

בשבת

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NOT ALL BIRDS ARE EQUAL

The beginning of *Parshas Tazria* explains how a woman who had just given birth must bring a set of *korbonos* to the *Beis HaMikdash*.¹ Among these *korbonos* are either a 'young dove or turtledove' which is a sacrifice found in other instances as well.²

However, the Ba'al HaTurim³ (Reb Yaakov ben Reb Asher, 1269–1343) points out that everywhere else in the Torah, the phrase is 'turtledove or young dove,' only here does the Torah reverse the order, and place the young dove before the turtledove. Why?

He explains that normally this sacrifice requires two birds, whereas in this instance the Torah only requires one bird. Thus, by taking one bird, one would cause its mate to mourn the loss of its companion, and since turtledoves mate for life, the mate would be left alone until its death.

To avoid this, the Torah places the 'young dove' first, to imply that the two birds are not equal — if one has a young dove which has yet to find a mate, don't take a turtledove, so as to avoid causing needless pain.

Rav Simcha Zissel Broide⁴ (1912–2000) points out an amazing lesson from the Ba'al HaTurim. Our actions always have ripple effects, and it is impossible to be aware of and account for all the consequences of our actions. Yet, there are times that we can, and when we can, it is clear that we must take it into account.

One may have claimed, "I'm bringing a *korbon* to Hashem, my cause is noble!" or, "Am I really hurting the animal? How much damage am I causing?" Yet, the Torah's principles are greater than human intelligence. And when we can, despite our excuses and rationalizations, a person must do what they can to mitigate the negative effects of one's actions.

1 *Vayikra* 12:6

2 E.g. *Vayikra* 5:7, *Vayikra* 14:21-32, and *Bamidbar* 6:10

3 *Vayikra* 12:6, s.v. ובן יונה

4 *Som Derech Al HaTorah*, *ibid*.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

It is commendable to be careful and sensitive to the outcome of one's actions, but isn't this something that you either have, or you don't? How can one develop the ability to be sensitive to things that have yet to happen?

Oftentimes, the best way to learn something is not to study it in a book, but to experience it in one's own life.

Therefore, one idea on how to develop this characteristic is to associate oneself with another who already has this sterling *middah*.¹ We tend to pick up the personality of those around us, and this *middah* is no different.

If we try to interact, on a consistent basis, with someone who is sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, it will inevitably wear off on us as well.

1 *Hon Ashir* on *Avos* 2:9, s.v. הרואה את

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Unfortunately there are innumerable masses of mankind that have destroyed themselves by neglecting to study and take the pure guidance of the Sifrei Mussar... - Mahara"m DeLunzano zt"l, (1550–1626) cited in *Sefer Hisragshus HaLev*, Ahavat Shalom ed., pg. 100

BUILDING BLOCKS IN BEITAR

In 2001, Ezra Kantor* of Beitar, began preparing the *leining* for his *bar mitzvah* which would take place in a year. His grandfather, Mr. Boruch Atlas of Chicago, made a recording of the *leining* to help Ezra practice.

Over the months, Ezra and his grandfather had many phone conversations to review the *leining*. Ezra could not wait for his *bar mitzvah*, to make his parents and grandparents proud.

The Shabbos of the *bar mitzvah* arrived. The family and guests gathered in the Minchat Shlomo *shul* in Beitar, for the early *minyan*, expecting to hear Ezra read the *parshah*, but to their surprise, it was the regular *baal korei*, not Ezra, who read the Torah. Everyone, especially Mr. Atlas, was astonished. People glanced at Reb Yoel Kantor, Ezra's father, but he motioned to them that everything was fine and they need not worry. Ezra was called up for *maftir*, which he *leined*, along with the *haftorah*. This was a far cry from what he had prepared for so long.

After the *davening*, as people wished the Kantors *mazel tov*, Ezra's father explained to his family what happened.

Ezra's classmate, Dani, had lost his father years earlier. His *bar mitzvah* was on the same Shabbos as Ezra's. The Kantors received an invitation to Dani's *bar mitzvah* and were surprised to see that it would take place in their *shul*, Minchat Shlomo, in their neighborhood of Beitar, at the second *minyan*.

This was puzzling. First, Dani did not live in Beitar, so why would he have it there? Second, *bar mitzvah* boys were not allowed to *lein* in the second *minyan*; they were permitted to read only the *maftir* and the *haftorah*. Didn't Dani want to *lein* the entire *parshah* like his classmates?

Upon inquiry, Reb Yoel Kantor found out that the school principal had befriended the young orphan and had occasionally invited Dani and his family for a Shabbos meal. The principal offered to make Dani's *bar mitzvah* in Minchat Shlomo, where he *davened*.

Reb Yoel realized that Dani would be able to *lein* only the *maftir* and *haftorah* in the second *minyan*. He approached Ezra and said, "Many boys from your class will be in *shul* for the Shabbos of both *bar mitzvahs*. Surely they will compare what both of you do. How will it look for Dani if he will *lein* only the *maftir* and *haftorah*, and you will *lein* the entire *parshah* in the first *minyan*?"

"I know how much effort you put into learning the *parshah* and you know it perfectly. Everyone in the family, especially your mother and I, are proud and happy for you. But for the sake of Dani who is an orphan, and his mother, who is a widow, maybe you should just *lein* the *maftir* and *haftorah* at our *minyan*."

Ezra was a bright child. He understood and was proud of his father's sensitivity. He looked up at his father and without a moment's hesitation, said, "Yes, that's exactly what we should do."

*Adapted from In The Spirit of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn

DID YOU KNOW?

- When *Klal Yisrael* was described as a 'stiff-necked people,' it specifically referred to the fact that they do not foresee the consequences of their actions.¹
- When one learns Torah, they should use their imagination to envision how the *halacha* would play out. Doing so fulfills, 'Who is wise? He who sees the outcome.'²

¹ Abarbanel on *Shemos* 32:7, s.v. וידבר

² *Chochmah U'Mussar* Vol. I, 34