

A Taste of Torah More Than Pedagogy

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

You are the principal of a Jewish day school, and you are interviewing a candidate for a position teaching Torah to youngsters. He is knowledgeable, well-trained, and is a wonderful educator. He inspires his students, magnificently communicates the subject matter, and is well-liked by the children and parents alike. What more could you ask? He's hired, right?

Not so fast. There's one more thing you need to ascertain. The candidate must be an upright, G-d fearing individual. Because if that's not the case, he is not qualified to teach Torah.

The Torah tells us, "And you shall make known to your children and your children's children - the day that you stood before Hashem, your G-d, in Chorev (at Mount Sinai)..." (Devarim 4:9-10)

The Talmud (Kiddushin 30a) quotes Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who commented that the juxtaposition of the requirement of teaching one's children with the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai informs us that one who teaches his grandson Torah is regarded as having received the Torah at Sinai.

Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky (1886-1958), in a talk delivered to Rebbeim (Torah teachers) of Jewish day schools,

stated that if a principal of a school has a choice between a skilled educator whose fealty to Torah leaves much to be desired, and another who is not as impressive in the classroom, but is a G-d fearing individual, the latter should be selected.

If one required the skills of a physician, explained Rabbi Grozovsky, one would sooner choose a doctor whose skills are minimal over a top-notch lawyer. For as good as as the lawyer may be at his profession, he doesn't practice medicine! By the same token, a Rebbe is not merely imparting the Torah's wisdom and message to his charges; he is an emissary of Hashem Himself! He is considered to have personally received the Torah at Sinai for the purpose of teaching it to the Jewish People! Thus, he must be an individual who is fit to be G-d's agent; pedagogical skills are insufficient, for that is not the profession necessary to act as an agent of G-d. This, he continued, is the meaning of the passage in the Talmud that states, "If a Rebbe is like an angel in your eyes, then seek Torah from his mouth." (Moed Katan 17a) For what is an angel if not an emissary of Hashem? So, too, a Rebbe must be Hashem's agent.

Ask the Rabbi Lend a Hand

From: Harry

Dear Rabbi,

I'm not the type of person to share my belongings with others, or loan them out, since I'm particular about their

staying intact and I don't want them to get ruined. So I'm having problems with the Torah idea of having to loan things in order to help others, and, even more, with the idea that I should somehow intentionally buy things for the purpose

Stories For The Soul

Guard the Shabbos

By Rabbi Yehoshua Schwartz

Two years after World War II had ended, Rabbi Moshe Neuschloss, who would later become the highly respected rabbi of the New Square Chassidic community near Monsey, NY, reached the decision that the time had come to leave Europe.

He and his wife immediately made reservations for a flight from Prague to New York.

The day of departure arrived, and the plane took off as scheduled. But problems developed in mid-flight, forcing the pilot to make an emergency landing in Ireland.

Soon, the plane was repaired and was ready for the next leg of the journey. The passengers were informed, however, that due to the delay, the flight would arrive in New York on Saturday.

Rabbi Neuschloss informed the airline personnel that he was a Sabbath observer and would not embark on such a journey. Rabbi and Mrs. Neuschloss booked a room in a hotel for the weekend.

After Shabbos, Rabbi and Mrs. Neuschloss took the next available flight to New York. Upon their arrival in New York, they heard the shocking news: the plane that had departed before Shabbos had crashed into the sea, leaving no survivors.

It says in this week's Parsha, "You shall guard the Shabbos." Rabbi Neuschloss is just one of the many Jews throughout the generations who have seen that when one guards the Shabbos, the Shabbos guards them.

Kollel Happenings

DERECH HASHEM

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for a philosophical series on "Derech Hashem", a sefer by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. Discover and delve into the vital understanding of Hashem's world. The women's class will resume on Monday, August 27th, 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. For info, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.



A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issues, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. The class will resume on Tuesday, August 21st, 8 p.m. at Aish.



TRUST THY FATHER

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers for "Trust Thy Father", a series based on Chovos Ha'Levavos/Duties of the Heart. Discover and delve into vital Jewish concept of Bitachon. The classes are held on Tuesdays, 7:55-8:25 a.m., at Aish. For info, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Interpersonal Issues

If the Lost Item Has No Valid Identifying Feature

If one who can be considered a talmid chochom (as defined in a past edition) claims, upon viewing the item, that it is his, he is believed. Therefore, an item found in area where there is a talmid chochom must be announced

despite its lack of any identifying features.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

of letting others use them. Is this really a requirement, and if so, how can I overcome my natural inclination to keep my things to myself?

Dear Harry,

It is certainly understandable that you want to preserve the things that are important to you, that you bought for yourself to be able to use and enjoy, and not have to worry whether they'll be returned, and, if so, whether they'll be damaged or broken, or at least not available for you when you want them.

But first you have to ascertain whether that's your real motivation, or perhaps you're fundamentally uncomfortable with helping others.

For example, even if you don't loan out your personal belongings, are you willing to offer your help in other ways? If not, that needs attention. But if you're OK with that, then even before you lend your things, you can lend a helping hand. Work on finding ways to be helpful to others in ways that don't depend on lending your belongings.

That being said, while you don't have to give out your things to irresponsible people or under circumstances that are likely to cause damage, to normally responsible people in normal circumstances you should be more forthcoming in sharing. Judaism teaches that one's wealth (and therefore one's belongings) comes from G-d. And just as He shares of His with us, we are expected to share that with others.

Doing so is almost a condition for His giving.

Yet, there is another possibility for you as well. If there is a certain thing of yours which people tend to need and ask to borrow, and you don't want it to get damaged by loaning it, you could buy another such item specifically for the purpose of lending it, while keeping yours for yourself.

This is the idea of a "gemach", a type of free-loaning organization that benefits others by making things or services available to them which they normally don't have. In fact, a "gemach" might loan things that you don't own yourself, or have no use or interest in, but others do. This might include power tools, infant supplies, Shabbat goods or many diverse and various things.

So, given your description of yourself, I would suggest finding other ways to help people while also loaning your own things a little more liberally. But perhaps more importantly, I encourage you to start a "gemach" or two or few to benefit others in this way. Usually, the costs of supplying, and even maintaining, a "gemach" can be covered by part of the money a person sets aside as "ma'aser" (a tenth of one's income) or for charity. Sometimes, a minimal fee or voluntary donation is used for upkeep of the "gemach".

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