

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

פֶּרֶשֶׁת בְּהַר־בְּחֻקֹּתַי

כ"ו אייר תשפ"ה

4:26

Parsha Sponsor: Anonymous

וְכִי־יִמוּךְ...

“If your brother...” (Vayikra 25:35)

In this week's Parsha, the Yidden are traveling through the *Midbar*. The pasuk says *V'chi yamuch achicha, Umata yodo imach* – if your brother becomes impoverished and stretches out his hand – *vehechzakta bo* – you should give him strength. If a person needs help or assistance you should care for him and support him. There is a big question here. In the *midbar*, the Jews had everything they needed. No one was impoverished. They had food from the *manna* and water from the well. They all had clothing and weren't lacking anything. So, what's *vehechzakta*? What kind of support would one need?

My father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita shared a beautiful answer from the Avnei Nezer. The Avnei Nezer says that the Mitzvah was not to help someone by supporting him with money. The Mitzvah wasn't to help someone financially. The Mitzvah was *Vehechzakta* – to give someone Chizuk! To inspire someone! The Mitzvah was for them to be there for someone! So many people have affluence but suffer from affluenza. They have everything they need, but they feel like nothing. Many people don't need your money – what they need is your presence. They need more of you in their life. *Vehechzakta* means to be there for a friend and give him a hug or smile when he needs it most. *Vehechzakta* means to put your arm around a person and tell him I'm here for you. To tell another person, “I care about you.” To tell another person, “I love you. I am here for you.” So many of us underestimate the power of a smile, hug, or a good word. We all need someone like that in our lives. We all need someone to inspire us and be there for us when we need it most.

There was a woman who had a son who was very disrespectful and rebellious. One day, she decided that she had had enough. She gave up on her kid. She called her sister, who lived

in another city, and said, "I'm begging you, please take my son as your foster child." The woman had six children of her own, and they were not the easiest kids. She really didn't want to take her nephew into her house. The boy's mother persisted and said, "There is nobody else in the world; you are my only sister. If you don't take him, I'll have to give him up to a stranger, and that would be awful." The sister agreed and took the boy in. The boy behaved terribly and was a horrible example for the rest of the family. Every day was a struggle and a constant battle.

The aunt's husband taught in the local yeshiva where this boy learned. The principal of the yeshiva tried his best to cope with the kid, but one day he decided that he had had enough. He called up the aunt and said, "I feel awkward talking to your husband because he is a teacher in our school; so, I am talking to you. I cannot tolerate this child anymore. I must expel him." At first, the aunt was very happy. She thought this could be an excuse for her to get out of the responsibility of taking care of her nephew. She would tell her sister that he was expelled. Then something happened. She stood strong. She said to the principal, "If you expel my nephew, my husband is quitting his job. You will have to look for a new teacher." The principal was shocked and couldn't believe what he was hearing. He decided to give the boy a probation and another chance.

Later that day, the boy came home and looked his aunt right in the eye. The principal told the boy about the conversation. He asked his aunt, "Is it true? Did you really put my uncle's job on the line to save me? Is it true that you were willing to risk your whole livelihood, the bread on your table, just for me?" With tears in her eyes, the aunt said, "It's true." The boy was never the same. This act of kindness helped him turn his life around. He turned a new leaf and became a new person. Why? Not because he was punished or rebuked. He changed because he had someone who had faith in him. He had someone who believed in him. He had someone who supported him. That's *vehchezakta bo*. Even though almost everyone gave up on him, his aunt didn't. She was there for him. She stuck up for him. He changed because his aunt supported and inspired him. We can do the same. Let's do this! Let's be there for others! Let's uplift and inspire each other! We never know how far one warm hug or one small smile can go! We can change lives!

Have a Great Shabbos!

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