

MESIVTA'S MESSAGE

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FEATURED TORAH *Message*

Rabbi Shimshon Gewirtz

In another two weeks, we will read פרשת כי תשא and the incident of the עגל הזהב. The Torah tells us that the Jewish people thought their leader Moshe was late returning from Har Sinai, possibly never to return, and they sinned and worshipped the עגל הזהב. When Moshe descended from the mountain, he met his disciple Yehoshua, the future leader of the nation. Yehoshua told Moshe that he the sounds of war were coming from the Jewish camp: "קול מלחמה במחנה". Moshe responded sharply, saying, "אין קול ענות גבורה ואין ענות חלושה, קול ענות אנכי שמע". Moshe said that the sounds they heard were not those of strength or weakness but rather sounds of distress.

Chazal (ירושלמי תענית פרק ד, מדרש רבה קהלת פרשה ט) teach us that Moshe was criticizing Yehoshua for not being able to correctly interpret the sounds he had heard, saying, "מי שעתיד להנהיג שררה על ששים רבוא אינו יודע, Moshe told Yehoshua that a good leader must be able to correctly interpret and understand these sounds.

Why is it so important for a leader to be able to correctly interpret such sounds? What message was Moshe

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THOUGHTS *on the* PARSHA

Henoch Rubin, 11th grade

In this week's parsha, פרשת תרומה, the תורה says, "ועשו" "ארון עצי שטים" - "And they shall make an ark of cedar wood." The Midrash Shemos Rabbah comments, "Why did the Torah use the singular form for "and you shall make," while for all the other keilim of the Mishkan, a plural form was used: "and they shall make?" The Midrash answers that Hashem was inviting everyone to participate in the construction of the Aron (through donations) so that they would all merit the Torah (which the Aron symbolizes.) The Ramban elaborates on this midrash, saying that everyone could be involved by donating one gold vessel, by helping Betzalel a little bit, or even by merely having the intention to participate.

From the final words of the Ramban, Rav Henach Liebowitz learns a significant concept in serving Hashem. The Ramban teaches us that even someone who has no way to participate in a mitzvah, such as someone who had no money or materials to offer for the Aron, and no physical capability or skill to assist, could still merit by just wanting to participate.

The Gemara in Kiddushin discusses a person who was going to do a mitzvah but, by some freak accident, wasn't

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SPARKS *of* MUSSAR

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The Alter of Novardhok

Speaking of the extraordinary Torah genius of R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, R' Yosef Yoze

explained how this gadol achieved his greatness: In his youth, R' Chaim Ozer was always in the company of Sages and elders. Never did he say, "Listen to my opinion." Instead, he listened to the opinions and

explanations of the elders. He absorbed it all until the wisdom of several generations was woven together in his powerful mind.

FEATURED TORAH *Message continued*

conveying to Yehoshua, and what can we learn from this about leadership, chinuch, or parenting?

In his sefer *בית השואבה*, Rav Shimon Schwab explained that the sounds Yehoshua heard were sounds of drunken revelry, and he interpreted these sounds as a rebellion against Hashem. Moshe corrected him, saying that the sounds of drunken revelry were actually a cry of *ענות*, meaning suffering and pain. The Jewish people despaired when they thought that they were stranded in the desert without their great leader Moshe, and because of that despair, they began to behave in an inappropriate manner that led to the *חטא העגל*.

Moshe taught Yehoshua that a leader must be able to distinguish between behaviors that are truly a rebellion against Hashem

and those that are, in fact, an outpouring of pain and dread. He rebuked Yehoshua for misunderstanding this because a leader must understand what's motivating his followers to do wrong if he hopes to guide and support them. When people are suffering, a great leader can support them and guide them through this pain, but only if he is able to avoid interpreting their actions as rebellious.

In our lives, we can make this mistake, too. We see behaviors in others, such as our children or students, and may assume that they represent rebellion or rejection of us, our way of life, or our precious *מסורה*. This interpretation can cause us to respond with anger or punishment. Perhaps we may become hurt or scared by what we're seeing and lose our ability to respond properly. If we can observe others more

up. But Chazal teach us that this is not the proper thing to do. When someone is in a position where they can't do the mitzvah, they should still have an overwhelming desire to do it. Even if you can't find a way to do what you want, just the genuine yearning to do it will bring the reward of Olam Habah.

carefully, we often find that their behavior is not a rebellion at all but an expression of confusion, pain, or even just immaturity. It behooves us to keep in mind this message of our great teacher Moshe, *להבחין בין קול ללוקל*, and to use a stance of curiosity and empathy when we observe others to ensure that we don't miss what's right in front of our eyes.

RECENT *Happenings*

Gabriel Salehrabi, 12th grade

This week we were privileged to have a class on **finance, budgeting, and decision-making** given by a member of our local community, **Clifford Tager**. Mr. Tager explained important financial concepts in a clear and relatable way, making sure everyone could follow along. One of the key topics he covered was the difference between credit cards and debit cards. He explained that debit cards are linked directly to a bank account, meaning you can only spend what you have, while credit cards allow you to borrow money, which must be paid back later. He also discussed the importance of managing credit responsibly and how interest rates on credit cards can add up quickly if they are not paid on time.

Students thought Mr. Tager's presentation was interesting and valuable. He used real-life examples and interactive questions to keep everyone engaged, making the topic of finances easy to understand. Many students walked away with a better understanding of how to make financial choices, such as using credit cards wisely and avoiding unnecessary debt. His advice on budgeting and decision-making left a strong impression, and everyone appreciated the practical knowledge he shared. Overall Mr. Tager's visit was very successful, and his insights will help students make informed financial decisions in the future.

THOUGHTS *on the PARSHA continued*

able to do it, and he gets credited for the mitzvah anyway. But this Ramban teaches us a new concept: Someone can just want to do a mitzva -that he would never be able to do in realit -and still get credit for it.

The natural tendency when faced with a mitzvah that seems impossible is to give

ONGOING COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- SUNDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S MESILAS YESHARIM (ZOOM)
- TUESDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S ORCHOS TZADDIKIM (CHESTERFIELD)
- DAILY AHAVAS CHESSED (WHATSAPP)
- DAILY SHMIRAS HALASHON (WHATSAPP/EMAIL)
- DAILY ORAYSA (WHATSAPP)

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