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בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BESHALACH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
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THE GREATEST ROLE MODEL

K*lal Yisrael* had finally defeated the Egyptians, leaving them behind in the sea. After years of terrible slavery, the Jewish nation was truly free! In celebration, the people burst into song, singing, "Az Yashir." The second *Passuk* of *Az Yashir* states, "זָה אֱ-לֹהֵי יְאֻנְהוּרֹהוּ," "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him."¹

What was *Klal Yisrael* referring to when they said that they would 'glorify' Hashem? The *Gemara*² quotes Abba Shaul who says, "Be comparable to Him. Like He is compassionate and merciful, you too should be compassionate and merciful."

There are many ideas that one can find in this simple statement from Abba Shaul - ideas that may change the way we look at self-growth. First, apparently the best way to glorify Hashem is to act like Him. In other words, building tall buildings in His honor, singing songs about Him and so on, are not the ultimate expression of glorifying Hashem. If you feel grateful to Hashem, if you want to honor Him - act like Him!

Second, we see that human beings, in our own way, can indeed be similar to Hashem! One would think that Hashem's ways are so beyond our own that there is no point in even attempting to be like Him. Yet, Abba Shaul sees the exact opposite idea in this *Passuk*. Be like Him, you can do it!

And lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we tend to think of 'being nice' as a way to get along with others. And though that is true, it is much deeper than that. When we are compassionate, when we don't indulge in mean-spirited arguments, we aren't just being nice, we are being G-dly.

In fact, the *Alter* of Slobodka³ (R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel, 1849-1947) writes that the only way to truly know and understand Hashem's ways is to act like Him. By doing so, we raise our understanding of what it means to be compassionate, and to care about others.

There are many reasons one may have to develop their character, and this idea adds another deeper inspiration to motivate oneself to do what they can to cultivate their innate greatness.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The idea of being similar to Hashem can be daunting, and even overwhelming. Additionally, this idea is all-encompassing. How does one work on emulating Hashem?

The entire body of *Mussar* study is devoted to this one idea - character development. There are many good ideas, methods, and tricks one can employ to enhance one's self-growth.

One idea in particular that relates to emulating Hashem is the idea of *Middah Kneged Middah* - Hashem interacts with us as we interact with others.¹

When we are merciful to others, when we are helpful and kind, Hashem acts with us in the same fashion.

Thus, if only for purely selfish reasons, we can motivate ourselves to help others. For example, if I increase my generosity with others, Hashem will increase His generosity with me. Who wouldn't want that?

When we reflect on this idea, it can inspire us to go the extra mile in our own growth.

¹ Peah 8:8, Avos 2:6

¹ *Shemos* 15:2

² *Shabbos* 133b

³ *Ohr HaTzafun*, Vol. 1, p 8

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**One who does not learn Mussar
has never tasted 'fear of sin.' He thinks
he is fine, but he is like a dead person
who doesn't feel Yiras Hashem. - Pele**

Yoetz, "Mussar"

A MODEL LESSON

We all know that the best way to educate is to model the behaviour. Mr. Dovi Pattio* learned this lesson very well one Wednesday morning.

Dovi woke up like any other day, and started to get ready for *Shacharis*. His routine included waking his children, bringing them to school, and then heading to *Minyan*. As his family was slowly waking for the day, Dovi remembered that today was an 'Alternate Side Parking' day. Simply, anyone who was not parked on the proper side of the street would receive a forty-five dollar ticket. And Dovi was not parked on the proper side.

"Uh-oh!" thought Dovi. He quickly finished getting dressed, and did his best to get his children, Shua and Yisroel, dressed as well. They finally made it out of their apartment, and were headed towards the car. At that point, Mr. Pattio could already see the police car coming around, placing tickets on the parked cars. He quickly rushed his kids down the block to where the car was parked just across the street. Standing on his side of the street, Dovi waved his arms at the officer and shouted, "I'm here! I'm here!"

The officer finished placing the ticket on Dovi's windshield, turned to Dovi with a smile and a wave, and said, "Have a great day!" before driving off.

Dovi was fuming. "What nerve! What audacity! He knew I was here. And then to smile at me, as if he didn't just ruin my morning!" Mumbling and grumbling to himself, Dovi crossed the street with his children, grabbed the ticket off the windshield, and threw it onto the passenger seat.

After a moment, Dovi took a deep breath. "It's only forty-five dollars, Dovi. Don't let it get to you," Dovi thought. "Y'know, fellows," a calmer Dovi said to his six and four year old, "it can be so frustrating to get a ticket. But it's not worth getting upset over." With that, Dovi started to drive to school.

It wasn't long before Shua and Yisroel started bickering, as kids often do. Mr. Pattio wasn't even sure what they were fighting about this time. But then Shua's voice rang out clear, "Yisroel, you can have it. It's just not worth getting upset over."

"That was forty-five dollars well spent," thought Dovi, as he silently thanked the police officer.

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- The great Kabbalist, Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, wrote an entire work, *Tomer Devorah*, devoted to the idea of emulating Hashem's Thirteen *Middos*.¹
- Not only is it good advice to emulate Hashem, but it is considered one of the 613 commandments.²
- It's easy to be helpful and kind to those that we like. Being like Hashem, though, means being helpful and kind to those who bother and annoy us.³

1 *Tomer Devorah*, 1:1

2 *Sefer HaChinuch*, Mitzvah 611, *Mishnah Torah*, *Hilchos De'os* 1:5

3 *Pele Yoetz*, "Dveykus"