

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

SHAVUOS

בשבת

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THE WILL OF HASHEM

In the middle of *Megillas Rus* we find a curious incident.¹ Boaz, the man Rus wants to marry, first asked permission from 'Ploni Almoni,' who had the allowance to marry Rus first. 'Ploni' gave his consent to Boaz, because he was under the impression that Rus's joining the Jewish nation would be problematic, and wanted no part of it. Rus was of Moavi descent, and the *passuk* specifically states, "An Amoni or Moavi may not join the nation of Hashem."² Ploni was incorrect, though, as the Gemara³ explains, this refers to the males of Moav, but not the females.

One must wonder, though, why indeed were the males of Moav not allowed to join *Klal Yisrael*? What terrible deed did they perform to deserve such a decree? Even the Egyptians, who enslaved the Jewish nation, were not given such a punishment.

The *passuk* explains, "Because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water on the road..."⁴ They did not act properly when the *Bnei Yisrael* travelled nearby.

While we can all understand that this is not a nice *middah*, but what *aveirah* did they do? Non-Jews have seven specific commandments, and greeting travelers is not one of them. Why did they receive such a drastic punishment, simply for acting, 'not nice?'

The *Toras Avraham*⁵ (R' Avraham Grodzinski, 1883–1944) explains that there are certain *mitzvos* that one is obligated to adhere to, even without a specific commandment from Hashem! This includes proper *middos*, and the fact that the Moavi violated this so egregiously disallows them forever from joining Hashem's people. They saw the amazing way Hashem took care of His nation, and yet they turned their back. This flies in the face of any sort of refined social behavior; and as such, they were disallowed from joining *Klal Yisrael*.

What an idea! *Middos* are what Hashem seeks from us, not simply a 'nice thing to do.' And when we work on refining our *middos*, we are truly fulfilling the will of Hashem.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

What an incredible idea! *Middos* are not simply, 'a nice thing,' but are actually a serious way to fulfill the will of Hashem. However, at times it may be difficult to relate to this concept, after all, where is the *Shulchan Aruch*, where are the *halachos* of *middos*?

The reality is that there are many *sefarim* filled with the parameters of *middos*, we just tend to not think of them as *halachic sefarim*.

The *mussar sefarim* on our shelf act as the *halachic* guidance in the areas of *middos*. None other than the *Minchas Chinuch* (R' Yosef Babad, 1800–1874) points to these *sefarim* as the guidance for the *halachos* of *middos*.¹

And this, of course, is in addition to all of the works written on particular *mitzvos* that have strong *middos* components; writings like *Hilchos Deos* in the *Rambam*, *Ahavas Chessed*, *Chofetz Chaim*, *Orech Meisharim*, and the list continues.

Like any other area of *Ratzon Hashem*, one can find an abundance of *seforim* that elucidate how best to serve Hashem.

1 *Minchas Chinuch* 611:1

1 Rus, Chap. 4
2 *Devarim* 23:4
3 *Yevamos* 77a
4 *Devarim* 23:5
5 pg. 256-259

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There is one, and only one, tool that enables each and every one of us to achieve our goals, and reach our dreams, in Torah and Mitzvos. What is it? Devotion to Mussar and Cheshbon HaNefesh. - R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler zt"l, Michtav M'Eliyahu vol. 5, pg 49

WHAT'S RIGHT IS RIGHT

Dov* was sitting at the table in the dining room, talking and laughing with his friends. They were all waiting for the head counselor to quiet everyone down, and make the Friday night *kiddush*. The sun was still peeking over the horizon, as the camp always made an early Shabbos, and some boys were using the last rays to pick their way down the path to the dining room.

"Oh man! I can't believe I forgot my croutons!" Dov's ears perked up, as he heard someone angrily grumbling behind him. The person behind Dov was complaining how he left his croutons all the way back in his bunk, how long of a walk it is, and so on.

Smiling, Dov stood up. "I'll get 'em," he said. "Which bunk?"

"What? Really? Oh, thanks! Bunk *Chof-Gimmel*. First bed on the left, they should be sitting right on the bed."

Dov nodded, and headed out. He knew how things went, he'd be back before *kiddush*, and why not do the fellow a favor? Dov easily found the bunkhouse, and then the bed. He grabbed the croutons and froze, as he saw some movement out of the corner of his eye. Leaning forward in the waning light, he could see it — perhaps the largest spider he had ever seen. It was there, sitting on a web it had spun between the bed and the wall, waiting, waiting...

Dov lost no time in heading for the dining room. As he handed the croutons to the fellow, he mentioned the spider. "Just a heads up, there is a really large spider right next to your bed."

"What!? Did you kill it?"

"No... It's Shabbos."

"You didn't kill it? What's wrong with you? Are you serious?"

Dov was taken aback by the ferocity of the boy's tirade. He stood there for a moment as the boy continued, gave a small shrug and a mumbled apology, and went back to his seat.

Dov's friend Yaakov had witnessed the whole thing, beginning to end. "What nerve! What an ingrate!" Yaakov started, offended for Dov's sake. Dov put his finger to his lips, and Yaakov paused and furrowed his brow in anger. "You could have said something, he didn't even thank you for bringing his ridiculous croutons!"

Dov gave a wry smile. "True. But look, it doesn't matter. I did what's right, and if he has an issue with it..." Dov trailed off.

"Where in *halacha* does it say that you have to do favors for ungrateful people?"

Dov shook his head. "I appreciate your feelings, but sometimes something is right, simply because it's right. Anyways, they're about to make *kiddush*, and I'm hungry!"

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

"I appreciate your feelings, but sometimes something is right, simply because it's right."

DID YOU KNOW?

- Many *Rishonim* understand "והלכת בדרכיו"¹ as a commandment to have positive *middos*.²
- One must do *teshuvah* on bad *middos* much like one must do *teshuvah* on *aveiros*.³

1 *Devarim* 28:9

2 Rambam *Mishnah Torah Hilchos Deos* 2:5, *Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah* 611

3 The Meiri's *Chibbur HaTeshuvah*, pg. 76