

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ה RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS TOLDOS

THE CHOICE - LIMITED OR UNLIMITED KAVOD

The *parsha* begins with the words **אלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק** Rashi writes that it seems unnecessary to relate to us the fact that Avraham fathered Yitzchok especially since the Torah says clearly before hand **אלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם**. Rashi brings the Chazal that says that the cynics of the generation would say that it wasn't Avraham who fathered Yitzchok but rather his father was Avimelech who impregnated Sarah when she was taken captive to his palace. In order to refute such a perverted claim, Hashem therefore made the facial features of Yitzchak to mirror those of Avraham thereby uprooting any false fabricated rumor that someone else besides Avraham was Yitzchak's father.

The *meforshim* ask that this action taken by Hashem to dispel any notion brought about by the cynics seems to contradict Hashem's reaction in a parallel scenario. When Hashem was about to create Man He turned to the *malachim* and used the plural form of **נעשה אדם** Let us create Man. Hashem used the plural form in order to teach humility as if to partner with others in Man's creation. However the *malachim* claimed that here it is improper to write the plural form because the cynics will prove from this that there are two deities active in the creation of the world. Hashem responded Nonsense! **כל הרוצה לטעות יבוא ויטעה** whoever wants to be a cynic let him be.

When does Hashem worry about the cynics and when does He just let them be? The Biyala Rabbi ztl says the difference is as follows. When it comes to Hashem's *kavod* He lets the non believer get away with it. However, when the *kavod of tzadikkim* are in jeopardy, He will strike with a mighty hand the cynics who cast doubt on their righteousness, and will even create a supernatural event in order to preserve their *kavod*.

From this answer we see that Hashem worries more about the *kavod* of others than his own. If so we can apply and include this conduct to be emulated in the mitzvah of **והלכת בדרכיו** to copy the *middos* of Hashem. This *chiddush* would help us understand another *Chazal*. Rabbe Akiva says **ואהבת לרעך כמוך זה כלל גדול בתורה** Love your friend as yourself. This mitzvah demands from every Yid to treat another Yid like yourself. If one would not like something particular to happen towards himself he should not do it to another Yid. Put yourself in the other person's shoes before you talk or act.

Ben Azzai says that even a higher level above Rabbe Akiva is demanded from a Yid and that is **בצלם אלקים עשה את האדם** that Man is created in Hashem's image. The **סמ"ג** comments **על פי שאינו מקפיד על כבוד עצמו יש לו להקפיד על כבוד חברו**. According to Rabbe Akivah since the Torah inserts the word **כמוך** in your obligation to love your friend, it puts a cap on how much you have to do for him. If I eat pizza for lunch because I love pizza when you come over my house I can give you pizza because that would be the fulfillment of **כמוך**. However according to Ben Azai one must look at his guest as a *Tzelem Elokim* created in the image of

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Hashem and pizza would not be according to this caliber of *kavod*. Look at Avraham how he toiled for his "desert" guests each one with his own tongue including the chili and mustard. Sarah made שלש סאים three *seah* measurements of sifted flour and made loaves. Three *seah's* worth of flour uses 143 eggs. With this measurement, one can produce enough loaves to make three *Sheva Berachos*. The answer is if one views Man as a *tzelem Elokim* the reaction is shifah there is no quality nor quantity limit with which to honor them. This is Ben Azzai's addition to Rabbe Akiva.

If this is how it is to be interpreted, then even towards oneself he must be treated as a *Tzelem Elokim* and Cheerios won't cut the cake for breakfast, nor a peanut butter sandwich for lunch. It is therefore that we present another interpretation to Ben Azzai. His intention was to relate that You the **giver** not the receiver is created as a *Tzelem Elokim*. Therefore you must emulate Hashem's *middos*. Just as we found above that Hashem gives more *kavod* to others than himself so too you must give more *kavod* to others even though you would not do so for yourself. Upon yourself you are not *makpid* but for others you must extend yourself and go the extra mile for his *kavod*.

I once asked my Rebbi ztl Rav Shlomo Freifeld when I wipe my hands on a towel do I have to fold it neatly the same way over the bar as the way I found it or not? He answered since your spouse works hard to have an orderly house that looks good that is her *kavod*. Men don't usually care if they take a towel from the bar and it is not folded properly as long as it does the job of soaking up the water. Not so women. One has to go the extra mile in order to respect **her** *kavod*.

Mishlei 27,19 כלב האדם לאדם כן לב האדם לאדם just like one sees in water a reflection of himself so too your feelings towards someone else is felt in the heart of the receiver of your feeling without him even demonstrating them to you. The Sar Shalom of Belz asked why didn't Shlomo Hamelech use the analogy of a mirror instead of the reflection of the water? He answers to see your reflection in water one has to lower and bend over his body. The lesson is that when you look or assess the character of a person you must lower yourself to be honest and see the faults within you thereby the outcome of the evaluation of your friend will be more positive. In fact you might find that in him are *some* attributes in which he excels even more than you. This brings out the awareness that he might deserve more *kavod* than you, even though you might be superior than him in other things. Only Hashem can be the true judge of one's accomplishments and the unique journey he took to get there.

I remember my father a"h telling me that even though you are not born a **Yemenite**, nevertheless, one has to work on himself to be a **Yenemite** which in Yiddish means to think of others not just yourself.

RAV BRAZIL
GUT SHABBOS