

Marrying for money

Preparing for a successful marriage

Show# 208 | Feb 16th 2019

Riddles of the week

#1

פרשת תצוה

רמב"ם הלכות ביאת המקדש פרק ט הלכה ז

וכן הדלקת הנרות כשירה בזרים לפיכך אם הטיב הכהן את הנרות והוציאן לחוץ מותר לזר להדליקן.

ספר מנחת חינוך - מצוה צח - אות ט

ודעת הר"מ פ"ג מתמידין ומוספין ה"י, שמצות עשה להדליק הנרות היא מצות עשה בבוקר ובין הערביים, ודוחה שבת וטומאה כקרבנות שקבוע להם זמן. ועיין יומא כ"ד ע"ג, לענין עבודות שהזר חייב עליהם, דהדלקה לאו עבודה היא, וכתב הר"מ פ"ט מביאת המקדש ה"ז, וזה לשונו, וכן הדלקת נרות כשרה בזרים, לפיכך אם הטיב כהן את הנרות והוציאן לחוץ מותר לזר להדליקן, עכ"ל, והראב"ד כתב הפליג וכו' אלא שאם הדליקן כשרים, עכ"ל. ובכסף משנה כתב, דלדעת הר"מ הוא לא כמו שחיטה דלאו עבודה היא וכשרה בזרים, עי"ש, >כּוּוּנַת הר"מ שכתב הוציאן לחוץ, דבהיכל אסור לזר ליכנס. >א"כ הוא הדין כל הפסולים לעבודה, כגון מחוסר כפורים ובעל מום, ופשוט דלא גרעו מזר. ועיין משנה למלך שם הט"ו, שכתב שם לענין איסור לזר ליכנס בהיכל אף דכשר להדליק, עי"ש ואין כאן מקומו. וזה כמה שנים הקשיתי על דין זה של הר"מ, דאם הוציאן לחוץ מותר זר להדליק, הא במנורה ודאי הדלקה עושה מצוה ולא הנחה, דאי לאו הכי לא היתה דוחה שבת, דאפשר לעשות קודם השבת להדליקה ובשבת יגביה ויניחנה, ומבואר להדיא ברש"י שבת כ"ב ע"ב ד"ה אי הדלקה עושה מצוה וכו', כדאשכחן במנורה. ושם בסוגיא מבואר דאי הדלקה עושה מצוה הדלקה במקומה בעינן, ואי הדליקה מבפנים והוציאה גבי נר חנוכה לא עשה כלום, עי"ש, א"כ כיון דמקום המנורה בהיכל, בודאי צריך להדליק במקומה היינו בהיכל, ושלא במקומה לא עשה כלום, ואיך כתבו הר"מ והראב"ד דהדלקתן בחוץ כשרה, הא הדלקה במקומה בעינן. ואחר זמן מצאתי קושיא זו בספר מעשה רוקח לחכם ספרדי על הר"מ פ"ד מחנוכה ה"ט, הקשה קושיא זו, ואינו תחת ידי כעת:

#2

פרשת כי תשא

פרק לד פסוק כט

וַיְהִי בְרִדְתֹּת מֹשֶׁה מִקֶּרֶם סִינַי וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הַעֲדֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה בְּרִדְתָּו מִן־הַקָּר וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא־יָדַע כִּי קָבַן עֹר פָּנָיו בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֹתוֹ:

רש"י פרשת כי תשא פרק לד פסוק כט

ויהי ברדת משה - כשהביא לוחות אחרונות ביום הכפורים:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף ז עמוד ב

אין בין שבת ליום הכפורים אלא שזה זדונו בידי אדם וזה זדונו בכרת.

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות יום הכפורים סימן תריא סעיף ב

כל מלאכה שחייבים עליה בשבת, חייבים עליה ביום הכיפורים.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף ו עמוד ב

אמר מר: זו היא רשות הרבים, למעוטי מאי? - למעוטי אידך דרבי יהודה; דתנן, רבי יהודה אומר: אם היתה דרך רשות הרבים מפסקתן - יסלקנה לצדדין, וחכמים אומרים; אינו צריך. ואמאי קרו ליה גמורה? - איידי דתנא רישא גמורה, תנא נמי סיפא גמורה. ולחשוב נמי מדבר, דהא תניא: איזו היא רשות הרבים - סרטיא ופלטיא גדולה, ומבואות המפולשין, והמדבר! - אמר אביי: לא קשיא, כאן - בזמן שישראל שרויין במדבר, כאן - בזמן הזה.

רש"י מסכת שבת דף ו עמוד ב

בזמן שהיו ישראל במדבר - חשיבא רשות הרבים. בזמן הזה - אינו מקום הילוך לרבים, דהולכי מדברות לא שכיחי.

Selected audio from our listeners

Answers to the questions

Answers to the questions 1 *click here*

Answers to the questions 2 *click here*

Answers to the questions 3 *click here*

Answers to the questions 4 *click here*

Answers to the questions 5 *click here*

Comments on the Show

Comments on the show 1 *click here*

Comments on the show 2 *click here*

Comments on the show 3 *click here*

Comments on the show 4 *click here*

Comments on the show 5 *click here*

Comments on the show 6 *click here*

Comments on the show 7 *click here*

Comments on the show 8 *click here*

Comments on the show 9 *click here*

Comments on the show 10 *click here*

Comments on the show 11 *click here*

Comments on the show 12 *click here*

Comments on previous Shows

Show 207- Bishul Acu"m

Comment 1 *click here*

Show Suggestions

Suggestion 1 *click here*

Suggestion 2 *click here*

Selected emails from our listeners

Comments on the show

Reb Ahron Sorscher is always a pleasure to listen to. To give another analogy to his point he made if you start off telling people how hard it will be etc.. you set them back and it makes it harder..

We learned together in the Daf Chabura (best years of my learning by far), and when we were learning Bava Metzia blatt after blatt we found ourselves coming up to Perek Eizehu Neshech and all the Daf Chabura nay sayers said aha now you'll see it's impossible to learn that in 6 months let alone a month... it's a total waste of time to even try.. blah blah.. I said Farkert I never saw one real Talmid Chacham say everything can be learned except this Perek.. All the real Talmidei chachamim that spoke out against the yeshiva Derech Halimud none have said oh except Eizehu Neshech... so we went in with the attitude yes it can be done. And it was done maybe took a little more than a month for those 15 blatt but it was done. And done well. It's all in the attitude..

Samuel Obstfeld

Your interview with shadchan from EY was shocking!!! This is a good Bachur???

Shlomie Baumwolspiner

Hi Reb Dovid,

I am listening to your show about marrying off your children.

I am an Avreich in Eretz Yisrael and I have to tell you that the system is INSANE. I met my future Mechutan and he is a well to do guy. He knew that I have nothing and said "you give 500 thousand shekel I give 300k."

To this day I can't stand him.

But if you don't pay - your daughter remains single. How is a father whose average salary was about 13 thousand dollars a year [like me] going to pay these crazy sums?

So we ended up agreeing on 290 thousand shekel [not including wedding expenses] and my reward was that my son in law's offended and hurt me on numerous occasions and when I told him - he blamed me. Now my daughter - who I never had an argument with in 20 years - won't visit me or come for Shabbos because her husband doesn't like me.

I want my money and my daughter back but it is too late.

It is killing me. The attitude of a lot of Bochorim is מגיע לי - I deserve it. This is the system. WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING!!!!

Thanks for having a show about it. HAVE MORE. IT IS KILLING PEOPLE.

My brother who learns and makes nothing [and his wife doesn't work] promised a Dira to his son in law in Yerushalayim - and he has 8 more to go.

People are in HUUUUUGE Chovos.

A.E.

Hello Reb David,

I have very much enjoyed listening to your Shiurim lately. The issues are timely and it is nice seeing somebody address them head-on.

I listened to your shiur on marrying for money and there was a point mentioned which I felt could be expanded on and maybe adapted into a newer shiur.

Namely the Gemara in Sotah Daf Beis Amud Alef gives the Maskana: כאן זיווג ראשון כאן זיווג שני. The Gemara says by Zivug Rishon. קשה זיווגו של אדם כקריאת ים סוף. So by Zivug Rishon Hashem has a system of bashert whereby two individuals/Neshamos are brought together based on their Neshamos being interconnected.

A point which I have pondered in the past is if the system in Zivug Rishon goes according to bashert so where does this monetary aspect of Shidduchim come into the picture? Are some parents blocking their child's bashert making monetary demands?

I think that the answer is that here is where Hashems Hasgacha comes into the picture. In every generation there have been different מיועצות which have affected Shidduchim: wars, difficult mother in laws-father in laws, finances, etc etc. Today's specific financial element is just another way Hashem guides בן פלוני לבת פלוני.

Anyways I thought this might just be another aspect of that shiur which could be fleshed out in a new shiur. Zivugim Rishonim Shniim. Can we delay our bashert through our behavior? Are there different levels of bashert?

All the best,

Reuven Phillips

Thank you for your show this week on marrying for money. While I had a vague understanding of how the system works in Eretz Yisrael, I found the actual details portrayed to be quite shocking. It's easy for me to pontificate about this from 6,000 miles away in NY, so I won't, as much as I want to.

When Mrs. Levitin laid out the ballpark figures that some people are paying, the thought occurred to me that this might be one of the factors driving up real estate prices in Eretz Yisrael. While there are several issues that contribute (shortage of housing, large families, etc.), having a built-in demand where people absolutely NEED to spend a million shekel on a dirah can definitely drive prices higher than they should be.

Thank you

Tsvi Goldstein

Dear Rabbi Lichtenstein,

I am a frequent listener and big fan of your weekly podcasts.

I was recently offended by the comments of Mrs. Michal Friedman who casually used the term "sex life" when referring to intimacy in a Jewish marriage.

Sex life is for goyim who compartmentalize aspects of their life. For example they have a professional life, a family life and a sex life etc.

This is NOT Hashkafically sound because everything we do is part of a Torah life.

Furthermore it makes it sound as though the act of intimacy is about oneself when it is anything but selfish.

Mrs. Friedman correctly emphasized the importance of enjoying things in this world, but fell short from explaining that enjoyment is not an end in itself rather it is a means for giving satisfaction to others.

When referring to intimacy in a Jewish marriage (the ultimate Kedusha) one can never be too careful not to introduce goyish concepts Chas Vesholom because that is how marriages get ruined as Mrs. Friedman said "someone watches a video and the people look like they are having the time of their lives and the people want to know if they are normal".

Have a sense of responsibility to your audience and before you air a sensitive topic, please go out of way and screen the interviews by a few more people as this one was offensive and anti Torah Hashkafa.

Respectfully submitted,

Burl Sostchin

Dear Reb Dovid:

I am a regular listener of your podcast, so I need to first of all thank you for your efforts, time, guidance, wisdom, and Torah knowledge which you so generously share with the Torah world in your podcasts. They are unique in the digital world in that they attempt to tackle important issues head on, without fear and with only one goal: the pursuit of the truth.

I have never written to you before, but after listening to the most recent podcast about marrying for money I really couldn't abstain. The information in this podcast, in particular the state of Shidduchim in Israel, is so thoroughly horrific and against everything the Torah and Chaza"l teaches us, there is just no way that I can remain silent.

Without going into the Heter of having the right to go to Kollel, which in and of itself is a huge Sugya and something that according to Gedolei Haposkim from the Mishna all the way through the later Achronim can and should only be done by someone **who does not become a burden to the Tzibbur** (the sources to this are too numerous to list, but a good place to start is the Rambam in the end of Shmita and Yovel, Radvaz there, Rambam in Perush Hamishnayos in Avos, etc.), I would like to simply focus on one point: in my humble opinion, anyone who approaches marrying off their children with their focus on money first - for **whatever reason, even if it means learning in Kollel** - while the person they are actually marrying taking a secondary level on importance, will have **exactly that kind of marriage: money first, marriage second**. Our holy Torah has been used and abused to the extent where it's literally being pawned off as a money grab, Rachmana Litzlan.

Chazal teaches us that since the creation of the world, the Boreh Olam has been sitting and making Shidduchim. He is very, very, **very** good at it. Any "Rosh Yeshiva" (the quotes are very much intended) who pawns off their "Top Bochurim" to the highest bidder to the complete detriment of the entire community, which is a violation of Torah, Halacha and Hashkafa of the highest order, is in my opinion guilty of Kefira. It is not unlike someone who steals from someone else, which Chazal also compares to a Kofer, because to believe that even one Pruta of our money could ever reach us without the Boreh Olam wanting it to is tantamount to heresy. The same is true about Shidduchim. Hashem has His plans, and they will happen, no matter what. "Rosh Yeshivas" who claim to have the best interests of their top students in mind when they say that they only want that their students should be able to sit and learn "without financial worry" will soon find out that any marriage that begins with money will end in money, Rachmana Litzlan. How far have we fallen, that we think we can be smarter than Chazal, who state over and over again that prayer, faith and honesty alone assure a person's Menuchas Hanefesh in this world, not money, a rich father in law, or a 1.2 million shekel Dirah.

While I applaud Mrs. Levitan for coming forward and sharing her opinion about the horrific state of affairs of Shidduchim in the Torah world in Israel, I can't help but feel that while she bemoans

these facts she simultaneously benefits from them by charging for her services and **enabling these Katnei Emunah who masquerade as Roshei Yeshiva.**

History will (and already has, with 30% of Chareidim in Israel living beneath the poverty line) prove these people wrong.

Thank you again for everything you do.

Sincerely,

Lazar Weisz

Spring Valley, NY

Reb Dovid:

I caught the clip on Headlines with the Shadchan in EY. Call me naive, but isn't there a clear no-Machlokes Gemara in Kiddushin 29 that mandates that a father has an obligation to teach his son a trade? That does not seem to even be part of the narrative here, unless the trade is extortion.

Also, has the Kesuva become a joke? Maybe that's why they read it in Aramaic, so that no one in the crowd realizes that Jewish men have an obligation to support their wives and families. I don't think that there is an alternate version with those clauses redacted, for husbands in indefinite Kollel. Since it's Adar, I heard a line of what's the difference between a hospital and Lakewood? In a hospital, the people go from life support into the freezer; in Lakewood, they go from The Freezer to life support.

In all seriousness, Kollel is not what it once was. My observation today is that it is often more of a social statement, rather than for Metzuyanim to develop. And in previous generations, even the Metzuyanim left the Yeshiva after a year of Kollel, if that. Now, the Kollel rosters are filled with those who:

- (1) Don't have any other compelling plan to get started with
- (2) Are seeking a general postponement of reality because that's the normative script which has been written for them

(3) Have been convinced by their Rosh Yeshiva to stay to keep the benches full and fundraising streams flowing

(4) Had underwhelming high school and Beis Medrash experiences and now need years of remediation so that they finally be able to learn a Daf of Gemara and Siman of Shulchan Aruch.

(5) Have parents and in-laws who will feel validated in terms of their own Frumkeit or life accomplishments by being in Kollel vicariously; some of these are Baalei Teshuva and others have a guilt trip for not being in Klei Kodesh themselves

(6) Have wives who were groomed by their teachers to aspire to be a Kollel wife, without really knowing what that means and what goes on or does not go on in a typical Beis Medrash

All in all, this makes for a quite unaffordable economic model with little return on investment for the community. And in America, how many guys in the above 6 categories convince others that they spend their Shana Rishona and then some, in Israel? Plenty. Based on whom I see walking the streets of Yerushalayim when I visit, I do think that it is great for the economy of Israel (places like Greens) and gives Parnassa to the Rosh Kollelim and Rosh Yeshiva. So, maybe I am just a party pooper.

Thank you for indulging me.

Elly D. Lasson, Ph.D.

Baltimore, MD

Thanks for that most revealing program. What to you was Hindu is to me obscene!! Hatzlacha.

Eli Cohen

Dear Mr. Lichtenstein.

I would like to respond to your friend who terribly regrets listening to his Rav who recommended he go through with a wedding even though he was not attracted to his wife. Unfortunately, this story may be presented as a one sided story that perhaps has been simplified

over time in the speaker's mind. For example, it could well be that this young man told his Rav that he did not have stars in his eyes, that he thought she was ok-looking but not was not infatuated with her. In such a context it could very well be that he was advised to follow through with the marriage.

If however, the Rav did actually recommend that this man marry his wife even though he was not attracted to her, the Rav has acted in a grievous manner, seriously injuring the happiness of a potential marriage using flippant gestures that do not take the individual's desires into consideration.

I have fortunately been blessed with a man who finds me widely attractive, despite having gained and lost over 30 lbs throughout our married life together. Yet, I have a neighbor and friends who have not been blessed with such Mazal, and I wonder if perhaps a more public understanding on attraction must be brought to the forefront in order to dispel with common media myths that have pervasively infiltrated our homes.

Attraction initially may start out as more physical in nature, however all scientific studies indicate that it wanes between 18-24 months after initial exposure. After that point attraction can only be maintained through a harmonious vibrant relationship. The studies on this subject or dense and John Gottman (one of the famous relationship researchers in the world and orthodox Jew) has gone on record as saying that those who find their spouse unattractive are often the ones who need therapy.

In reality, I cannot list all the causes for unattraction, but some of them are often brought on by a lack of confidence by one or both parties, as well as an underlying problem within the relationship itself.

Harvey Weinstein, Tiger Woods as well as many famous men, have married women known worldwide for their physical beauty. Despite the physical temptation, it did not preclude these men from wandering any less than those married to simple women.

In fact, many studies show that the mistress is often less attractive than the spouse at home (think Donald Trump, Elliot Spitzer to name a few). In many cases these men are looking for validation and unconditional love without having to exert much effort to maintain a relationship.

They in essence enjoy the chase and the illusionary aspects that initial attraction provides. This is part of the subliminal message in pornography and is against our Torah values.

On the female side, many women stop being confident in themselves and use their children as a proxy for a loving relationship. Instead of pursuing a close relationship with their husbands in a loving unconditional way. These women treat their husbands as children, causing irrevocable harm to the marriage and often unconsciously causing their husbands to become un-attracted to them.

Within this whole argument it must be maintained that attraction is important for both parties to maintain within their lifetime. At the same token it would be foolhardy to believe that attraction was the sole basis for the demise of a marriage. Women in particular should put effort into looking their best despite the perceived flaws brought on my mass media consumption. The woman in the times of Egypt did not believe they were unattractive even though there may have been many variances in their appearance. In the 21st century, female confidence has been dismantled in systematic ways, and may be hurting the fabric of our Jewish homes.

I will end with one story that emphasizes my point.

I had a friend whose father was considered a very well respected member of his community. She privately confided on a number of occasions that her father was very into looks. Eventually, this parent divorced his “plain –jane wife” and remarried. I was not privy to the inner workings of the second marriage nor its eventual divorce. But needless to say this man got married and divorced a third time, and is now in search of wife number 4. It would not be unreasonable to say that this parent may have used his unattraction as proxy to more deficient aspects within himself. At this juncture we can pretty much assume that blaming the dissolution of a marriage on looks may have been a cover for other seriously defective character traits.

My hope in writing this essay, is perhaps it will enable you to shed some light on this important topic in a more public setting. There is a great need to dispel with some common myths that are circulating our community and that are seriously injurious to the health and wellbeing of our marriages. Hashem created attraction between a man and woman, but it can only be upheld

through Torah laws and Hashkafic concepts. Highlighting these concepts in a public forum may help many who find themselves in relationships with waning attraction.

I am an avid listener of your radio show Headlines, I have listened to practically all 220 of them and I really find them to be informative and enlightening.

However, as I was listening to one of the recent shows - the one about the Shadchan from Beit Shemesh who said that from her experience - "only the Rosh Kollelim and Roshei Yeshivas seem to be able to afford to make the million shekel shidduchim..." Therefore, she assumes that they must be pocketing a large percentage of fundraising money - which donors believe are heading to the institution.

Following this show was many, many comments made by R' Dovid and other listeners. Most immediately took this Shadchan's assumption as a hard and cold fact and begun commenting on what a terrible 88888 was taking place.

However, I have another take on this.

When R' Meir Shapira of Lublin opened his large yeshiva, he enlisted the help of several Bochorim to become collectors to enable him to run the yeshiva successfully. After some time, one of the fundraisers approached him and explained that he would arrive at a rich man's home, dirty and sweaty from the long trip and he didn't feel that it was Kavod HaTorah for a Yeshivah Bochor to try fundraising looking and feeling so dirty and exhausted.

The Bochor proposed that perhaps some of the money collected could be used to buy him a new suit and a horse and wagon, so that he would feel and look more of a Chosheva Ben Torah, rather than a tramp. To which, R' Meir Shapira readily agreed.

A short while later, one of the regular donors to the yeshiva suddenly stopped his large donations. R' Meir Shapira requested an audience with the Gvir and asked him for the reason of his refusal to continue supporting the yeshiva.

The man responded that once he saw the fundraiser had a new suit and a horse and cart to take him around - he decided to stop his donation - after all, he wanted his money to go towards the yeshiva and not towards the fundraisers clothing.

R' Meir Shapira explained that when the Yidden were requested to start donating to the Mishkan – Hashem appointed Betzalel Ben Uri to head it. As it is explained that Betzalel was able to discern the donators intentions – if one gave willingly – his gold could be used for the Aron – however, if one did not give willingly – his donation might just be used for the outside of the Mishkan.

So too, explained R' Meir to the Gvir, one who donates willingly with the right intentions to our yeshivah – Hashem ensures that that money goes to the yeshivah. And conversely one who gives money to the yeshiva – albeit with the wrong intentions – his money will go towards the horse and cart.

I think the message of this story is clear.

It is not up to us to make Cheshbonos and to worry about transparency and what percentage the Rosh Kollel is taking – our duty is simply to donate with pure intentions to the worthy cause – and Hashem can and will ensure that our money goes to the correct place.

Thank you for your wonderful program and Hatzlocha for all the future shows.

Z. Cohen

Givat Ze'ev, Israel

Show Suggestions

Dear R' Dovid שליט"א

I am a Rav in a shul in Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa, of some 400 families. I have been here for 20 years and beforehand I learned in the Yeshiva Gedolah of Johannesburg, where I grew up, under the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Azriel Chaim Goldfein זצ"ל, who was a talmid of Telz and learned under Rav Mottel Katz זצ"ל and Rav Eliya Meir Bloch זצ"ל and learned B'Chavrusa with Rav Gifter זצ"ל. The current Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Dr. Goldstein (whom you have had on your show) is a Chaver of mine from Yeshiva. Most of my community are non-Observant Orthodox Jews (a strange phenomenon in South Africa) but we have a core of Shomer Shabbos congregants. About 95% of South African Jews come from Lithuania. My late in-laws were both

born in Kovno (my father-in-law's surname was Grodsinsky). My great-grandmother, whom I knew, came from Vilna. There are hardly any Sephardim here and the only Chassidim are Chabad. There is one Beis Din in South Africa, with branches in Johannesburg and Cape town and there is one Hechsher. There is a Mehadrin standard under the unified Hechsher. Reform is very small and Conservative does not exist. I am also a Mohel (see the website of the Board that runs Brit Milah in South Africa www.britmilahsa.co.za and I serve as the Chairman of the local Frum primary school the Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School and of the Simcha Fund, a Gemach that helps people make modest Simchos like weddings, Brisses and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs.

I must thank you for your very interesting show which I download and listen to in my car while commuting. The shows are informative, tackle some tough issues facing Klal Yisrael and are full of great Mekoros. I especially enjoy your own Divrei Torah and have used some of your ideas in sermons and Droschas in my shul. Your guests are varied and the topics you choose are fascinating. I know many people who listen to your show regularly.

I do not listen to the shows in order but instead I download topics that I think will be of interest and listen to them when I can.

As a Mohel I very much enjoyed your program on Metzitzta B'Peh. The guests were all so good. I learned Milah by a Gerrer Chosid in Israel.

I also derived much benefit from your show on Racism. Until 1994 (when I was 21) South Africa was divided by race and Black people had to live in different areas and were very heavily persecuted by the White minority. It has taken a long time to root out the racism from society and, unfortunately, it still raises its ugly head from time to time. Jews can also be quite racist. I was quite revolted by your guest Rabbi Mordechai Yitzchok Friedman who spewed out some really racist remarks. He twisted the Chazal's he brought as "proofs" especially the one about *הלא כבני כשיים אתם לי* which has nothing to do with race or color but about the behavior of the Kushiim, which was a nation. Please see attached a letter from Rav Moshe זצ"ל on the issue of the Ethiopian Jews and see also Rav Yaakov's comments in Emes L'Yaacov on Chumash, Parshas Bereishis 1:22 and Noach 9:25 regarding racism. See also *אזנים לתורה יתרו ד"ה ויהן שם* and *פלא יועץ לשון הרע* and *אור החיים הקדוש יתרו י"ה כ"א ד"ה ונראה כי טעם הדבר, ישראל* where he says one cannot speak ill of a Shevet of Yisrael, like Ashkenazim or Sephardim and one cannot say lashon

hara on a family or town because of a few single people who don't behave properly. Racists look down on entire races because of the behavior of some individuals, just like anti-Semites.

I would like to suggest an idea for a show and I apologize if you have dealt with this topic before: Derech Eretz. My Rosh Yeshiva זצ"ל used to speak a great deal about this and how it is being lost in the world and even in the Torah world. South African Jews are known as great בעלי דרך ארץ and a Rosh Yeshiva in Israel once commented that “it takes an American Bochur about three years in yeshiva to reach the level of Derech Eretz that a South African Bochur walks in with!” Many South Africans are shocked when they go to Frum communities around the world (especially in Israel) and see how poor the Derech Eretz is. I experienced this myself some years ago when I spent several months learning Milah in Israel and I stayed in Charedi Neighborhoods. People were rude, unhelpful, did not say ‘thank you’ or ‘please’. One of the first mornings I was there I went to a small Ashkenazi minyan across the street where I was staying. I was dressed exactly like everyone else (dark suit, hat and beard) and I was the only stranger there. This was a small shul and it was clear I was not a regular yet no one said hello or welcomed me. When I went to ask someone some information and told him I was learning Milah, all he had to say was, “well you are late, the Brisses are already happening.” In South African shuls people will run to welcome a stranger. Naturally I cannot generalize and there are, of course, many people with good Derech Eretz but this was the overall feeling I had. I recall going to the store on Thursday nights when the crowds were large. All Derech Eretz went out the window and people were pushing and shoving and seemed to have forgotten the laws of שמירת גייעה, men and women pushed each other out the way in order to get the best deal. Last year my family went to Israel to celebrate my daughter's Bas mitzvah. My wife and I wanted to expose our children to the Frum world. In some ways it was a bit of a turn-off. We found the more ‘Yeshivish’ the place was (like Bnei Brak) the less polite people were. One store owner in Bnei Brak with Peyos, beard and Bekkische, screamed at my nine-year old daughter when she asked to use the toilet and slammed the door in our faces. The more secular or modern-Orthodox, the more polite they were. I think my children were relieved to be back in South Africa where the non-Frum are largely respectful of the Frum and have Derech Eretz. This behavior is very puzzling considering how important Derech Eretz is meant to be for Torah Jews. I have written quite a lot about this in my weekly emails to my shul and also in my book on the Parsha ‘Wisdom From The South’ (see cover,

attached) that was published last year. Also attached is a series of talks I gave on the topic at a local Jewish school with Mekoros.

Once again, I thank you for the Headlines, ישיבה של מעלה, Program and I wish you much Hatzlocha in all your endeavors for Klal Yisroel, may you go מחיל אל חיל

Rabbi Mordechai Liebenberg

Claremont Wynberg Shul

Cape Town, South Africa

Rabbi Sorscher

תלמוד בבלי מסכת קידושין דף ע עמוד א

אמר רבה בר רב אדא אמר רב: כל הנושא אשה לשום ממון - הויין לו בנים שאינן מהוגנים, שנאמר: בה' בגדו כי בנים זרים ילדו; ושמא תאמר: ממון פלט? תלמוד לומר: עתה יאכלם חדש את חלקיהם; ושמא תאמר: חלקו ולא חלקה? תלמוד לומר: חלקיהם; ושמא תאמר: לזמן מרובה? ת"ל: חדש. מאי משמע? אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: חדש נכנס וחדש יצא וממנום אבד.

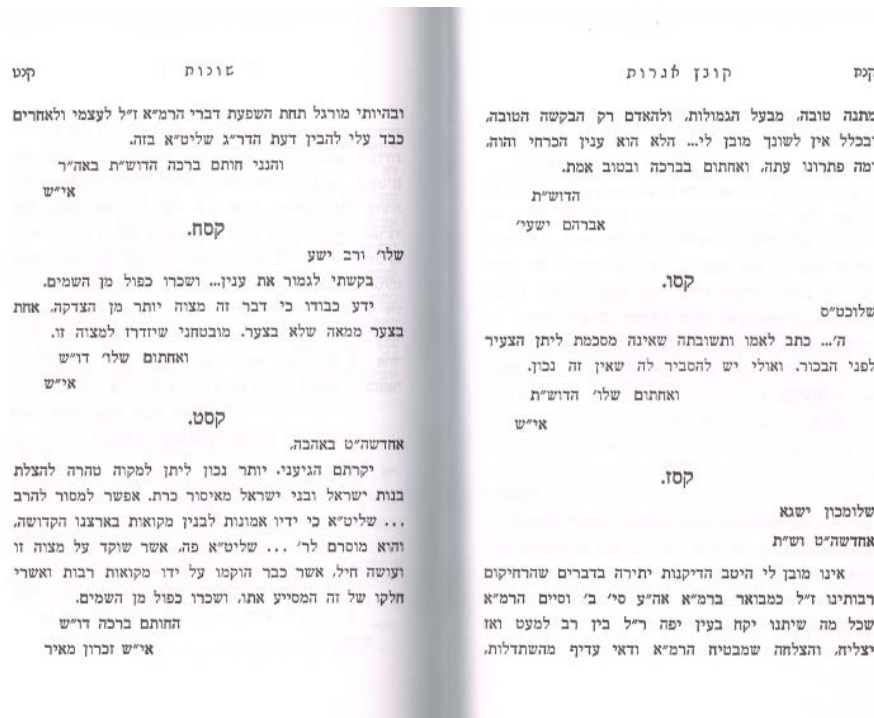
רמ"א אהע"ז סימן ב ס"א

הגה: כל הנושא אשה פסולה ב משום ממון, הויין לו בנים שאינם מהוגנים. אבל בלאו הכי, שאינה פסולה עליו אלא שנושאה משום ממון, מותר (תשובת ריב"ש סימן ט"ו) וכו'. ומי שפסקו לו ממון הרבה לשדוכין וחזרו בהם, לא יעגן כלתו משום זה ולא יתקוטט בעבור נכסי אשתו, ומי שעושה כן אינו מצליח ואין זיווגו עולה יפה, כי הממון שאדם לוקח עם אשתו אינו ממון של יושר, וכל העושה כן מקרי נושא אשה לשם ממון, אלא כל מה שיתן לו חמיו וחמותו יקח בעין טוב ואז יצליחו. (ב"י בשם א"ח).

ביאור הגר"א אבן העזר סימן ב ס"ק ו

כי הממון כו'. כמש"ו וכל העושה כו' וזהו דלא כריב"ש הנ"ל ועח"מ אבל העיקר דס"ל לא"ח דכל משום ממון ה"ל ג"כ נושא כו' אלא דאם ה"ל לוקחה בלא"ה אף על גב דלוקח ממון ג"כ אין נקרא נושא כו' וז"ש אלא כו'.

אגרות חזון איש ח"א סי' קסז



ערוך השולחן אבן העזר סימן ב ס"א

וכל הנושא אשה שאינה הגונה מפני יופיה או מפני ממונה הויין לו בנים שאינם מהוגנים וגם הממון לא יתקיים [רפ"ד דקדושין] אבל אם נושא אשה כשירה לשם ממון שאלמלא ממונה היה נושא אחרת אין בזה עון ואדרבא ראוי לעשות כן אם הוא ת"ח דע"ז לא יצטרך להיות טרוד הרבה בענייני העולם וכן נוהגין אנשים ישרים ליקח ת"ח לבתו וליתן לה ממון הרבה ולהחזיקו על שולחנו כמה שנים שישב וילמוד ואין לך מצוה רבה מזה ובשכר זה מצליחים בעסקיהם.



שו"ת חתם סופר אבן העזר ח"א סימן קנ

מ"ש פר"מ דבא"ח דמייתי הרב"י בא"ע ס"ס"ו ס"ו ימצא המעיין דמ"ש שלא יעגן אשתו עבור ממון שפסקו לו ולא יתקוטט עבור מעות כזה אחר שבידו לפרנס א"ע בלא"ה כמובן שם בדבריו עכ"ל פר"מ ואנכי הרואה עיינתי בדברי הא"ח ולא מצאתי משמעות זו אדרב' מדכ' שהממון ההוא לא יצליח מפני העיגון ומפני הרהור עבירה ורבים נכשלו בעבירו' כשאינם נושאים אשה מהרה ועליהם נאמר כל הנושא אשה לשם ממון עכ"ל ומדתלי טעמא בהרהור עבירה ועיגון ש"מ אפי' עני שבישראל לא יעגן עצמו ויביא עצמו לידי הרהור עבירה ואם דקדוקי עניות קשי' מגידא ומותא הרהורי עבירה קשים מעבירה ומשנתנו דהפוסק מעות לחתנו דלרבנן תשב עד שתלבין מיירי במקום שיכול לישא אחרת וליכא עיגון דלי' ולא הרהור עביר' אבל בזמנינו אל ישגיח על ממון נושא אשה לשם שמים וכי לא ידעי רבנן מאי השלך על ה' יהבך.

פתחי תשובה על שולחן ערוך אבן העזר הלכות פריה ורביה סימן ב סעיף א

לא יעגן כלתו כו'. עיין בתשוב' חתם סופר סי' ק"נ דהגאון השואל רצה לומר דהיינו דוקא ביש בידו לפרנס א"ע בלאו הכי והוא ז"ל כ' דמדברי הא"ח בשם הראב"ד דמייתי הרב"י ס"ס"ו ס"ו מדתלי טעמא בהרהור עבירה ועיגון ש"מ אפי' הוא עני לא יעגן עצמו כו' ע"ש. ועיין בשל"ה דף קמ"ג ע"ב שכ' ז"ל אמנם אותן הנוהגין לרמות החתן בכל מה שיכולו

לרמות אותו בענין נדונייתו וגם לכופו שילך לחופה אף שלא נתנו לו הנדוניה משלם שהבטיחוהו איני יודע מנין להם הדין הזה ואדרבה תנן בפ' בתרא דכתובות הפוסק מעות לחתנו ופשט לו את הרגל כו' אף לדברי אדמון אין אנו יכולין לכפותו להכניסה אף שכבר קידשה והנה הם סברי מצוה עבדי שלא לבייש בת ישראל אבל לא נראה הגון בעיני עכ"ל ועמ"ש לקמן סימן נ"ב סק"ב.

שו"ת שבט הלוי חלק ח סימן רסה

עוד לפני פסח קבלתי תשובת כ"ת על מה שהשבתי לכב' מעל' בדין המבואר באה"ע סי' ב' ס"א, שלא יעגן אשה לשם ממון, - ומה דפליגי בזה הגאון מהר"ם מינץ זצ"ל עם מרן הגאון ח"ס זי"ע בתשובת ח"ס אה"ע ח"א סי' ק"נ דדעת מהר"ם מינץ דזה דוקא אם יכול לפרנס את ביתו אבל אם אינו יכול לפרנס ומעגן עצמו עי"ז אינו בכלל נושא אשה לשם ממון, והח"ס דחה אותו מלשון הא"ח המובא בב"י סי' ס"ז, וכל דבזה"ז לא יעכב עצמו משום דקדוקי עניות, וסיים הח"ס אלא ישא לש"ש וכי לא ידעו רבנן מאי השלך על ה' יהבך.

ובתשובתי שם עוררתי בעניי דלשון האו"ח הנ"ל מורה יותר כהגאון מהר"ם מינץ, וכ"ת מהפך בזכותא דמרן הח"ס, וכן יאות לעשות כי דבריו דברי אלקים חיים, וכב' העתיק מכו"כ ספרי אחרונים ואין פנאי לעיין אחריהם, איברא אבא על מקצת דבריו על מש"כ בעניי דפשטות לשון הרמב"ם פ"ה מדעות הי"א דכך דרך בעלי דעת שיכינו עצמם בית ושדה וכרם לפני הנשואין מורה דלא כח"ס, וכב' דחה משו"ת תפארת אדם ח"א סי' פ"ד שהוא נוטה דקיי"ל כר' נהוראי סוף קידושין שאיני מלמד את בני אלא תורה וכיון דס"ל שאיני מלמד אלא תורה א"כ הרי שא"צ לאומנות קודם הנשואין, וכן הביא כב' ממש"כ מרן הח"ס בחי' ב"ב כ"א ע"א ד"ה בתינוקות דקיי"ל כר' אליעי סוף קידושין מניח אני כל אומנות שבעולם ואיני מלמד את בני אלא תורה וכו'.

הנה כל מה שהביא בזה אינו מכריע כלל דהח"ס שם לא מדבר שם מפרק נשואין אלא משנות חינוך תורה לפני הנשואין ובדאי מקום להכריע כר' נהוראי דמניח אני כל אומנות שבעולם, אבל כשיגיע לפרק נשואין הרי דברי הרמב"ם לפנינו.

והגם שהביא כ"ת מאיזה ספרים דלא נהיגן היום כהרמב"ם, זה יתכן דהיינו שא"צ בית כרם וכו' כמש"כ הרמב"ם אבל לחשוב מהיכן יתן פרוסת לחם למחרת הנשואין גם היום מחויב, ומש"כ מו"ר הגאון הק' מסאטמר זי"ע במאמר לה"ק ס"ב דרמב"ם מיירי דוקא בזווג שני, אחרי נשיקת רגליו רחוק לומר כן באמת ומה שהביא כב' מהגהות היעב"ץ זי"ע במס' סוטה, וממש"כ הגה"צ החפץ חיים זצ"ל בס' נדחי ישראל, וז"ל דכמה פעמים סיבת איחור נשואין הוא מפני שדואגים שלא יהי' לו מה להתפרנס עם אשתו, והוא רק עצת היצה"ר כי האדם יש לו לבטוח בה' המפרנס לברואיו שלא יגרע מזונו בעבור שרוצה לקיים מצוותו ע"כ.

הנה כל זה אמת נכון וכ"ה למעשה וכן אנו פוסקים כל היום, אבל מי שהוא עני ואביון ממש, ולמחרת הנשואין יהי' בגדר איני זן ואיני מפרנס באונס או ברצון שאין לו אב או חמיו מחזיק בו, ואין לו לא כולל, ולא ממשלה, הלא דינו מפורש בשו"ע אה"ע סי' ע' ס"ג שאם הוא עני ביותר שאין לו ליתן אפילו לחם שכופין להוציא, ודבר פשוט דזה אפי' למחרת הנשואין כשעדין לא קיים המצוה, ואם נאמר דדין השלך על ה' יהבך לבד הוא בגדר ההלכה עד שנכניס אותו בשביל זה בגדר נושא אשה לשם ממון ואנו גוערים בו על שמעגן עצמו מן המצוה, א"כ מדוע כופין להוציא את העני

הזה הרי יטעון הרני משליך על ה' יהבי.

אלא מה תאמר שנגד זה יש גם חיוב מזונות ופרנסת הבעל לאשה, וא"כ מי שהוא דל שבדלים וגם בטלן אינו מוצלח איך יכולים להכניס עצמו לדבר זה רק בטענה של השלך על ה' יהבך.

אבל מודינא דכהיום שבזה עכ"פ אפשר דרא שתומכים באברכים לומדי תורה ואיכא הרבה צדקה וחסד שצריך בבא הזמן לקיים המצוה, ועיקר דברינו רק נגד מש"כ מרן הח"ס דמי שאינו מקיים השלך על ה' יהבך הוא בגדר נושא אשה לשם ממון דזה קצת קשה להבין.

ואמת לאמיתו מש"כ בזה רבינו הגאון המקנה קידושין פ"ב על מימרא דר' נהוראי דמניח אני כל אומנות שבעולם ואיני מלמד בני אלא תורה כ' ז"ל נראה דאין זה סותר למ"ש חז"ל כל תורה שאין עמה מלאכה כי אחז"ל כי התורה ניתנה לאוכלי מן ותמצית דבריו דכ"ז רק למי שהוא במדרגת בטחון מאד ומשליך נפשו מנגד, נפשי שחי ונעבורה כי אם בתורת ה' חפצו ואז גם הקדוש ברוך הוא מקיים והי' ה' מבטחו, אבל לסתם אינשי דאין בטחונם חזק כ"כ יהי' נא תורתם קבע ומלאכתם עראי כי כפי חוזק האמונה כן יהי' מבטחו, יע"ש בדבריו הק', וא"כ אין חוצץ בינינו כי שני הבחינות אמת ואשרי להצעירים ששמים גם בזה מבטחם בה' ב"ה, מהם תצא תורה, ואין ברצוני לכפול עוד הדברים והכל כמש"כ בתשובתי הראשונה ומכתבי זה ישלים החסר שם, ועל שאר דבריו אין פנאי להשיב.

רבינו יונה על התורה פרשת חיי שרה

כל זה נתן שליח החתן¹⁰ אבל הכלה וקרוביה לא מצאנו בתורה ובאגדה שיתנו דבר לחתן. והגה יעקב עבד ברחל. ואפילו בעת הצרות שנהרגו רוב האנשים והוצרכו למה שאמר הכתוב והחזיקו שבע נשים באיש אחד ביום ההוא לאמר (ישעי' ד א) מה שהפליגו לומר לחמנו נאכל ושמלתיני נלבש [רק יקרא שמך עלינו], ואפילו בימי המשנה שעשו תקנה בבנות שימצאו קופצין, לא תקנו

אלא עישור נכסי הקרקעות לבד. **ובדורות הללו¹¹ אשר הכלה נותנת לחתן הוא דבר הגורם כמה רעות כי יבאו כמה בני אדם ולא תשיג ידם להשיא בנותיהם ובה ימעטו וישוחו, וישאו למי שאיש הגון להם ותרבה המריבה בין האנשים והנשים ותהיה האשה מושלת בעלה, ואם תמות היא בחיי בעלה ישנאו קרוביה, ואם ימות הוא בחייה תקח רוב עזבונו וישארו יתומיו עניים ואומללים.**

Rabbi Manis Friedman

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ה משנה טז

כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה ושאינה תלויה בדבר אינה בטלה לעולם איזו היא אהבה התלויה בדבר זו אהבת אמנון ותמר ושאינה תלויה בדבר זו אהבת דוד ויהונתן:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף מט עמוד ב

תניא, היה רבי מאיר אומר: כל המשיא בתו לעם הארץ - כאילו כופתה ומניחה לפני ארי. מה ארי דורס ואוכל ואין לו בושת פנים - אף עם הארץ מכה ובוועל ואין לו בושת פנים.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת נדרים דף כ עמוד ב

וברותי מכם המורדים והפושעים בי - אמר רבי לוי: אלו בני תשע מדות, בני אסנ"ת משגע"ח: בני אימה, בני אנוסה, בני שנואה, בני נידוי, בני תמורה, בני מריבה, בני שכרות, בני גרושת הלב, בני ערבוביא, בני חצופה, איני? והאמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: כל אדם שאשתו תובעתו - הויין לו בנים שאפילו בדורו של משה רבינו לא היו כמותם, שנאמר: הבו לכם אנשים חכמים ונבונים, וכתיב: ואקח את ראשי שבטיכם ולא כתיב נבונים, וכתיב: יששכר חמור גרם, וכתיב: מבני יששכר יודעי בינה לעתים! ההיא דמרציא ארצויי.

Michali Friedman

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף סב עמוד א

רב כהנא על, גנא תותיה פורייה דרב. שמעיה דשח ושחק ועשה צרכיו, אמר ליה: דמי פומיה דאבא כדלא שריף תבשילא! אמר לו: כהנא, הכא את? פוק, דלאו ארח ארעא. אמר לו: תורה היא וללמוד אני צריך.

רש"י מסכת ברכות דף סב עמוד א

דשח ושחק - עם אשתו, שיחה בטלה של ריצוי תשמיש. ועשה צרכיו - ושימש מטתו. כדלא שריף תבשילא - כאדם רעב, כמו שלא שמת מטתך מעולם שאתה נוהג קלות ראש זה לתאורתך.

כ"ו סיון שדמ"ח

למע"כ נכדי האהוב הרה"ג מוהר"ר מרדכי טענדלער שליט"א, בכרכה שלום
ובכרכה וכט"ס.

אחדשה"ט.

הנה כפי בקשתך, באחי בזה לאשר מה שכחבה בשמי לפני כמה שנים, אודות
"הפעלאשעס", שידוע מה שכחוב כשו"ח רב"ז חלק שביעי סימן ט',
שממע שבחזיקס כיהודים, אבל לדינא קשה לסמוך על זה, שלא ברור אם
הרב"ז ידע היטב המציאות אודותם, וגם לא ברור אם עד זמנינו לא

נשחנה מצבם. אבל לדינא אין באיזו מחנה ובין להרב"ז מזכיר שם שר"י ו
גם כמא נאמט פסקא. ודין בתמול'ט אפארטט התעצבט שו"מך דעדין דלמך' נאס'ט

ולבני יהדותם, נחשב לנו כספק, ויש להצריכם גירות אמיתי קודם שנחירם
לבוא בקהל. אבל גם קודם גירותם יש מצוה להצילם משמר ומסכנה כדין כל
ישראל, ש"ספק נששות להקל" גם שנאן הספק הוי בעצם יחוסם ביהודים.
וגם יש לידע, שאפילו אם לדינא אינם יהודים, מ"מ מאחר שחושבים שהם
יהודים ומסורים נפשם על יהדותם, מחוייבים להצילם.

והנה כהזכרת, אין להביאם לא"י אלא א"כ יעברו גירות, כדי שלא להרבות
חשש התבוללות. אבל אם נתגיררו כדין, וכמו שמעתי שעושים, נחשבם ככל
יהודים, ויש לעוזרם. ולהחמסם בכל צרכי חייהם, בין בגשמיות ובין

ברוחניות. ומאד נצטערתי על מה שמעתי שיש כאלו בא"י שמונעים מלקרוב
בעניני רוחניות, וגורמים ח"ו שיהיו אבודים מדה יהודי. ונראה לי שכך

נזהגים רק משום שבצע עורם הוא שחור. דפשוט שיש לקרובם, לא רק מצד

שאינם גרועים משאר יהודים, ואין לדינא חילוק כמה שהם שחורים, אלא
גם מצד שיש בהם התענה שאולי הם גרים, ונכללים במצות "ואהבתם את הגר".

ואסיים כחקה שישופר הסוב, ובזכות סמירת כל המצות, נזכה כולנו בקרוב
לקיבוץ גליות ע"י משיח צדקנו.

זקנך אוהבך בלו"נ,

משה פיינשטיין

הרוצה שיחכים ידרים

WISDOM FROM THE SOUTH

*An eclectic collection of essays on the
weekly Torah portion*



RABBI M LIEBENBERG

DERECH ERETZ

A THREE WEEK COURSE FOR GRADE 11
HERZLIA HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

BY

RABBI M LIEBENBERG

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Part 1-Introduction

Definition

The term 'derech erez', literally 'the way of the land/earth', as it appears in the Talmud and other rabbinic literature, is used in reference to three concepts:

1. A livelihood or career. See for example Pirkei Avot chapter 2 Mishna 2: "Torah study is good together with an occupation"
2. The intimate relationship between husband and wife. See for example Rashi (quoting the Sages) on Bamidbar chapter 12 verses 4.
3. Proper behaviour as befits a person who lives in a civilized society. See for example Pirkei Avot chapter 3 Mishna 17-"If there is no Torah, there can be no derech erez and if there is no derech erez there can be no Torah."

It is this third concept that we will be examining for the next three weeks.

The Maharal (Moreinu HaRav Loew, Rabbi Yehudah Leib, Prague 16th century) writes in his booklet on this topic the following short definition (Netiv Derech Eretz): "The Torah is the higher G-dly wisdom that is entirely from G-d, whereas derech erez is that which the intellect of a person dictates. It instructs him how to behave and many other things all in accordance with human intellect and as such it is the lower wisdom."

At the same time it must be pointed out that derech erez is part of Torah knowledge and is not to be compared with other human wisdoms. Rabbi Ovadiah Bartanura therefore explains that Pirkei Avot (that section of the Mishna that discusses derech erez) begins with the phrase "Moses received the Torah at Mt Sinai" to stress that even these rules-that govern the behaviour of a person in society-have their origin from Sinai. In fact, very often, the Torah itself will include a particular teaching just to instruct us in a rule of derech erez. (We will see examples below).

Why Is It Called Derech Eretz?

The Sages (Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin 40b) stated: "Whoever has studied scripture, Mishna and is conversant with the ways of derech erez will not easily sin as the verse states (Kohelet 4:12): "The three-fold strand does not quickly snap". However, whoever has not studied scripture or Mishna and is

not conversant with the ways of derech eretz **is not part of civilization** (yishuv). Rabbi Yochanan added that he is disqualified from giving testimony.” [We will discuss this in another session]

‘He is not part of civilization’- The Rambam (commentary to the Mishna) explains that this means that such a person is of no value or benefit to society, on the contrary, it would be far more beneficial to society if he was removed from its midst.

The Maharal puts it this way: The yishuv is that area that is dedicated for human habitation, specifically for man who is an intelligent being. Animals, who function based on instinct rather than intellect [are not to be found in the yishuv but rather in] the sea or the wilderness.

Thus someone who is lacking derech eretz is not part of civilized society. He or she belongs in the forests and in the wilderness with the animals. It is for this reason that in Yiddish someone who possesses derech eretz is called a mensch (literally ‘a man’) whereas someone who does not is called a wildechaya (wild animal) or a beheima (an animal).

What Is Included In Derech Eretz?

The following areas, amongst others, are all included in the subject of derech eretz (wee will give examples of these in the next two sessions):

- Positive character traits (middot tovot)
- Running one’s home (parnasat beito)
- Personal hygiene (nikayon haguf)
- Care for one’s health and safety (shmirat haguf)
- One’s clothing (malbusho shel adam)
- One’s eating and drinking habits (achila v’shtia)
- Interpersonal relations (hanhaga im acherim)
- One’s speech (Nikayon hapeh)

Derech Eretz Preceded The Torah

In the Book of Bereishit (3:24) we read: “And having driven out the man, He stationed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flame of the ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the Tree of Life” (lishmor et derech eitz hachaim). In the Hebrew we find the word ‘derech’ and then ‘eitz hachaim’. The Torah could just as easily have left out the word derech and said, “to guard the Tree of Life”. The reason it added the word derech is to teach that first there is a ‘way’ and then one reaches the Tree of Life-the Torah. That ‘way’ is derech eretz. This point is made by the Midrash (Vayikrah Rabba parsha 9) that identifies the ‘way’ as derech eretz.

Based on this Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rav Nachman stated a famous principle: “Derech eretz preceded the Torah by 26 generations.” In Hebrew this is “kadma derech eretz l’torah..”. G-d did not present the Torah to the Nation of Israel until many generations had passed since the creation of the world. The reason for this is that before the world could run on the higher, G-

dly wisdom of the Torah it first had to function according to the lower wisdom of derech erez. Thus derech erez is viewed as a prerequisite to Torah. Similarly, a child must be taught basic manners and proper behaviour before he can start to delve into the depths of Torah. (See also the commentary of Rabbeinu Yona to Pirkei Avot 3:17 “im ein derech erez ein Torah”, where he explains that one must first rectify his behaviour with positive character traits and only then will the Torah reside within him because “the Torah never resides in the body of someone with poor character”.)

The Rambam (Mishna Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah, chapter 4:1) rules this as law: “We may only teach Torah to a proper student who has pleasant ways or to a simple person. But if the student was following an improper path of behaviour, we must first set him right and instruct him how to act properly and in an upright manner. We then examine him and only afterwards do we admit him into the study hall and start teaching him Torah.”

Derech Eretz Requires Constant Revision

We already learnt above that derech erez is a prerequisite to higher knowledge and for that reason alone it is proper to give it close attention. But there is a second reason. The Sages of the Talmud (Brachot 32b) taught: “Four areas of conduct require constant strengthening: Torah study, good deeds, prayer and derech erez.”

Why these four in particular? The Maharal (Netiv Derech Eretz) explains: “Any matter that has opposition to it requires strengthening. Torah study must be strengthened for man is a creature of flesh and blood and is made of physical matter [whereas the Torah is spiritual] and thus a person needs great resources to overcome his physical nature. Good deeds must be strengthened because the evil inclination of a person attempts to convince him they are not necessary. Prayer needs to be strengthened because there are many accusatory forces that declare that the person is not deserving of what he is asking for in his prayers. Thus a person needs great fortitude to request something that he does not really deserve. There is also an opponent to derech erez, for derech erez is that behaviour that one’s intellect demands and therefore a person needs great strength to ensure that his intellect overpowers his natural instincts. His natural instincts tell him to behave in a way that is purely physical without any recourse to the intellect.”

Where Can You Find The ‘Laws’ Of Derech Eretz?

The Maharal (Netiv Derech Eretz) writes “the concepts of derech erez include all the words of mussar (character refinement) that are to be found in Pirkei Avot and throughout the Talmud as well as all the other words of mussar and they encompass all the upright and beautiful behaviour of human beings.”

Besides for Pirkei Avot, there are two other small tractates of the Talmud that deal with this subject called Derech Eretz Rabbah and Derech Eretz Zuta. The concepts of derech erez are also to be found scattered around the Talmud and the Midrashim and many other rabbinic works, including the

famous works of the Mussar Movement of 18th century Lithuania. As noted above very often, the Torah itself will include a particular teaching just to instruct us in a rule of derech erez. (We will see examples below).

Derech Eretz Applies To Everyone

Derech erez is not a petty subject that applies only to certain people and at certain times. It applies equally to scholars and great pious people as it does to simple people. The Maharal (ibid) makes this point very strongly: "A person who is considered great amongst his nation (be it in wisdom or wealth) should not say that he does not need to act in accordance to the dictates of derech erez in the belief that it is only for the rest of the 'average' people, for this is not so."

On the contrary, the behaviour of learned people should be even better than the average person so that they do not cause a desecration of G-d's Name (Chillul Hashem).

There are several proofs from our Sages to this concept, but here is a famous one:

The Torah (Shmot 12:22), when warning the Children of Israel about the tenth plague in Egypt states: "And no man shall leave the door of his house until morning." On this the Midrash (Mechilta) comments: "This teaches us that in general a person should only set out on a journey when it is good to do so (i.e. when it is light) and should return home when it is still light (because of holes in the road that cannot be seen at night and bandits who are active at night etc.). And so we find with the forefathers who conducted themselves with derech erez. We are told that "Abraham arose early in the morning" [to go to the binding of Isaac]; "Jacob arose early in the morning" [to set out to Aram] and "Moses arose early in the morning" [to prepare the Nation to receive the Torah] etc. Is the matter not subject to a logical extension? If the great patriarchs and prophets, who were setting out to do the will of Hashem, nevertheless conducted themselves in the ways of derech erez, certainly other regular people should do the same!"

The Maharal (ibid) explains that G-d would not expect them to behave in a way that was contrary to the functioning of this physical world even though He occasionally interacted with them in a supernatural way. In other words G-d will not give a command that contradicts the laws of derech erez. Thus we find that Moses (see Shmot 4:18 and the comment of Rashi) first went to ask permission from his father in law Yitro before he set out on his mission to Egypt even though G-d had expressly commanded him to go. Since he had sworn to Yitro not to leave Midyan without his permission, G-d would not expect him to act contrary to the laws of proper behaviour.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (Michtav MiEliyahu volume 5, page 63) cites this passage from the Midrash and concludes, "Behold, we are all full of excuses- we are so busy and preoccupied-for why we cannot behave with derech erez or we feel we are important and that derech erez is for the 'little people'. All

of these excuses are empty and void in light of this passage of our sages who knew the true depth of the Torah.”

Derech Eretz Must Be Tempered By The Torah

There are some Jews who believe that derech erez is not that important because, after all, “the Germans were well mannered and look at what they did!” This is nonsense and is against the Torah. They may have had manners, but where such manners are not the product of a G-dly intellect they can easily become very twisted. That is why in Pirkei Avot we are told, “If there is no Torah, there can be no derech erez”, in other words, one’s derech erez is useless without the Torah-it cannot be a goal in its own right and it must be tempered by the words of the Torah.

This point is beautifully made by the Malbim, (Rabbi Meir Leib ben Yechiel Michel Weiser, 1809-1879, one of Europe’s greatest Biblical commentators) in his commentary to Parshat Vayeira:

Following the complete destruction of the towns of Sodom and Amora and the other settlements in the Dead Sea region, Abraham and Sarah relocated from Hebron to Gerar, the capital of the Philistines. As they approached the territory of Avimelech, king of Gerar, Abraham and Sarah were forced to give the impression, for the second time in their married life, that they were brother and sister rather than husband and wife. The first time was when the couple moved to Egypt when famine ravaged the Holy Land. In that episode, Abraham was concerned that Sarah, who was a most beautiful woman, might be kidnapped by one of the immoral inhabitants of the country who would then kill him and take her for a wife. His fears proved true when Sarah was apprehended and taken to Pharaoh’s palace. Miraculously, she was released and Abraham was rewarded handsomely by the monarch for his trouble. The Torah does not at first explain why Abraham insisted on calling Sarah his sister in the Philistines’ territory, as it did when they travelled to Egypt. It is only after Avimelech forcefully kidnaps Sarah and attempts to live with her that we realize why Abraham was so insistent.

Shortly after the king captured her, Hashem visited him in a dream and warned him, on pain of death, not to lay a hand upon her for “she is a married woman” and “the wife of a prophet.” Terribly shaken, Avimelech arose early in the morning and summoned Abraham to his home. “Why have you seen fit to do this thing?” demanded the king of Abraham, referring to the patriarch’s ‘subterfuge’ in calling Sarah his sister. Abraham replied (Bereishit 20:11): “I realized that the only thing missing here is the fear of G-d. I could be killed because of my wife.” The simple understanding of Abraham’s words is that the Philistines would have no qualms killing him if they wanted his wife and he was disagreeable to letting her go. However, there is something much deeper to be deduced from Abraham’s words.

Abraham is particular to point out that the “**only** thing missing here is the fear of G-d.” What does the word ‘only’ imply? The Malbim gives a most remarkable answer: “Even if a person or a nation appear to be great

philosophers, possessing great laws and rules of etiquette, and behaving with wonderful character traits that emanate from human intellect; even if they act justly and give charity as demanded by human intellect, despite all this you should not trust this person or this nation. Do not be sure that when this person or this nation is consumed with lust to do evil, that their intellect will overpower their desire. No, the opposite is true. When the fire of passion burns within them to take a beautiful woman or misappropriate the property of their fellow, then even their intellect will go along with their desire and they will kill, rape and do all manner of evil. There is only one thing in the soul of a person that we can be sure will prevent him from sinning, and that is fear of G-d ... For when such a person is tempted to do wrong, the fear of the Great King will overcome his evil inclination.”

According to the Malbim, Abraham was saying to the king that despite the fact that his nation possessed so many fine qualities, manners, virtues and niceties, there was still the chance that they would sin when tempted by sexual immorality. Because their manners and virtues were based only on human intellect and did not originate from a Divine source, they too would fall by the wayside when challenged.

However, when proper social behaviour is Divinely ordained, as are the rules of *derech erez* (proper behaviour), and are accompanied by a fear of G-d, the chances of sin are greatly diminished.

It is interesting to note that when Joseph refused to commit adultery with the wife of his master, Potiphar, he gave her two reasons (Bereishit 39:9):” No one in this house has more power than I have. He (Potiphar) has not held back anything at all from me, except for you - his wife. How could I do such a wrong? It would be a sin before G-d.” The first reason he offers is that acquiescing to her requests would be a lack of gratitude to his master, who has promoted him to head servant of his household. But that reason, although it may have been intellectually accurate, would not have been enough to prevent him from temptation. It was only because it would be a “sin before G-d”, that Joseph possessed the wherewithal to refuse her advances.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand, one of the Roshei Yeshiva of Ner Yisroel Yeshiva, Baltimore, records in his work on the parsha (pages 38-41), that Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman shared the Malbim’s comments with a group of rabbis in Germany during the 1930’s. His implication was clear: Germany may be a civilized country, but there was no fear of G-d there and, as such, it was a dangerous place where anything could happen. Some of the assembled rabbis objected, saying that Germany was a land of laws, culture, civilization, high moral standing, science and technology. It was not some backward backwater from the Middle Ages. They assured him that Jews would be safe there because the law protected them. Unfortunately, Rabbi Wassermann was shown to be correct when he became a victim of the Nazi regime.

Rabbi Frand concludes his remarks with a chilling story to illustrate the truth of the Malbim’s contention. Before WWII, Rabbi Avraham Elya Kaplan returned to the yeshiva in Slobodka, outside of Kovno in Lithuania, after spending

some time in Germany. The famous ethical head of the Yeshiva, the Alter of Slobodka, asked Rabbi Kaplan for his impressions of Germany. Rabbi Kaplan noted that, from what he saw, the Germans were a kind and refined nation. When someone asked for directions, the one responding would give detailed instruction and end with the words; "*nicht wahr?*" is that not so? Of course, he would know that you had absolutely no idea of how to reach your desired destination and, as such, he could not expect confirmation from you. Nevertheless, as a sign of refinement, he would end his words with the seemingly redundant "*nicht wahr.*" At that point a heated debate broke out amongst the Yeshiva students as to whether one could learn positive attributes from the Germans or any other gentile communities, or whether one should only seek such wisdom from the Torah. The great Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, later of Yeshivat Chaim Berlin in New York, was at that time a student in Slobodka. He sided with those students who felt that any positive personality traits not rooted in the Torah could very possibly be no more than a superficial cloak for a dark interior. A fellow student disagreed and maintained that the inclusion of '*nicht wahr*' in the German vocabulary was a sign of refinement and that one could learn such graces from any nation. Almost fifty years later, Rabbi Hutner was teaching in his yeshiva in New York when an old man walked in, sat in the back and waited until the class was over. He then walked over to the rabbi and said, "You don't remember me, do you? I was the student who argued with you about admiring the Germans." Rabbi Hutner said that he did indeed remember him and then he reached down to shake the man's hand, only to be confronted by a hook where the hand should have been. The old man explained, "I lost my hand in the concentration camps. When the Nazi was sawing off my hand, he kept saying, 'this is hurting you, *nicht wahr?* The pain is intense, *nicht wahr?*' And even as I was screaming as if my lungs would burst, he was smiling all the time. Such a gentle, refined smile. Reb Yitzchak, you were right, and I was wrong."

When social niceties and manners are the constructs of human minds but lack the stamp of G-d's approval and involvement, one ought to be very concerned about what lurks behind the refined veneer.

Continuation of Part 1 (Introduction)
Parts 2 and 3-Practical Examples And Cases Of Derech Eretz

Derech Eretz Is One Of Three Steps To Piety

In the Talmud (Bava Kamma 30a) there is a discussion regarding what field of the Oral Law one should study in order to achieve the elevated level of chassidut (piety). Rabbi Yehudah is of the opinion that one should carefully study the concepts and laws of **damages** (nezikin). Rovah is of the opinion that one should study **Pirkei Avot** and the final opinion holds that one should study the laws of **blessings** (brachot).

The Maharal (introduction to Derech HaChaim, his commentary to Pirkei Avot) explains that each field of study corresponds to one of the three aspects of a person through which he can achieve perfection: one must be complete and whole with his fellow men, one must be complete and whole with himself and one must be complete and whole with his Creator. Rabbi Yehudah feels that the main principle of chassidut is not to be the cause of any harm to any person, hence one should study nezikin. Rovah feels that the main principle of chassidut is to be a complete and whole person with the finest character traits, hence one should study Avot. The final opinion holds that the main principle of chassidut is a constant and never-ending relationship with G-d that can be achieved only through an ongoing 'conversation' through blessing His name constantly.

It is also possible, notes the Maharal, that there is no argument at all, but that each Sage is simply emphasizing one part of the essential three-part relationship that every person must have and attempt to perfect.

Rabbi Dessler's Important Principle Of Derech Eretz

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler of blessed memory, one of the twentieth century's foremost experts on Mussar (the field of Jewish ethics and character improvement) puts forward a vital principle in the laws of derech eretz (Michtav MiEliyahu volume 4 page 245- "Derech Eretz Kadmah L'Torah"): "Just because I am in pain or suffering, does not mean that others have to suffer as a result of me." Rabbi Dessler derives this from the behaviour of Abraham at the beginning of Parshat Chayei Sarah. Abraham had just returned home from the aborted sacrifice of Isaac to find that his beloved wife of many years had passed away. His attempts to find a burial place were thwarted by the local inhabitants. Despite all of this, he nevertheless treats the people of the tribe of Chet (from whom he desired to purchase a burial plot) with the utmost respect, bowing down to them and speaking to them with honour and dignity.

There are countless examples of this principle in daily life: Just because you wake up on the wrong side of the bed, does not mean you are entitled to shout at your friends, family and co-workers. Just because you failed your driver's license, does not mean you have to take it out on the driving

inspector. Just because you had a bad day at the office does not give you the right to persecute your family when you get home.

Practical Examples Of Derech Eretz

Proper Speech (Nikayon HaPeh)

- (Talmud, Pesachim 3b): “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, ‘A person should never let an ugly word escape his mouth for we find that the Torah added an extra 8 letters rather than using an ugly word, as it says (Bereishit ,Parshat Noach 7:2), “Of every clean animal take unto you seven pairs, a male and its mate, and of the animal that is not clean, two, a male with its mate.” The Torah could have said “the unclean animal” (הבהמה הטמאה) but instead it said “the animal that is not clean” (הבהמה אשר לא טהורה היא).
We also see from here that one should not speak disparagingly about someone else’s food even if it does not appeal to them or is forbidden.
- Self Deprecation- (Ibid): “There were these two students that were sitting before Rav in a Torah lecture. One said, “this learning has made me as exhausted as a stuffed pig!” and the other said, “this learning has made me as exhausted as a stuffed kid!” Rav would no longer speak to the first student.
Rabbeinu Chananel explains: “Rav would not speak to him because he spoke disparagingly **about himself.**”
- Rude And Sexually Explicit Language- (Talmud, Ketubot 8b): “Rav Chanan bar Rav said, ‘Everyone knows why the bride goes to the chuppah but whoever dirties his mouth and says something horrible about the situation then even if a decree of seventy years of goodness has been passed in his favour, it will be changed for the bad.’” This is a particular problem with best man’s speeches at weddings where the order of the day is to insult and embarrass the groom (or the bride) as much as possible.
The Rambam (in the Moreh Nevuchim, cited by Ramban in his commentary to the Torah, Shmot 30:13) explains that ancient Hebrew is called lashon hakodesh, the holy tongue, because it contains no sexually explicit words or specific terms for the genital but uses euphemisms instead.

Clothing (Malbushav Shel Adam)

- Honourable Dress- (Talmud, Shabbat 113a): In the Prophet Isaiah (58:13) the verse sates: “If you restrain your foot because it is the Sabbath; refrain from accomplishing your own needs on My holy day; if you proclaim the Sabbath ‘a delight’, and the holy [day] of Hashem ‘honoured’, and you honour it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden...” What is meant by “you honour it”? This means that one’s clothing on Shabbat must not be like one’s clothing during the week. Indeed we find that Rabbi Yochanan referred to his clothing as that which brings me honour.

Today clothing is designed to look casual, disorganized and even messy.

- Clothing That Is Suitable For Prayer-The Prophet Amos states (4:12): "Prepare to go towards your G-d, O Israel." Upon this the Talmud (Shabbat 10a) derives the requirement to prepare one's clothing before prayer, thus Rovah bar Huna would put on special shoes and then pray and Rovah would put on a special coat. The same is true of Birkat HaMazon (one of only two blessings mandated by the Torah), about which the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:66) writes: "A person should not slouch while reciting the birkat hamazon in an arrogant fashion rather he should sit up straight, put on his jacket and hat so that the fear of heaven will be upon him."
- Clothing must be appropriate to the place and the situation, be it at a simcha or, G-d forbid, a funeral.
- Clothing Of A Torah Scholar- Since a Talmid Chacham is viewed as a representative of the Torah and Hashem, he must be particularly careful about the cleanliness of his garments. The Rambam (in Hilchot Deot 5:9, based on the Talmud Shabbat 114a) rules, "The clothing of a Torah scholar must be pleasant and clean, and it is forbidden for him to have a spot or a fatty mark or anything similar on his clothing"

Eating Habits

The Maharal (Netiv Derech Eretz) writes, "the main part of derech eretz is how one eats for when a person does not behave with derech eretz when they eat, instead acting like someone who is starving who eats ravenously, he is increasingly despised by others." Rabbi Dessler (Michtav MiEliyahu, volume 5, page 62) writes in a similar manner: "Derech Eretz is upright and beautiful behaviour with others and with oneself, by which one acts in every matter with sechel (intellect) and refinement. The principle test of one's derech eretz is how one eats, for someone who does not behave with derech eretz when he eats, but rather behaves like a starving glutton, is increasingly despised by people." He then cites the Talmud (Shabbat 10a) that discusses at what times of the day it is appropriate to eat, the general principle being that the earlier you eat the more greedy you are. An average person eats four hours into the day (about ten o'clock) and a Torah sage eats six hours into the day (at about twelve o'clock) because he is so involved with Torah thoughts that he does not concentrate on his hunger until it begins to bother him terribly.

- Eating In a Greedy Manner- (Talmud Beitzah 25b): "A person should not drink the entire contents of his cup in one gulp and if he does he is a glutton."
- Eating In Public- (Talmud Kiddushin 40b): "One who eats in the marketplace is similar to a dog and others say he is invalid to give testimony." Rashi explains that like a dog he is not particular about his own honour. The Maharal (Netiv Derech Eretz) writes that this only applies to someone who does this regularly but as far as a Torah scholar is concerned, even once would render him unfit to give testimony.

The reason he is rendered unfit to give testimony, explains the Maharal, is because testimony establishes the reality of the event and a person who puts himself beyond normal 'reality' has left the yishuv (civilization) and is therefore no longer a part of it. How can he then testify to what happened in reality when he is lacking a complete reality himself..."

- Eating What Is Appropriate For One's Standing-The Talmud (Chullin 84a) quotes the verse in Devarim (12:20): "When Hashem, your G-d, will broaden your boundary as he spoke to you, and you say, 'I would eat meat', for you will have a desire to eat meat, to your heart's desire you may eat meat." The reason why the section permitting us to eat non-sacrificial meat is preceded by the words "when Hashem will broaden your boundary" is to teach us derech erez that we should only eat meat when we have an 'appetite' for it [and when our boundaries have been broadened, i.e. we have the financial wherewithal). The Maharal (Chiddushei Aggadot) explains that one's behaviour in terms of the laws of derech erez must comply with his wealth. If he behaves beyond what he can afford, then he is simply a glutton who eats and spends whatever he has in a careless way. This is completely the opposite of how one is meant to behave with derech erez.

Other Aspects Of One's Behaviour

- In Bereishit (13:3) we read that when Abraham returned with Sarah to Israel after their trip to Egypt "he travelled on his [regular] journeys from the south until Bet El." This is really a superfluous verse and therefore the Sages explain (Arachim 16b, cited by Rashi) that the Torah is teaching us that Abraham stayed at the same accommodation he normally stayed at and that it is derech erez not to change one's normal accommodation. The Maharal (Gur Aryeh) gives two reasons why one should stick to his normal accommodation. (i) He should not cause others to slander the establishment when they see he does not return there and they assume he saw something unpleasant about the place. (ii) He should not cause others to slander him when they see he does not return and they think that the establishment does not want him back for some reason.
- When Moses criticized the children of Israel about the disaster of the spies, he said (Devarim 1:22), "And you **all** approached me and said, 'Let us send men before us to spy out the land..." Rashi comments that they all came to Moses in a disorganized, mixed-up fashion so that young people were pushing elderly people and the elderly people were pushing the leaders. However, when they approached him following the giving of the Torah (Devarim 5:20), the verse states, "All the heads of your tribes and your elders approached me." In that instance the approach was done properly, with young people honouring the leaders and the elders honouring the leaders and allowing them to go first. Similarly when Moses addressed the Children of Israel for the last time, he said (Devarim 29:9): "Behold you are all standing before Hashem today-the heads of your tribes, your elders, your law enforcement

officials, all the men of Israel etc.” The Malbim writes that the Torah elaborates on the order to teach us derech erez that it is fitting to do so for all future generations when the nation (congregation) gathers together. There is most certainly a proper way to seat people at functions.

This is contrary to the behaviour of people in the pre-Messianic era about which the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a) relates, “In the generation in which the son of David will come, the youth will embarrass the elderly and the elderly will have to rise before the youth, a daughter will rise up in rebellion before her mother and a daughter-in-law before her mother in law...and brazenness will increase.”

Behaving In Accordance To The Customs Of The Place

[This can also have relevance to halacha -see Pescahim chapter Makom SheNahagu]

- The Talmud (Bava Metziah 86) cites the verse (Devarim 9:9) that when Moses ascended Mt Sinai he did not eat or drink for forty days or nights. On this Rabbi Tanchum ben Chanilai comments, “A person should never differ from the custom of the place for we see that Moses ascended to the heavens and did not eat bread (in the same way that the celestial beings do not eat)... and the angels descended to earth (to visit Abraham) and they acted as if they were eating.”
- In Tractate Derech Eretz Zuta (chapter 5) a principle is stated: “A person should not be awake amongst those who are sleeping nor asleep amongst those who are awake. One should not cry amongst the jovial nor be jovial amongst the weepers. One should not sit amongst those who are standing nor stand amongst those who are sitting. One should not read scripture when others are studying Mishna or study Mishna when others are reading scripture. The principle of the matter is that one should not change from the custom of people.”

Leadership

- Consulting Our Subordinates-Bereishit (1:26) states: “And G-d said, ‘let **us** make man in our image and our form...’”
Rashi comments: “Even though the angels did not assist Him at all in the creation of man and [by writing the word ‘us’ in the plural] the Torah is creating an opening for heretics, nevertheless the Torah did not hold back to teach us derech erez and humility that a greater person should consult with his subordinates and ask their permission [even if it is not needed]. We would not have learned this had Hashem said, “I will make man.”
- Going Down To Grass Roots/Making A Full Investigation-Bereishit (11:5) “G-d descended to see the city and the tower [of Babel] that the sons of man had built.” Rashi points out that although G-d does not have to ‘go down’; we learn that judges may not pass a guilty verdict until such time as they have fully examined the matter.

Recommended Reading

- Ethics From Sinai (3 volumes) by Irving Bunim published by Feldheim Publishers www.feldheim.com
 - Chapters Of The Fathers by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, published by Feldheim Publishers www.feldheim.co.za
 - The Birnbaum Edition: Pirkei Avos-Teachings For Our Times by Rabbi Berel Wein, published by Artscroll publishers www.artscroll.com
 - Relevance-Pirkei Avos for the Twenty-First Century by Rabbi Dan Roth published by Feldheim Publishers www.feldheim.co.za
 - Guide To Midoth Improvement by Naftali Hoffner distributed by Feldheim Publishers www.feldheim.com
 - Messilat Yesharim (Path of the Just) by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato-translation from the Hebrew classic by Feldheim publishers www.feldheim.com
 - Orchot Tzaddikim (The Ways of the Righteous)-translation of the classic anonymous Hebrew work on ethics and positive character by Feldheim publishers www.feldheim.com
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