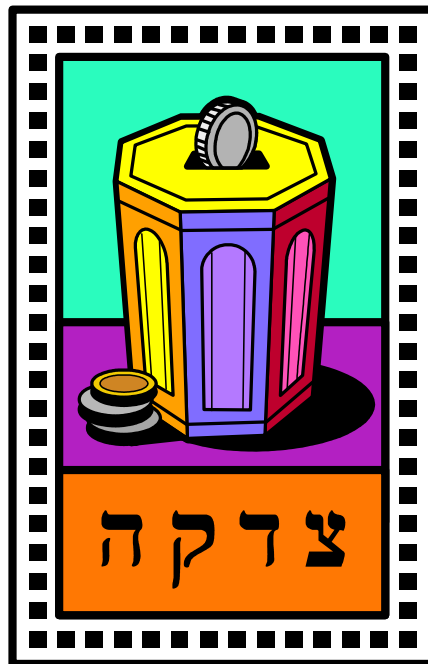
"With one exception. Your bank balance is the money that you gave to *tsedaka* (charity) when you were alive. That is the only money that you bring with you."

"I should have given more. Now it is too late."

"Take from yourselves *trumah* to Hashem" (Shemos 35:5). The verse uses the word "take" instead of "give" when referring to *trumah* (charitable gifts). Why? Because this is the only money that you can take with you . . . into eternity.

Kinderlach . . .

Tsedaka is big business. You can make tremendous profits. The more you give, the more you take. Money comes and goes, but tsedaka stays with you forever. Give, give, give, and take, take, take.



Make a Name for Yourself

"See, Hashem has proclaimed the name of Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur of the tribe of Yehuda" (Shemos 35:30). The Medrash elaborates the many virtues of a good name. "A good name is better than good oil" (Koheles 7:1). The fragrance of good oil can only fill one room. However, a good name goes from one end of the world to the other. Rashi adds that oil flows downward from the head to the beard, but a good name keeps going higher and higher. Good oil lasts a short time, but a good name is forever.

"The day of death (is better than) the day of birth" (ibid). Why? On the day of birth, we do not know what a person will become. When he dies, his deeds become known. The Ibn Ezra explains that the verse connects the two concepts of a good name and the day of death to teach that a person's deeds determine his name. Good deeds will earn a good name. We proclaim Hashem's Good Name in our daily prayers, "You are Holy and Your Name is Holy". Through Your deeds, we recognize Your Holiness.

Listen to how the Torah describes the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu. "A man from the house of Levi married a daughter of Levi. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son" (Shemos 2:1-2). No names are mentioned. Later, after Moshe achieved greatness, the Torah recounts his birth. "And Amram married his aunt Yocheved and she bore Ahron and Moshe" (Shemos 6:20). Now they had earned names for themselves.

Kinderlach . . .

How many good deeds did you do today? Ten? Twenty? One hundred? These good deeds earn you something very special. A good name. Avraham Avinu, Yitzchak Avinu, Yaakov Avinu, Yosef HaTzaddik, Moshe Rabbeinu, Aharon HaKohen, Dovid HaMelech, Shlomo HaMelech, Rebbe Akiva, Rebbe Yehuda HaNassi, Rebbe Yochanan, and others were all tzaddikim. Then earned great names for themselves with their outstanding deeds. Kinderlach, put your name on the list. Make a name for yourself.

Holy Places

This is the next to last of the parshios that deal with the construction of the Mishkan (tabernacle). This was the holy site where the Jewish nation would offer up their *korbonos* (sacrifices) to Hashem. The *Shechina* (Divine Presence) rested upon this holy place. We no longer have the Mishkan or the Beis HaMikdash in our days. We still have holy places, however. Our shuls and Battei Midrashim are places of *kedusha* (holiness). The Mishna Breura calls them *mikdash mi'at* (small sanctuaries). We learned in Parshas Yisro that we have to behave differently on Shabbos because it is a holy day. Similarly, we have to behave differently in the shul and the Beis HaMedrash, because they are holy places.

Kinderlach . . .

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 151) explains how to guard the sanctity of our holy places. Joking, idle conversation, and sarcasm are all prohibited there. We cannot enter them only for the purpose of gaining shelter from the outside weather, for a pleasure walk, or shortcut. We cannot discuss our business affairs there. Our clothing and shoes should be clean when we enter these holy places. We have to keep the shul itself clean. Children, our shuls and Battei Medrashim are places for tefillah (prayer) and learning Torah. Therefore, we have to behave with the utmost respect when we are there. It is a privilege to go shul with Abba. We cannot abuse that privilege. We have many places to play -- the park, the garden, the schoolyard, and the playground. The shul is not one of them. The shul is a place to be close to Hashem.