

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

STIFLING SIBLING STRIFE

Towards the beginning of *Parshas Behar*, the Torah speaks about a person who has fallen on hard times, and the duty for others to aid him. In speaking of such an individual, the *passuk* says, "וְכִי יָצַח אָחִיךָ" "When your brother becomes impoverished..."¹

Why does the Torah use the term, 'brother,' as opposed to other terms often used, like 'friend' or 'acquaintance?'

The Alshich HaKadosh² (1508-1593) explains that the Torah is stressing the attitude one should have towards those who are in difficult circumstances. It is not enough to help out, monetarily or otherwise. Rather, one's mindset should be as if he is interacting with their brother. With a stranger, we might feel comfortable, and even applaud ourselves, with simply handing them a dollar or two and wishing them the best of luck. But is this the way we would treat our brother?

This is indeed an important lesson in how to relate to those who need our assistance. But perhaps overlooked is a more basic idea — the way one should treat their actual siblings!

The very fact that the Torah uses 'brother' as an example of one who you would certainly treat well indicates exactly that — we should treat our siblings with the maximum amount of care, respect and regard. It is so easy to take our siblings for granted, and even, at times, have resentment or hostility towards them. "Why did you take my toy?" "He won't share with me!"

Unfortunately, this ill will can even carry into adulthood! On the other hand, when siblings are easygoing, care for each other, and genuinely delight in each other's success in their younger years, they will create a relationship that is more powerful than the closest friend.

1 *Vayikra* 25:35

2 *Ibid.*

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

It's not always so easy to get along with siblings, especially if we feel that they have hurt or wronged us. If I see my sibling taking something of mine, or if they are mean or even malicious towards me, how do you expect me to get along with them?

It is certainly not easy to let things slide when a person perceives an injustice being carried out right in front of them. Nevertheless, one idea may be to recognize that there is a personal reason to overlook other's faults. If we get sucked into a battle, the cycle will continue. "I won't share my Lego, since she didn't let me have the book!"

Even if it's not expressed as such, the feelings remain. Bitter feelings beget bitter feelings.¹ On the other hand, when we are generous with our siblings, they will respond in kind — perhaps not immediately, but certainly over time.²

1 *Ralbag* on *Mishlei* 15:1, s.v. מענה רך

2 *Metzudos Dovid* on *Mishlei* 27:19, s.v.

כמים



Gatherings large and small are great opportunities to expound on Mussar topics to strengthen Middot and Derech Eretz, and this is truly a very great thing; those who lecture publicly should do so in a pleasant, simple, and straightforward way.

- *Chacham Ovadia Yosef zt"l*, Introduction to *Shu"t Yechaveh Daat*, pg. 36 (2020 Edition)

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STILL A BROTHER

Dov had just recently gotten married, and though he lived in a one-bedroom basement apartment, the accommodations were vastly greater than the dorm room he had left behind.

The plan was to stay in *kollel*, and beyond that, he was hoping to be a *rebbe*. Of his early married responsibilities, he sat down with his new wife, and figured out how much money they had received as wedding gifts.

Straightaway, they determined how much they need to give to *maaser*, and the discussion then turned to which *tzedaka* or *tzedakas* they should send the money. In the midst of the discussion, Dov's phone rang — it was his father. "Hi, *Abba*," Dov answered. "To what do I owe this call?"

His father got right down to business. "Dov, I'm calling because I think you might be in a position to help someone. I know someone who has a family to feed, and no means to do so. This person can really use a boost."

"Funny that you're calling now! I was just figuring out how much *maaser* we have."

"And?"

"Oh, well... it's about one thousand five hundred dollars."

"No, that won't do. He'll need more than that."

Dov was taken aback. It wasn't like his father to ask questions like this, to be so direct, especially when it came to financial matters. And to ask for more than what he needed to give to *maaser*? "*Abba*, I'm sure you understand, but we were hoping to use this money to start a savings account — Chedva doesn't have a well-paying job, and I'm in *kollel*. Of course we'll give *maaser*, but more than that..." Dov trailed off.

Dov's father sighed. "Dov, it's your brother, Eitan. You know I wouldn't normally ask, but he's really having a hard time, financially. And his monetary woes are affecting everything else. Really, if you can give more, it would be so appreciated."

Eitan? Oh. Eitan... Though siblings, Dov and Eitan were not the best of friends. Far from it, growing up, Eitan and Dov always fought, and sadly, those bitter resentful feelings lasted into adulthood. "Let me speak to Chedva, *Abba*."

"Of course."

'Speaking to Chedva' was a short conversation indeed. "Eitan is your brother, Dov. Please, take a step back and think about it. He's suffering, and we can help. Of course, we should give what we can."

Dov called his father back. "*Abba*, how much do you need? And Eitan won't feel comfortable taking this money from me, do you have a plan to get it to him?"

"Dov, I knew I could count on you. Don't worry, I have a way, and thank you and Chedva for your generosity."

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Moshe and Aharon are the model examples of brothers. Although Moshe was made the leader of *Klal Yisrael*, and Aharon received the *kehunah*, they were both excited for the others' success.¹
- In searching for a way to describe how we want Hashem to comfort us despite our sins, *Klal Yisrael* asks Hashem to be like Yosef, who comforted his brothers, despite what they had done to him.²

¹ *Medrash Tanchumah, Shemos 27:1*

² *Rashi on Shir HaShirim 8:1, s.v. מי יתנך*