

This little scene could not have been orchestrated more perfectly. The young boy was held accountable for his behavior. He sincerely regretted his misdeed, and this wiped the slate clean. It was now time for some positive stroking. His father looked at him and asked, "But you did checkmate him, didn't you?"

TORAH GEMS

êâúá éúûã÷ðå éûã÷ í ù úà à ìçú à ìà
(âì-áë) 'âââ í ëûã÷î 'â éðà ìàøùè éðá

The famous question is asked on this *posuk*: what is the need for the double imperative - "*You shall not desecrate ... you shall sanctify me*" - for does not the prohibition to desecrate G-d's name imply that we must sanctify it. and vice versa?

An incisive response is given by **R' Shmuel Yaakov Rubinstein ZT"l**, in his *sefer Shearis Menachem*. He writes that it is quite possible to sanctify and desecrate *Hashem's* name at one and the same time. The image of religion can easily be tarnished by some who act detrimentally in the name of religion. Thus, the *Torah* here instructs us: Through your pursuit of holy tasks and godliness do not cause a desecration of the very ideals you seek to uphold.

This idea is further elucidated in the *parsha* of *Shema*. The command, יְהוָה אֶחָד יְהוָה יְהוָה אֶחָד יְהוָה - "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might," is troubling. The ability to "love" is the culmination of knowledge and experience; loving cannot be imposed on a person, for genuine love must come naturally. Therefore, *chazal* explain the word "יְהוָה אֶחָד" to be in the causative, i.e. you must cause Hashem to be loved, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might! How can one accomplish this? Let people say of you: "He studies *Torah*, speaks kindly to others, is honest and honorable." This will cause G-d to be beloved in the eyes of the world. But if one studies *Torah* and is dishonest and unkind, he will profane Hashem's name and alienate others from *Torah*."

(àé-ãë)'âââ ì ÷ ã í ù ä ú é ì à ø ù é ä ä ù à ä ï á á ÷ ã

The *lechem hapanim* - *Showbread*, was put on the *shulchan* in the *Mishkan* every *Shabbos*, and was removed the subsequent *Shabbos* and eaten by the *Kohanim*. According to the *Medrash*, the *lillui* - *blasphemer*, had a problem with this. He argued that a King should be served warm, fresh, bread, not week-old, stale bread. In the end, he cursed G-d. This *Medrash* is complex. What does it mean, "*He had difficulty dealing with the parsha of Lechem Hapanim, until he came to curse G-d*"?

R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"l points out an interesting fact. What would have happened if this fellow would have waited a week? He would have seen a miracle. The bread was not hard and stale, but retained its freshness for an entire week. He would have had no questions, wouldn't have cursed *Hashem* and would not have been put to death. But he had no patience to wait. He had to know now, and if it did not make sense to him now, then the whole concept was not worthwhile. There are a lot of times in life when we don't understand *Hashem's* conduct. We don't understand sickness, why the righteous suffer; we don't understand things like Jewish history, the Holocaust. It makes no sense to us. But *Hashem*, we believe, has His Master Plan. Unfortunately, time and space limit us. In the grand scheme of things, with the passage of time, things begin to make sense.

This is the lesson of the blasphemer and the **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ**. His inability to accept, and his lack of understanding led him to a terrible death. Had he had the faith to accept, to wait and to conclude, "I don't know why, but *Hashem* must have His ways" - his entire life would have been different.

úáún éé "úáúáá úðçíî íèì íúðòñá" "úéäí äáæá
 óá .äéíä úéáðî äçðä äúäá áíé ,äçðîí áúáðéç
 äíéçúáä ,æ"ò úáííéî çñòä 'à íééä äçð äèðúé
 äúì÷äá úáún íéäá ,úáúáún æ çñòä 'á íééí úáííì
 òáún àìä "úáúáún òáún" "úéäí äðééäá .íúáííé
 ääííéä íí áúáún ,äðííú úáún íéáún æáíðì ,úáðòäáú
 íí éðíäì äçð æäú ,úéðéáúá úáúá óáñ äò úó÷
 .äðáúä äá äðúéúú íééä ääííéä

Ḃ'a'-Ḃ ḂuḂa Ḃ"Ḃ ḂuḂiḂēḂ iḂḂḂḂḂ ḂēḂ iḂḂḂḂḂ Ḃ'ḂḂ
 Ḃ"ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ, ḂḂḂ Ḃ ḂḂḂḂḂ iḂḂ iḂḂḂḂḂ iḂḂḂ
 'Ḃ ḂḂḂḂ. ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ḂiḂḂḂ 'Ḃ iḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂiḂḂḂḂ
 ḂiḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ iḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ
 ,ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ, ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ, ḂḂḂḂ, ḂḂḂḂ : ḂḂ, iḂḂḂ 'Ḃ
 ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ iḂḂḂḂḂ. iḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ, iḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ
 'Ḃ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ Ḃ'a'-Ḃ ḂḂḂ iḂḂ, ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂ
 .ḂḂḂḂ iḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ Ḃ iḂḂḂḂ, iḂḂḂ 'Ḃ iḂḂḂ

מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

(i-äe) 'ááá áéíòá àîèé àì ùòðì í äéìò úøîää îðää éóá íéóäëä à ðåîà äùî à 'ä øîäéå

Rashi answers the unspoken question of why this *posuk* employs the double wording, "שׁוֹמְרֵי" - "Say" and "וְנִשְׁמְרֵי" - "You shall say" by quoting the words of the *gemara* (אֲבֵדִי וְנִשְׁמְרֵי הַיָּלְדִים וְנִשְׁמְרֵי הַיָּלְדִים) "אֲבֵדִי וְנִשְׁמְרֵי הַיָּלְדִים" - "To warn the adults about the children." In other words, adult *kohanim* must see to it that their children remain pure in a priestly sense, teaching them wisely and ensuring that they not bring impurity upon themselves. This is not just a lesson for *kohanim*; all parents are charged with the all-important mission of educating their children in a firm and positive manner to ensure that they retain their purity.

As a child, **R' Abraham J. Twerski Shlit" a** was somewhat of a chess prodigy and was invariably triumphant when playing against most of his opponents. Even a number of the men in his father's synagogue would attempt to defeat him, but he was too good. One *Rosh Hashanah*, when he was nine years old, a rabbi from Chicago was a guest in the Twerski home, and in the afternoon when his father was resting, the man asked little Avrohom if he wished to play a game or two of chess. The young boy was surprised at this, being under the impression that playing chess on *Rosh Hashanah* was prohibited; but the rabbi's assurance that it was permissible was sufficient for the boy who never missed an opportunity to play. The rabbi was a good player, but young Avrohom eventually won.

That evening, the second night of *Rosh Hashanah*, Avrohom was told that his father wished to see him in his study. When he came in, his father was studying, and the boy remained silent. After a few moments, he looked up from his books. "You played chess on *Rosh Hashanah*?" he asked quietly.

"Yes," Avrohom said, a bit shakily. "The rabbi said it was permissible." His father looked back down to his *sefarim*, slowly shaking his head in the negative. The message was clear. Even though the rabbi was correct according to the letter of the law, it was not in the spirit of *Rosh Hashanah* to play chess, and even the young boy knew better than that. (Rabbi Dr. Twersky adds that the admonition "You should have known better," is an insult because it chastises one for his ignorance. "You know better than that," is merely stating an oversight and is not insulting.)

As he had not been dismissed, young Avrohom remained standing in silence while his father continued learning. The remorse he felt during these few minutes was most profound. There had not been any beating nor even any shouting, yet the boy could feel his father's disapproval, as though he had let him down terribly, and he resolved right then and there that never again would he violate the spirit of *Yom Tov*, even with something that was technically permissible.

After a few moments, R' Twerski looked up, a hint of a smile accompanying the twinkle in his eye.