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אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
VAYIKRA 5778

בְּשַׁבָּת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

More Precious than Gold

With the *Mishkan* complete, Moshe was about to receive the 1st *Nevuah* from Hashem from within the *Mishkan*. At that point Hashem, "Called Moshe," and spoke to him, an action that we don't find elsewhere. Why here does Hashem "Call Moshe?"¹

The *Medrash*² explains that after the *Bnei Yisrael* donated materials to the *Mishkan*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* was upset that he had not donated anything. He thought that since he had not donated anything, perhaps he would not be fit to have a *Nevuah*. In response, Hashem told Moshe that his speech is more dear to Hashem than all the gold and silver that was donated.³ The conversations that Hashem would have with Moshe, and especially the questions Moshe would have in his pursuit of understanding the Torah, was more precious than all of the donated materials.⁴ That is the meaning of the 'call' to Moshe *Rabbeinu* - Hashem had to 'call Moshe' to the *Mishkan* and reassure him that He specifically wants Moshe to come learn Torah.

The *Eitz Yosef*⁵ explains that this *Medrash* is not just a good story, but is a lesson for us all. While learning Torah in school or in a *Shiur*, we frequently have questions. Asking questions is the way to obtain better clarity of what we are learning. It's the way we can take ownership of new material. Sometimes we may be reluctant to ask questions; people will think that we're not smart; it's not such a great question, etc. However, this *Medrash* highlights the idea that in the context of learning Torah, Hashem has very high regard to our asking questions, or any other attempt in getting clarity and gaining ownership of any section in Torah.

Even if we don't find the answers that we seek, and even if we don't understand the answers to our questions, there is value in our inquiries, more value than donating to the *Mishkan* itself!

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

One of the biggest impediments we have to asking questions is our own embarrassment.¹ Our fear that our question will make us look foolish keeps us quiet - and then we don't learn.

What can we do to overcome that fear? Is there any trick we can employ that will help us not worry about mistakes?

One idea is to keep our eye on the goal. When we don't make the inquiries needed to understand a topic, we're cheating ourselves. We're allowing a possible moment of discomfort to interfere with our self-growth and knowledge.

Another idea is to remind ourselves of the inherent value of seeking truth. Whether we find clarity or not, the questions themselves are prized by Hashem and we shouldn't allow momentary feelings to stand in the way.

And perhaps the best idea is to remember that it's more likely than not that no one will think poorly of you for asking a question!

1 *Vayikra Rabbah* 1:6, *Eshed HaNechalim* s.v. הכל הביאו

2 *ibid.*

3 *Eitz Yosef ibid.* s.v. יש זהב

4 *Eitz Yosef ibid.* s.v. אלא למשה

5 *Eitz Yosef ibid.* s.v. יש זהב

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1 *Avos* 2:6

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Rabbi Yehoshua Isaac Shapiro (“Reb Eiz’l Charif,” 1801-1873) was the *Rav* of Slonim and known for his keen intellect and sharp wit. As a child prodigy, he was enrolled in a yeshiva for young adults, and stood out as an exceptionally bright student.

When it was time for his daughter to get married, he decided to handpick a suitable mate for her. R’ Eiz’l began to make the rounds of the Eastern European yeshivos, in search of a young scholar who met his specifications.

In each yeshivah, the same routine was played out. When word spread that the famed *Rav* of Slonim had come, everyone rushed forward to greet him. The cream of the student body would gather around R’ Eiz’l and he would begin Talmudic discussion. At some point, he would ask an exceedingly difficult question, one that never failed to stump the students.

After having visited a number of yeshivos, R’ Eiz’l was still not satisfied. He had not found what he was looking for. Then, he came to another yeshivah where he again asked a question that no one could answer. After some time, he took leave of the students and headed toward his waiting carriage. One of the students hurried after him. “Please, Rabbi,” the student begged, “tell me the answer to the question!”

“Ah!” R’ Eiz’l exclaimed. “True love of Torah! You are the one for my daughter!”

**Rewritten from the book “For Love of Torah” by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman*

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Hashem rewards us in direct correlation to our actions. Therefore, if one lowers oneself to ask questions, despite the potential embarrassment, Hashem will raise up that person, and they will attain great heights in Torah.¹
- A student should not say “I understand” when he really doesn’t, rather a student should ask as many times as needed.²
- One learns more from a student than from a teacher, because a student asks questions, forcing the teacher to know the material with clarity.³

¹ *Mishnas Reb Aharon*, Vol. 1, p. 40

² *Rambam Talmud Torah*, 4:4

³ *Taanis 7a*, *Rashi* s.v. קטנים מחדדין