



פרשת פינחס

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Getting Along

Contents:

Part I. Alongside Your Nation - 1

Part II. Alongside Your Neighbors - 4

Part III. Alongside Your Spouse - 7

Part I. Alongside Your Nation

Seeking a New Leader

When Moshe Rabbeinu was preparing to yield the leadership of the Am Yisroel he made an especial request of Hakadosh Baruch Hu: **יִפְקֹד ה'** – **אֱלֹקֵי הַרוּחֹת** – “Hashem who is the Elokim of spirits – it means the One who knows the character of human beings – He should appoint, **אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה אִישׁ**, **אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ** – a man who has a spirit in him to take my place (27:16-18).” Moshe Rabbeinu was going to be leaving this world soon and he wanted to leave the nation in good hands.

Now we understand how serious a request that was. In order to take over for Moshe Rabbeinu it had to be someone who was especially capable. Of course, you won't be able to find a man like Moshe, but at least the very best person was what Moshe sought. And that's why he didn't rely on himself – because character is extremely difficult to know. Like Yirmiyah Hanavi said (17:9), **עֲקֹב הַלֵּב**,

מַבֵּל – the mind is more complicated than anything else.

Lehavdil, a certain scientist said that there's no object in the world that has such complicated and orderly arrangement as the couple of pounds of brain in a human head. The brain has such complexity of arrangement that cannot be equaled anywhere in the universe. And hidden away, somewhere in those complexities, are all the quirks of character, all the idiosyncrasies of man; his attitudes and mannerisms, his likes and dislikes. A person's character is very complicated.

And therefore when Moshe sought a man to take his place, he didn't rely on himself. Although he was an expert in understanding human nature, he appealed to the *Elokei Haruchos*, the Creator of human nature, the One who could look into a person's soul, plumb the depths of his character and choose the right man: **יִפְקֹד ה' אֱלֹקֵי הַרוּחֹת** – You, Hashem, should appoint somebody because You are the one who makes spirits; You're the one who makes people's character so You'll know best.

EasyPrint edition sponsor:

Please contact us for sponsorship opportunities.

Call/Text 732.844.3670

Seeking a Man of Spirits

And then Moshe Rabbeinu continued his request: **אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ** – *It should be a man who has a spirit in him.* He's explaining what he's looking for. "The nation needs a man with a spirit in him." What does that mean?

So the Chachomim tell us a specific explanation: **שְׂיָכוּל לְהֵלֵךְ נֶגְדַּ רוּחַ כָּל אָחֵד וְאָחֵד** – someone who could go *neged* the spirit of each one. Now initially we might think it means that he could go *against* the spirit of everybody, that Moshe Rabbeinu, being experienced with the nation for more than forty years, wanted to choose a man who would be able to oppose everybody; someone who is **יָכוּל לְהֵלֵךְ נֶגְדַּ רוּחַ כָּל אָחֵד וְאָחֵד**, someone who won't yield before anybody.

But that's the wrong *pshat*. Because really what it means is that he can go along, he can walk along with the spirit of everybody. That's what *neged* means; He can fit in. That's what Moshe Rabbeinu asked for; that was his primary request – "Please Hashem, appoint a man who can accommodate himself to everybody and get along with everybody." That's the real *pshat*.

The Secret of Leadership

Of course, when our Chachomim said **נֶגְדַּ רוּחַ כָּל אָחֵד וְאָחֵד**, it also means that he's able to go against everybody. If necessary Yehoshua should stand up and tell people that they're wrong. Like Moshe Rabbeinu did – when the time came to be *kineged*, against, he didn't back down. And so certainly that would also be a true *pshat*. But it's not the primary meaning. Because when a man has to do that, it means he failed already – or almost failed – in his mission. The first mission is that he shouldn't have to face opposition. He should be capable of leading in a way that there shouldn't be any opposition.

Now, don't make a mistake. Moshe kept a very strict supervision of the Am Yisrael. We know he had *mashgichim* over every thousand Jews. For every thousand Jews there was a supervisor who was responsible to Moshe and he reported on the

behavior of his people. And for every hundred Jews there was another supervisor who was responsible for his group and he reported to the *sar haelef*. And every fifty Jews had another supervisor who reported to the master of the hundred. And then every ten Jews had a supervisor. So you understand now how strict the supervision was in the wilderness? It's written in the Chumash. There were over 70,000 supervisors! It means that it was a nation where people were expected to behave.

So you can imagine already that there would be opposition and friction. There *had* to be. So how could Moshe Rabbeinu conduct the affairs of a nation like this if he had a principle of getting along with everybody? The answer is that's the whole trick. A man who gets along with people at the expense of his principles, that's not the kind of man that's meant here. We mean a man who won't sacrifice principles and still can get along with people.

Moshe's Perfect Record

Actually Moshe Rabbeinu was successful in that sense because the Jewish nation followed him. When he came to them, they followed him out of Mitzrayim and they accepted the Torah. Sure there was an exception; Korach. But even Korach followed him most of the way. And actually Moshe *did* get along with Korach just fine. It was Korach who didn't get along with Moshe Rabbeinu. Despite what Moshe tried, Korach eventually became too stubborn and he balked. And that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu had to step in. But the truth is that in most of the trials in the *midbar*, even Korach was obedient. Because Moshe Rabbeinu was a gifted leader who was *yachol lehalech*, he was able to go *neged*, along with the spirit of everybody.

It's like a cunning physician. A physician has to know with whom he's dealing. Suppose there comes into the office a man from a very poor neighborhood and he needs to be healed. So a wise physician won't prescribe for him rare and expensive remedies. If the physician can avoid it,

he won't prescribe that because it's a waste of time writing the prescription. The man just can't afford it.

The Blunt Prescription

Even when it comes to telling the truth to the patient, the physician has to know each patient according to who he is. If the patient is intelligent, if he's not obstreperous and he knows how to utilize the truth, very good. But some people, you can't tell them the truth directly. Some people when they come to you, you see there's nothing wrong; they're only making themselves sick emotionally. There are people who the only trouble is that they are excitable and have bad character and they can't get along with anybody and that's really what's upsetting their stomach all the time and upsetting their nerves all the time. But if the physician will tell her, "My dear madam, there's nothing wrong with you except your character," she'll never listen.

Now I'm not a physician and I don't know what they do, but what I would do is I'd write her a prescription for a nice red medicine that tastes good and is harmless; and I'd tell her to take a spoonful five times a day and to make sure never to miss once.

However, if she's an intelligent person, so you can tell her honestly. "Mrs. So and So, you're suffering from emotional stress due to a maladjusted character. And therefore you must try to change your attitude towards people, towards life; and you'll see that it's going to make a big difference in everything"

The Boom of Big Pharma

And the truth is that in most cases that's what's wrong with most people. Most illnesses, even real illnesses, are induced by maladjustment of character. But you can't tell it to everybody and that's why patent medicines are selling all over the place. Everybody is buying medicines.

Health foods too. Medication and health foods are booming industries because people are looking for ways to heal themselves other than the correct way. The correct way would be to live properly, to get off your television couch where you sit for hours munching candy and peanuts while your eyes are being strained looking at garbage and exciting your nerves about nothing. If you would get out in the fresh air and take walks, brisk walks, and drink a lot of water and go to sleep early and not talk much you'd already feel much better. But can a doctor tell that to all of his patients? He can't. Only a doctor who knows how to deal with the different mannerisms of each patient will be a successful healer.

The Brilliant Failure

And that's how Hashem wants us to deal with all the people around us, like the intelligent doctor who deals with everyone according to what's best for them. Because a man can be a genius and the most brilliant man; he can be the biggest *tzaddik* who loves Hakadosh Baruch Hu with all his heart and he can know a world of wisdom but if he is a misanthrope who can't get along with people then he's a failure.

Let's say you have an employee who works for you and you have to call him in and tell him that he's coming late too frequently or he's going home too early so you say like this, "Chaim, I'm satisfied with you." That's the way you start it. "Chaim, I'm satisfied with you. I see you're sincere. I see you have *yiras shomayim* and we like to have you here. It's a pleasure to have you here. But it's inconsistent with your character, that a man like you should chop off fifteen minutes before the day is over."

Like one writer said; he wrote like this: "Before you shave a man – here, on the back of the neck – you have to lather him." If a barber will try to shave you on the back of your neck without lathering you, it'll hurt! Sometimes he'll take off some skin too. And therefore if you have to criticize somebody, it's always good to lather that person first, to get

him in a good mood and then tell him the criticism. First tell him the good things and then the criticism.

Learning the Stratagems

Now, that's only one of the stratagems of dealing with people, of being able to walk alongside everyone. There's so much more. But those who want to become great, they practice these things. Now how exactly to do it, I'm not able to tell you fully. Otherwise, I'd be a great man myself. But at least it should be on our minds; it should be our goal.

To be successful in the eyes of Hashem a person has to have a very big amount of tolerance for people's crookedness. I don't mean dishonesty – but you have to be able to accept all kinds of deviations; all the various queer attitudes and behaviors and habits and mannerisms and even outlooks on life. You have to learn to roll with the punches.

Because if you want everybody to exactly suit your idea of how to look and how to talk and behave, then you're not going to be successful. You won't even start being successful. Because that's one of the prime functions of a person in this world: *Sheyachol lehalech neged ruach kol echad ve'echad*, that he can get along with everybody. Fathers and mothers with their children, brothers with their sisters, friends with each other, husbands and wives, employers and employees, neighbors with each other; that's how you live successfully, by conducting your affairs in the way of *neged ruach kol echad ve'echad*.

Part II. Alongside Your Neighbors

Strange Faces

And that brings us to an interesting remark that the Gemara in Berachos (58a) makes about human beings: *אין פּרצופיהם דומים זה לזה* – *There are no two human beings who have the same face.* It's a remarkable fact. In all of Mankind, even in identical twins, they don't have the same face.

Of course, strangers, people who aren't familiar, might think differently. Some people who don't know colored people think that all blacks have the same face. I hear European Jews who remark, "*Ale fun zei huben ein punim.*" But it's not true. If you live among them you see right away that they're just as different as anybody else is. Like the Germans used to say: "*Nachts sind alle Katzen grau* – At night all cats are gray." Because it's night, so it seems like that. But by daytime, you see it's not so.

Strange Minds

Now the Gemara says as follows: *בָּשִׁם שְׂאֵין כְּשֵׁם זֶה לְזֶה פְּרָצוּפֵיהֶם דּוּמִים זֶה לְזֶה* – *Just like their faces are different one from the other, just like their faces are not alike, כִּי אֵין דְּעוּתֵיהֶם דּוּמִים זֶה לְזֶה* – *so too their natures are not alike.* No two people are born with the same nature.

That's why an old bachelor who has already seen five hundred and thirty-two girls and never found his 'type' yet, he better give up the quest. Because it's not going to happen! That's a promise from the Gemara. I met someone like that once, a bachelor – I met him on Pitkin Avenue and I said, "What's the matter that you're not married?"

So he says, "I'm waiting. The time will come when I meet the right one and something will ring, a bell will ring inside of me." He eventually died a bachelor because he never learned this Gemara.

Mother Nose Best?

So the first thing is, be prepared for that. Don't expect everyone to have a face or a nature that's going to be your taste. And therefore, suppose your daughter brings home a young man and she says, "Parents, I have chosen a *ben Torah*. He has all the *ma'alos*. He's *frum* and he's a good learner and he's this and that."

Now the mother takes a look and her heart sinks within her. And she goes into the back room and tells the father, "I don't like his nose."

So the Gemara comes along and says, “Look, are you going to say everybody's nose has to be like yours?”

That's what the father should really say to the mother. “Look, if your daughter likes his nose what's it your business? That's how Hashem made his nose. So be it.”

Diversity of Noses

I was once riding in a bus so there were some students from Brooklyn College. You understand what kind of students they were. They were the kind who didn't have marks that would let them come in but they were pushed in by the government. What do you call it? Open enrollment; yes, open enrollment. They couldn't even speak English correctly.

They're sitting on the bus and they saw me so one of the sweet young ladies remarked out loud so the whole bus should hear, “I don't like those Jewish noses.”

Now I could have said I don't like theirs either. The truth is I'm not too impressed with their noses. But of course, I didn't say it. The main reason was because there were too many of them on the bus. But there is a better reason. The better reason is Hakadosh Baruch Hu made them that way. What do you want? Go ask Him *kashas*.

And just like we can't criticize people on the basis of their noses so the same is we don't criticize people on the basis of their natures. Nobody has the same nature as yours. It just cannot be. You know, if you had to be a roommate with Rabbi Akiva Eiger or with the Chofetz Chaim, I guarantee you that you wouldn't get along with them. They certainly would get along with you, no question, but you wouldn't get along with them! Because you're not great enough to overcome all the idiosyncrasies. You have to train yourself to get along with people. It takes some work to achieve that.

A Kapdan Won't Make It

You have to be ready to overlook other people's ideas, their approach to problems, their way of looking at things. Even when you have let's say a certain proposition that you think would be a big help for your family, or for the neighborhood, or for the yeshivah, or even for the Jewish people, and someone else has another idea that's opposed to your idea – it will ruin your idea – but he means well. You have to have the patience to try and show to him that yours is the most effective one. Who says he has to think like you? Sometimes it breaks your heart before you can explain it to him. Sometimes you never will. Maybe you should bend your mind to his way.

That's the greatness of a good *rebbe* by the way. *לֹא הַקִּפְּרָן קֹלֶמֶד* – if you're not ready to be a patient fellow then forget about being a teacher. You'll say, “But this one thinks like this and the other one like that. Some of them are so dumb! I'm going to break my heart dealing with each one?!”

So become a lawyer or a shoemaker. The truth is that even then you won't get along because you'll fix a pair of shoes and the customer comes back and says, “Look, will you please knock in an extra nail right here? That's where my heel always wears off. Give me an extra nail.”

So you're thinking, “But you already paid me for the job. Will you pay me extra for this?” You can't say that. Once you say that you lose a customer. You have to swallow it and knock in that extra nail. That's how you keep customers in this world. If you're a baker or a butcher or a grocer, you won't have customers unless you're able to go *neged ruach kol echad ve'echad*.

Failure and Fighter

Otherwise you're a failure. Not only as a leader. As a person! As a human being! And especially as a servant of Hashem. A leader especially has to succeed but every person's success in this world is judged in a big way on his relations with other

people – and ‘other people’ means people who don’t think like you!

A man came here and told me he couldn’t keep his last job. He lost his job because he couldn’t get along with his boss. And then he tells me he’s having trouble with his landlord too.

So I asked him, “What about your mother?”

He fights with his mother too.

That man is a failure because he failed to understand the function of dealing with people. He never learned the secret of *sheyachol lehalech neged ruach kol echad ve’echad*, of bending your own mind and your own idiosyncrasies to the minds and idiosyncrasies of others.

Marrying A Family

Now when we understand that, we begin to learn the great value of family. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has created man as a family creature. Not only a wife – a wife is only a come-on because when you marry, you must know you’re getting a whole busload of relatives and you cannot cancel them out. You cannot say, “I just married my wife; I didn’t marry her brothers.” You married her brothers too. You married her father and mother and her cousins too. And you have to make up your mind, you’re going to be a success with them.

So therefore as soon as you start with a certain *kallah* and you decide that she is your intended one, get ready now for the test. Because they’re going to start marching before your eyes, a whole array of different personalities. And some of them will be very difficult. Her little brother will be a pest. He’ll make all kinds of trouble for you. And you’re going to have to pass the test. It doesn’t mean you have to hang around too long for him to bother you, but whenever you see him you have to pass the test.

Your mother-in-law will have one type of personality and your father-in-law a different one. Her cousins and uncles; everyone different than the next one. You’ll have to get along with a whole

houseful of relatives! Besides the ones you already had from before on your side. To get along with so many types of people, so many different noses and so many different ways of thinking? That’s a big order!

Start Training Young

That’s why it’s your job, as soon as you’re a little boy, to learn what you learned tonight. A little boy in the house has to know that’s why there are brothers. That’s why there are sisters. Not to fight with them, but to succeed with them. And the sooner you learn the lesson, the better off you are. Learn the trick of answering quietly, pleasantly, letting the arrows bounce off of your head, they shouldn’t penetrate and hurt your feelings. And especially with father and mother. Many times it’s difficult to get along. I know many girls who fight with their mothers. Girls too can’t get along with their mothers! A great pity! They’re entering into life failures already from the beginning!

Imagine a girl who couldn’t get along with her mother. Her mother always scolded her for not getting up on time. For not going to sleep on time. For leaving her clothes on the floor when she goes out in the morning. She doesn’t help out. So finally she decides to get a room by herself. That’s a failure. That girl is a failure because she’s missing the opportunity of life.

It’s not *an* opportunity – it’s *the* opportunity! That’s why Hakadosh Baruch Hu made everyone so different, so many people who rub you the wrong way. So that we should succeed at one of our most important functions here in this world. That’s the test: Can you succeed at becoming an *ish asher ruach bo*, a man who has that spirit; a man who is big enough to overcome these little things that other people consider important enough to break off all kinds of cordialities, to break off relations, and to dislike people because of that. Little things. Silly things. You have to become a man who is big enough to overlook those things and get along with everyone.

Overlooking Idiosyncrasies, Not Principles

Now, just to get along with people by yielding without wisdom, that's nothing. Because if you have principles if you're a *rebbe* and you want to teach the principles to your disciples, you're a husband or a wife and you want your spouse to accept the Torah way of life then you can't always be a yielder – but what Hashem wants from you is that you should use diplomacy and strategy and tactfulness and patience. And never be discouraged or dismayed by the idiosyncrasies and quirks of others.

Because that's the perfection of life – to get along with other people, to force yourself to accommodate others. It's not your desires alone that counts. That's the great blessing of people: *כַּשֵּׁם שְׂאִין פְּרָצוּפֵיהֶם דּוּמִים זֶה לָזֶה* – Just like their faces are different one from the other, just like their faces are not alike, *כִּן אִין דְּעוֹתֵיהֶם דּוּמִים זֶה לָזֶה* – so too their natures are not alike. It's to give you the opportunity to train yourself *sheyachol lehalech neged ruach kol echad ve'echad*.

Part III. Alongside Your Spouse

The Helpmate From Hashem

Now a parallel to this ideal of the perfection of learning to live along with the quirks of others, we find elsewhere in the Torah. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu was contemplating, so to speak, the creation of Chava, the first woman, so He announced beforehand a plan, a blueprint. And He said like this: *לֹא טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ* – It's not good for Man to be alone, *אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֵזֶר* – I'm going to make for him a helpmate; *eizer* means somebody to help him (Bereishis 2:18).

Now, it would be quite simple if the blueprint ended there – “A helpmate;” it sounds wonderful. But the *possuk* continues: “I will make her a helper, *בְּנִגְדּוֹ* – against him. *Kinegdo*? That already throws a monkey wrench into the *possuk*. Against him? What's that supposed to mean?

Now some ladies when they learn that *possuk*, they learn it *kipshuto* – *kinegdo* means ‘to go against him.’ Oh, but it says *eizer*, a help. So they say, “That's the way we help him. He's as stubborn as a mule and he'll make all kinds of errors in life so he needs my intuition in order to push him, to be *kinegdo*, to be against him and force him in the right direction. I'll oppose him when he wants to do some silly thing and that will be the *eizer*. That's the way to help him.”

Wives and Road Rage

And actually that's true. Sometimes it's true. Because here is a man who got a bump on his car from somebody driving behind him. You see this always on the street. So he gets out bristling and shouting. But he made a mistake because now there comes out from the other car a very big Italian man. But the first man wants to maintain his bluff because he's a stubborn mule and so he raises his fists. And his wife sees that there's *tzaros*. So his wife screams and drags him back to the car.

Now, it's a big shame for him to retreat. Stubborn mules don't like to retreat. But fortunately for him his wife is pulling him; so he acts like he's yielding to her and he gratefully climbs back into the car. Because wives, with a little bit of common sense can look through all the falsehoods of their husbands' artificial lives. To him, to win the battle of staring him down, that's more important than saving his life. But to her, to save him from getting beaten up is more important than winning the staring battle. And so she acts against him, *kinegdo*.

The Real Kinegdo

But actually that's not the primary meaning of the *passuk*. It's true but it's not it. Because what the *possuk* really means is the same thing that Moshe Rabbeinu's wanted for a successful leader: *שִׂיכּוֹל לְהִלָּךְ בְּנֶגְדְךָ* – someone who can be a help by going alongside the other person; someone who can train themselves to deal with whatever might be swirling around in that complicated piece of

machinery between the two shoulders of your spouse.

Just like two people who have to lift up a heavy load so they have to lift up in the right place, opposite the point of equilibrium. If he lifts up too much on one side so the other one has to adjust. If you both lift up in the right place you'll both carry it successfully. And that's what it means *kenegdo*, that just in the place where she is needed she'll step in and she'll be a help. But if she'll be a help at the opposite end so she might oppose the equilibrium and she might cause the load to fall down on his corns. If you're a clumsy helper you can many times make more trouble than help.

So the plain meaning is *e'eseh lo eizer*, I'll make for him a help, *kinegdo*, that will be alongside him. It means that she will adjust her mindset to fit in with him. She'll be just where she's needed. If she has to say a few kind words when he comes home from the office and tells her of his discomfiture, of his defeats, of his failures with his boss, she knows how to do it. So instead of telling him, "I always told you you're no good. It's your fault you didn't listen to me," instead she pours a few drops of soothing oil on his wounds. "Don't worry about it Joe. Just don't argue with him and by tomorrow you'll discover that it's not so. It'll pass over. After all they know you're a good man and in the end every good man is recognized." Or she says something else to that effect. That's an *eizer kenegdo*. She knows where to help him in the right place.

Now, the Torah says this about the *isha*, the wife, but it's just as applicable to the husband. There's a certain reason why the possuk talks about the wife but actually it's a two way street. And often they're both driving in different directions and so it requires the *seichel* of *kinegdo* by both parties to make sure there are no smash ups.

The Self-Made Agunah

That's what happens constantly when people don't understand this function of *kinegdo*. Here's a

woman who goes on strike against her husband; she's upset at him—he did something foolish let's say—and she wants to spite him; they had a quarrel and she no longer wants to work with him. She doesn't want to cook supper for him or whatever it is. That's the wrong *kinegdo*. *Kinegdo* means to walk alongside him, to deal with the issues.

So now she becomes an *agunah* and she's running around writing in the newspapers about how much she's been wronged. It could be true that he's wrong but she has to live together with her husband anyhow; with a husband you have to suffer a little bit until you housebreak him. When you buy a dog it takes time before you teach him how to be civilized in the house.

Instead she throws him away. And now at the Shabbos table there are seven children around the table but the father's place is empty. That's an *agunah*?! The old-time *agunah* was a woman whose husband went to war and he got lost in battle and we don't have any witnesses to prove that he's dead. With no witnesses she can't get married. That's an *agunah*. But a self-made *agunah* who kicks her husband out of the house, that's not called an *agunah*. There are organizations for sympathy but after all it's their own fault. She didn't fulfill the *tzivui* of the Torah, of being *kinegdo*.

The Blessing of Marriage

You know what the problem is? A husband and wife don't know what marriage is for. Some people think the blessing of marriage is children. Some people think the blessing of marriage is other things. And certainly they are right – there are a lot of blessings in marriage.

But number one is what Hakadosh Baruch Hu said *לֹא טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבָדוֹ* – *it's not good for a man to be alone*, *אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ* – *I'll make for him a help that's alongside him*. Yes, a husband can't have children without a wife but that's not it. Certainly it's important but it's not the sole reason. There's a more important reason and that's to make you a

tov – and you become a *tov* by learning how to get along with your spouse.

People don't begin to understand what a spouse means in terms of *Olam Habo*. Your eternity depends on the development of your character, and your character depends on being successful as a husband or wife. Why? Because the greatness of a person means adjusting and yielding to others and when people live by themselves they're yielding only to themselves, that's all. But when you have to live with somebody else, you have to force yourself to get along and that's a great *brachah*. And therefore לֹא טוֹב הֵיזֵית הָאָרֶם לְבַדּוֹ – *It's not good to be alone*. Because when you're two people living together under one roof, the only way to succeed is to be a *kinegdo*.

Opposites Don't Attract

Now, it doesn't mean you shouldn't look for the easiest way. It's like I told you once in the name of Rav Gordon, the Lomzer Rosh Yeshiva. A boy once asked his advice about marriage and the boy showed me the letter that Rav Gordon wrote back to him. The Rosh Yeshiva wrote there that if possible he should try to marry a girl from the same background. It means a Hungarian, try to marry a Hungarian, a Polisher for a Polisher. Now, it's not an absolute requirement. Sometimes you'll find a prize who comes from Lithuania, or a Teimani, and she's worth everything. Sometimes it pays to forgo any other considerations – she is such an *eishes chayil* and she has so many good *middos* that it pays to overlook everything. But in general, let's say if you have two girls and both have good qualities so choose the one that resembles your background more. It's a good thing.

Why is that, he said? Because between a husband and a wife there's always a tug of water. At first it seems like it's nothing but *tootzeleh mootzeleh*. But then it starts. One morning there's a race for the bathroom. You know there's competition for the bathroom sometimes, and if somebody's in the bathroom and you're pounding

on the door, it's a strain on the initial romance. A little crack begins to appear.

And the bathroom is nothing yet. Because there are so many differences between people, idiosyncrasies, attitudes, ideas, that there will always be some tugging in opposite directions. And if you're going to add to that right away at the beginning a tug of war of diverse backgrounds, that she likes only goulash and he likes only herring—he's a Litvak let's say—so it doesn't mix. You can't make a combination of both; it wouldn't please anybody. It will cause the tug of war to be more intensified.

And therefore *lechatchilah*, when you start out, Rav Gordon said, look for somebody who is more like you, somebody who is more amenable and can get along with you. As much as possible it's good to have something solid, substantial, to paste together the marriage. And therefore if you come from the same background, that's something. It's some kind of a foundation that eases, it makes it easier on which to erect the edifice of marriage.

Inevitable Cracks

Now, you have to know that either way cracks will appear. There are a lot of cracks in the sidewalk, even in the nicest neighborhoods. It's impossible to have a perfect sidewalk that will never yield to the exigencies of the weather, the contracting and expanding of freezing and hot weather. Only if you have a conscientious superintendent, so he sees that the cracks are always cemented in.

Same thing, there will always be cracks in a marriage. It's a guarantee because that's how Hashem made people. As much as you'll try, it won't be perfect. And it's intended to be that way! Don't think your wife is going to share your ideas, forget about it! נָשִׁים עַם בְּפִנֵי עַצְמָן – Women are a separate nation (Shabbos 62a). It means that men are a separate nation too. Don't think your husband is going to think along with you. And so there will always be cracks.

Cementing The Cracks

The only thing is, you fill them in. By fulfilling this principle of *kinegdo*; by adjusting, by yielding, you are always pouring some cement into the crack. Sometimes you need more than some cement – could be you'll have to buy a diamond ring once in a while or you go especially out of your way to please your husband in order to cement the cracks.

And that's a *mashal* for all of our relationships in this world—our friends and neighbors, our bosses and our employees, our parents and our children—because that's what Hashem intended when he made people. Everyone is different from the next. From your vantage point, this one is acting foolish and this one is too tough. Another one just talks too much and that one is too quiet. There's no end to the differences. And we were put into the world to train ourselves to become people who *שְׂיָכוּל לְהֵלֵךְ נֶגֶד רֵוַח בֵּל אָחָד וְאָחָד*, who are capable of walking alongside everyone and getting along with them.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Exercising the *Kinegdo* Muscles

This week I will focus on acquiring the *middah* of *שְׂיָכוּל לְהֵלֵךְ נֶגֶד רֵוַח בֵּל אָחָד וְאָחָד* in all of my dealings with people. In order to build up the muscles of this *middah* I will make sure to adjust myself to everyone I come into contact with this week instead of acting my usual self. But in order to make some quick progress I will *bli neder* choose one especially difficult acquaintance and go out of my way to accept his idiosyncrasies and bend my own spirit to walk alongside him.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

177 - A Good Actor | 216 - Not Good To Be Alone | 427 - Shir Hashirim XVI |
635 - Getting Along with Others | E-232 - Torah of Common Sense
Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



Should I donate money to a *Kollel* whose *yungerleit* go away to the country for the summer?



And the answer is yes. You have to know that a *kollel* man in the summertime is accomplishing great things. The mere fact he's raising a sizable family in the country – he has a *kollel* of his own in the country. He deserves it; why not? And he's not wasting time. He's studying; he's reviewing, he's learning new *mesichtas*.

Now if he's not a *kollel* man, if he just calls himself a *kollel* man but he wastes his days, this happens too. So, that's the responsibility of the heads of the *kollel* – we're not talking about that now. But a true *kollel* man, even in the summer, he is carrying out his purpose.

TAPE # 224 (July 1978)



You can get these booklets delivered directly to your door.
(Only \$2.50 a week - US residents only)
Email: subs@torasavigdor.org
Call/Text: 862-800-7905

Sign up and get a new Q&A every day for free:
signup@torasavigdor.org