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We try our best to accurately present to you the Rav's words. Accuracy can sometimes get lost in the transition from spoken to written word. We would like to thank HaRav Nebenzahl for allowing us to send you this sicha without his first reviewing it. Although it does expedite matters in getting this sicha out to you, it does mean that if there is anything in the sicha that may not be understood, the fault is with us and not with HaRav Nebenzahl.

The Rav asks that his and other Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

*Shabbat Shalom,
 Nehemiah Klein*

The Yeshiva would like to express its gratitude to Richard and Anita Grossman for their ongoing support for the Yeshiva in general and specifically our computer center. This enables us to communicate this sicha to you each week - "lehagdil Torah ulehaadira".

As of Sunday night the students had not yet returned from their Sukkot recess. There was therefore no sicha delivered this week. We are attaching one of the sichot from the soon-to-be published book of Rav Nebenzahl's sichot for Sefer Bereishit.

PARSHAS BEREISHIT "BE LIKE HIM"

HOW TO BE A TZELEM ELOKIM

"And G-d said: 'let us make Man in Our image as Our likeness ... and G-d Created Man in His image, in the image of G-d He created him.'" (*Bereishit* 1:26-27)

We recite daily in *Birkos HaShachar*:

"May it be Your will Hashem, my G-d and the G-d of my forefathers, that You rescue me today and every day from brazen men and from brazenness ... whether he is a member of the covenant or whether he is not a member of the covenant ... always be a person."

The Rav (HaGaon HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l*) used to quote this *tefillah* and explain that before one worries about the distinctions between people, one must first and foremost be a *mentsch*. Man's task in this world is to cleave to

Hashem and emulate His ways. Man was created *betzelem Elokim*, in the image of G-d, and our mission is to work on completing this *tzelem*. This means that our actions must display this G-dly image.

The introductory section of the *Tomer Devorah* written by Rav Moshe Cordovero is based on the Thirteen Attributes of Hashem outlined in the book of *Micha*:

"Who is a G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression?"
(Micha 7:18)

Before he explains how man can cleave to these attributes, he prefaces it by saying that man's obligation to do so stems from his being created in Hashem's image.

The Jewish people declared as they crossed the Yam Suf: *zeh keli ve-anvehu* - "This is my G-d and I will beautify Him." (*Shmot* 15:2) The Gemara cites two interpretations of how to beautify Hashem. *Tanna Kamma* is of the opinion that this refers to having beautiful *mitzvah*-objects such as *tzitzis*, *tefillin*, *Sefer Torah*, etc. while Abba Shaul maintains that the Torah is teaching us to emulate the ways of Hashem: "Be like Him: just as G-d is gracious and compassionate, you also should be gracious and compassionate." (*Shabbos* 133b) The *Tomer Devorah* clarifies that these two views are not contradictory. Abba Shaul is suggesting a different way of "beautifying Him". Beauty manifests itself in character as well as physical appearance.

Hashem only gives; He has no reason to take, for there is nothing which He lacks. One who only takes from others distances himself from Hashem. On the other hand, the more one gives, the closer one comes to Hashem. Man by his very nature is a taker in this world. From the minute a person is born, he has needs: air, milk, clothing, and a home. Receiving these necessities distances us from Hashem. Our task is to give as much as we can in order to come as close as possible.

TAKING IN ORDER TO GIVE

HaRav Sholom Schwadron *zt"l*, the famous *maggid*, once gave a parable to explain the concept of giving. Two storeowners in the same town sell the identical merchandise. The first wishes to give to the Jewish community by providing them with *challot*, meat, fish, etc. If he just gave away all his stock, declaring: "Go, buy and eat, go and buy wine and milk without money and without price," (*Yeshayahu* 55:1) his supply would soon be depleted and he would not have the means to replenish it. In addition, if he could not feed himself and his family, he would be unable to continue serving others. He therefore has no choice but to charge for his products. The other storeowner's only interest is to make a profit. Of course, he knows that if he were simply to hang up a sign saying, "Money can be deposited here," he would not have much success in reaching his goal. He therefore has no choice but to provide goods in exchange for the money he takes.

Both stores appear to operate in the same way. Yet the first man's desire is to give to others - he takes in order to give and is drawing nearer to Hashem by emulating His ways of giving. The second merchant, on the other hand, is only interested in taking from others - he gives in order to take. Such a person is distancing himself from Hashem, for he is operating in a way that is contrary to Hashem's *middos*.

One may regard studying in Yeshiva in a similar manner: A student may come to the Yeshiva with the sole aim of availing himself of the Yeshiva's meals three times a day. He realizes that if he were to appear only in the dining room and not in the *Beis Midrash*, in no time at all he would be expelled. He therefore decides that it is in his best interest to learn a bit as well. Such a person transforms the Torah into "a spade with which to dig" (for food) (*Avos* 4:5). Let's take a look at another young man: His entire purpose in life is to learn as much Torah as possible, yet it is obvious to him that without food or a *kollel* stipend he would not be able to continue in his quest. In his case, his food or the stipend become a "spade with which to dig" - for the Torah. A person's task is to emulate Hashem to the greatest extent possible - Hashem only gives, He does not take anything. Although a human being is required to be a taker as well, he should do his utmost to ensure that the taking is in order to give and not that he gives in order to take.

THE COMPLETE TZELEM ELOKIM - MAN AND WOMAN

"And G-d said: 'let us make Man in Our image as Our likeness ... And G-d created Man in His image, in the image of G-d He created him, male and female He created them.'" (*Bereishit* 1:26-27).

"This is the account of the descendants of Adam - on the day of G-d's creating of Man, He made him in the likeness of G-d. He created them male and female, He blessed them and called their name Man on the day they were created." (*Bereishit* 5:1-2)

It is only man and woman together who are referred to as 'Adam' - Man. They are the complete *tzelem Elokim*. The love between man and woman, if one can speak in such terms, symbolizes the love between Hashem and the Jewish nation. *Shir HaShirim*, which describes the love between Hashem and His people, is written in the form of an allegory of the love between a man and a woman.

Man and wife can cement their relationship only when each is interested in giving more and more to the other. My Rebbe, HaRav Dessler z"l, used to counsel *chatanim* and *kallot* on the secrets of a long-lasting relationship: to give and to give and to give to each other. The same can be said of the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. Hashem gives without end. Our task is to do our utmost to fulfill Hashem's wishes. Giving to others and doing as Hashem wishes serves to strengthen this union. Otherwise, G-d forbid, the ties will be severed.

Avraham Avinu was first and foremost good to his wife. We read how he tried to come to the aid of the people of Sodom. He even invited three Arabs into his home. (I would not recommend doing that today, for who could guarantee that they really are angels?) Love for his wife, however, came before Sodom. The story is told of a young man who saw a woman carrying two heavy baskets. Noting her obvious difficulty, he ran to assist her, feeling proud of himself for his tremendous act of *chesed*. As he got closer, he realized that it was "only" his wife and he was very disappointed to have lost out on such a *mitzvah*. Perhaps he then left her to fend for herself ... In a similar vein, Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel, the Alter from Slobodka, was once having a talk with a young married man. In the course of the conversation, he asked him whether he helped out at home on *Erev Shabbos*. The man responded: "What kind of a question is that! Does it not say in the *Shulchan Aruch* that we are obligated to involve ourselves with *Shabbos* preparations?" The Alter from Slobodka responded, "Would you not have done your share had it not been dictated in the *Shulchan Aruch*? If a woman works so hard on your behalf, is

it not natural that you would want to help her?" Before studying the *Shulchan Aruch*, one must first and foremost be a *mentsch*!

BECOMING A VESSEL FOR RECEIVING THE TORAH

HaRav Chaim Vital asks, "Why does the Torah not command us about *middos* - character traits?" (See *Shaarei Kedusha, Chelek 1, Shaar 2*). He answers that *middos* are the major prerequisite for observance of the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos*, and man should be imbued with the proper *middos* before he even begins to approach *mitzvah*-observance. The well-known adage: *derech erez kadma laTorah* (Vayikra Rabba 9:3) teaches us that without proper *middos*, one cannot receive the Torah. I believe R' Chaim Vital's insight has a corollary as well. It is true that a person must have good *middos* before he approaches Torah and *mitzvah*-observance, but the Torah also serves to develop our *middos* further. It is impossible to attain a high level of *middos* unless we are occupied with Torah.

In this world, vessels are made from earthenware, metal, or wood. In the Next World, they are made from our souls. One who enters the Next World devoid of good *middos* (assuming one who lacks these *middos* even has the chance to enter the Next World) will not have anything to do there. Only good character can serve as a vessel to absorb the G-dly light for the soul. Entering the Next World without good character can be compared to someone who tries to carry precious diamonds in a bag that has holes at the bottom. The only way to create a proper vessel is to work on oneself. The more one works on his character, the greater this vessel grows.

We can learn from Avraham Avinu and Moshe Rabenu that positive character traits and especially humility are necessary for receiving the Torah. Avraham knew the entire Torah because he considered himself as 'dust and ash.' (*Bereishit* 18:27). It was Moshe Rabenu, the humblest of all men, who had the merit of bringing the Torah down to the Jewish people. The more we feel that we are 'dust and ash,' the less we allow our own selves, our egos, to get in the way and the less separation there is between ourselves and the Torah, the more Torah we will be able to receive in this world.

Someone with a true desire for Torah will not sit and ponder whether learning Torah is worth his while. Adam HaRishon was forbidden to eat from the *etz hadaat tov vara* - "the Tree of Knowledge of good and bad." (*Bereishit* 2:9) Would it have been so terrible if Adam and man in general had known how to differentiate between good and bad? Does Hashem wish us all to remain ignorant of the ways of the world? The Rambam explains that before Adam's sin, man was able to distinguish between truth and falsehood. After the sin, man became calculating - he began to make decisions based on what was good and bad for him.

The greatness of Avraham Avinu was that he did not make such calculations: "You found his heart faithful before You." (Nehemiah 9:8) Of Moshe Rabenu too, Hashem Himself testifies, "In My entire House he is the trusted one," (Bamidbar 12:7). He does what Hashem wishes and not necessarily what is good for him. This is how one becomes a vessel for receiving the Torah. We may not be on the level of our forefathers, but our goal must be to come as close to that level as possible. If this is truly our goal, we can merit receiving the Torah and the G-dly light of the Next World.