

בשבת

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MIDDOS THROUGH AND THROUGH

Parshas Shemini introduces us to a concept that would forever define Jewish daily living — kosher food. Not all animals are kosher, but there is a way to know which animals are kosher and which are not. For cattle, the Torah specifies the animal must chew its cud and have split hooves. The Torah then identifies four animals that, although they have one of the aforementioned characteristics, are not kosher, since they are missing the second trait.

The first animal introduced is the camel, with the Torah stating, “The camel, because it chews its cud, but its hooves are not split...” Similarly, by the next three animals, the Torah first specifies the reason for the animal to be kosher, and then the fact that the animal is missing the second requirement.¹

Why does the *pasuk* mention the kosher sign at all, why not simply state the animal is not kosher because it is missing the other sign? It’s almost as if the *pasuk* is saying the fact that the animal has one kosher sign makes the animal even less kosher, if there could be such a thing. But how does that make any sense?

The Kli Yakar² (Reb Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, 1550–1619) explains that indeed, having one kosher sign is actually worse than having no kosher signs at all. An animal that does not have any kosher characteristics can easily be avoided, but an animal that exhibits one sign may fool people into thinking it is kosher.

Similarly, says the Kli Yakar, there are people who appear righteous but in their hearts and the privacy of their own home, they are amoral. They don’t care for the Torah, but they do care for their appearances!

One of the insidious persuasions of the *Yetzer Horah* is the thought, “No one will know!” But we ourselves will know! And we will know we are not acting in a way consistent with how we want to present ourselves to others. Knowing the importance of how our inner thoughts and our outer actions should match can be an inspiration to remain steadfast in our *avodas Hashem*.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We find even the great students of Reb Yochanon ben Zakkai were more careful when in public than in private.¹ What, then, does Hashem expect of us?

The Aruch HaShulchan² points out that it is understandable if a person is not the same publicly as they are privately. It is quite common for people to be more on guard when they are around others.

The Kli Yakar is referring to one who puts on a show for others, but doesn’t care about who they truly are. However, a person who does care and is striving to better oneself is in a different category.

How, indeed, does one better oneself in this area? The Aruch HaShulchan quotes the famous dictum, “Study not for its own sake will lead to study for its own sake.”

In order words, keep studying, keep growing, keep focusing on *avodas Hashem*. One need not worry how their private life will match their public life, as it will naturally occur, as long as a person is sincere.

¹ Berachos 28b

² Yoreh Deah 246:21

¹ Vayikra 11:1-7

² Vayikra 11:4 s.v. את הגמל

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Everything depends on Yiras

Shomayim. - Response of Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l when asked why there are many people that study Torah, yet only a relative few become Talmidei Chachomim, *Sefer Minchas Todah*, pg. 22

CARPOOL FOR A TREE

"How did it go?" Mrs. Zeitschek* asked, as Rabbi Nachman Zeitschek came through the door after his *hilchos lashon horah shiur*.

"It went well, I think. We discussed the idea that even if one is sharing important information that one is permitted to share, one must not harbor ill will towards the subject. That really took over the evening, there was a lot of back and forth over that idea."

Shira nodded. "That's a very difficult mental state to achieve. Makes sense that you would spend the rest of the night discussing it!"

"Yup. I told them the parable about the tree and the branch," Nachman said, as he opened the refrigerator to find something to supplement the hurried dinner he had earlier.

"I'm not familiar with that, what is it?"

"Oh you know, I've said it before. The recognition that everything is from Hashem — if a branch were to hit a person, they certainly wouldn't come back the next day and kick the tree! When we realize it's all from Hashem, it's easier to depersonalize someone else's hurtful actions and statements."

Nachman stopped speaking as he stared into the refrigerator and deliberated the pros and cons of an apple vs. salad.

"By the way," Shira added, interrupting the passionate debate in Nachman's head, "the Krischers called, and asked if you can do carpool tomorrow. They said something came up."

The internal argument suddenly ceased, as the warring parties all agreed to take up arms against a new common enemy, the Krischers. "They do this every couple of days!" Nachman thought to himself. "They think they can just push carpool onto us, and they have no clue how disruptive it is to our morning. Just last week Shira came late to work, and I almost hit a car trying to get to *yeshiva* on time."

"And I understand that things come up, but they don't even feel remorseful, it's like we're they're kids valet and chauffeur and I'm sick of it!"

Nachman opened up his mouth to speak, but when he saw Shira's expression, not a word came out. Nachman realized that with her typical wisdom and insight, Shira waited for Nachman to discuss his *hilchos lashon horah shiur* before bringing up the Krischers.

"Boy, that tree branch hurt," Nachman said with a smile. "But I know Hashem loves me. Sure, I'll do carpool tomorrow. My pleasure."

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

DID YOU KNOW?

- A person who does not have *yiras shomayim* will align their public persona with their private impulses, and argue that they are working on their *middos*!¹
- A *talmid chochom* who doesn't act the same privately as they do publicly will inevitably stumble in their learning.²

¹ *Madreigos Ha'adam*, Vol. II, pg. 131

² *Ben Yehoyada* on *Yoma* 72b, s.v. *כָּל תַּלְמִיד*

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