

פ' ויקהל תשפ"ה

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MESSAGES TO OUR CHILDREN

“Moshe called the whole community of the Bnei Yisroel to assemble, and he said to them, These are the things that Hashem commanded to do. Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to Hashem” (35:1-2)

Immediately after coming down from Har Sinai after Yom Kippur Moshe assembled the nation and taught them *hilchos shabbos*. The reason for this is clearly because Shabbos is the foundation of our existence, forming a covenant as it does between us and Hashem. Chazal say that *hilchos Shabbos* have to be taught in public until the nation, both men and women, become thoroughly familiar with them, because someone who is *mechalel Shabbos* is like a non-Jew, and even someone who desecrates *Shabbos* unintentionally (even a rabbinic prohibition) has to fast for forty Mondays/Thursdays, although these fasts can be redeemed (see *Remo* O.C. 334:26 and *M. Berura s.k.* 78 *ibid*). We are also obligated to protest those who desecrate *Shabbos* publicly. When the son sees how dear *Shabbos* is in his father’s eyes, and how much pain he feels at its desecration, this has a deep effect on him, and remains engraved in his memory. Conversely, if his father remains silent, the son is likely to deduce that *chilul Shabbos* is not an important matter for his father.

NO COMPROMISES WITH CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

“Every generous hearted person shall bring it, Hashem’s offering: gold, silver, and copper” (ibid)

All the *klei shores* were acceptable whether made of gold, silver or copper. The *keruvim*, however, were an exception. They had to be constructed specifically using gold. Since they had children’s faces on them, Rav Meir Shapira derived from this that we do not make compromises with our children’s education, and nothing less than gold will suffice. Only if we invest everything possible in them, will we merit *siyata dishmayo* and blessings. Rav Sternbuch recalls how his mother would hire tutors to learn with her sons and daughters every evening, even though they were already learning a lot during the day. Even though she was a widow who had difficulties supporting her family, she was happy to make the financial sacrifice for the sake of providing her children with a “golden” education. She would say, “A mother is not obliged to teach her sons, but she is obliged to make sure that they receive the best possible education – one of pure gold”.

EFFORT-BASED REWARD

“Take from yourselves (me’itchem) an offering for Hashem; every generous-hearted person shall bring it” (35:7)

The word *me’itchem* seems superfluous. It comes to convey the message that when making a donation for a holy purpose the donor should feel that he has given something of himself, a part of himself, so to speak, out of *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem. Such an act is very dear in Hashem’s eyes. How much to give depends on one’s financial situation. For a poor person it is an act of self-sacrifice to donate even a relatively small amount, but a wealthy person has to donate a lot in order to feel that the donation is from “himself”.

Rav Sternbuch heard from Rav Moshe Schneider that the Chofetz Chaim once sent a message to an Orthodox member of the Rothschild family, who was gravely ill. This individual’s total fortune was estimated at some 50 million marks, a fabulous amount at the time. The Chofetz Chaim suggested to him that if he made a donation of one million marks to rescue the Russian *yeshivos*, which were experiencing dire financial straits, he would receive a portion in the World to Come. No response was forthcoming, and when the man passed away, his children were contacted to establish whether he had issued any

instructions before his death or made any relevant provision in his will. The answer was in the negative. The letter had clearly not reached him.

The Chofetz Chaim's response was that Hashem was sending the message that He wanted many more people to be given the opportunity to participate in this essential *mitzvah*. Hashem preferred that the yeshivos be supported by the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe, since many small donations accompanied by superior intentions and self-sacrifice are dearer in His eyes than one large donation made with relatively little effort.

WIVES AND TZEDOKO

The men came with the women [al hanoshim]; every generous-hearted person brought bracelets and earrings and rings and buckles (35:22)

On the *possuk* at the end of Malachi: "And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children [*al habonim*]" (3:24), Rashi says that *al habonim* means "through the children": the children will be the ones who will lovingly encourage their fathers to follow the ways of Hashem. Based on that Rashi, we may interpret the *possuk* here too to be praising the women and telling us that they encouraged their husbands to make the donations. Wives can be very influential in their husbands' decisions to give charity. Sometimes husbands need to receive *tzedoko* collectors in their office so that their wives will not know how much they are donating. Here the *possuk* stresses that wives implored their husbands to give generously. Fortunate indeed is the wife that is happy with her husband's donations and is the one who persuades him in this direction. As Chazal say (*Bovo Basro* 9a), "He who causes another to give *tzedoko* is greater than the one who gives it".

MESIRUS NEFESH

"Moshe said to the Bnei Yisroel: "See, Hashem has called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda" (35:30)

The commentators wonder why in the case of Oholiov (31:6) only his father's name (Achisomoch) is mentioned, whereas here Bezalel's grandfather is mentioned as well as his father. They answer that since Chur was killed during the sin of the *egel*, and since the work of the *mishkan* came to atone for that sin, his grandson Bezalel was in charge of this work, and it is therefore only appropriate for his lineage to be attributed here to his grandfather Chur (see *Rosh* on this *possuk* and *Da'as Zekenim* and *Chezkuni* on 31:6).

Hence, Chur's *mesirus nefesh* was rewarded by his grandson constructing the *mishkan*.

Self-sacrifice not only consists in fighting the battles of Hashem, as Chur did. Every time anyone sits down to learn or to pray and overcomes the difficulties he encounters in doing so, he is thereby sacrificing his personal desires for the sake of performing the Will of Hashem, and - as the Rambam notes - is performing the *mitzvah* of sanctifying Hashem's name. A great reward awaits him for his self-sacrifice.

TEACHING OTHERS

"He has imbued him with the spirit of G-d, with wisdom, with insight, and with knowledge, and with all manner of craftsmanship, and to devise skillful works ("velachshov machashavos") (35:31-32)

Targum Onkelos renders *velachshov machashavos* as "to teach [other] craftsmen". Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira said that we see from here that teaching others Torah is a higher level of *chochmo*. It is possible for a person to possess all the superior qualities enumerated here: the spirit of Hashem G-d, wisdom etc., but his wisdom is incomplete if he lacks the ability to explain his thoughts to others.

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky told Rav Sternbuch that he would give a *shiur* to *baalei batim* once a week, and he found this much more difficult than delivering a *shiur* to *bnei Torah*. Before each *shiur* to the *baalei batim* he would learn the *gemoro* six times on his own, until he found the best way to explain it to them. Of course, delivering a *shiur* to *bnei Torah*, and thinking about how to make the material as clear as possible, also requires great effort. This is the level of *lachshov machashovos*.