

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
BEHA'ALOSCHA

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

THE CLARION CALL OF COMPASSION

In the middle of *Parshas Beha'aloscha*, Hashem tells Moshe to make two silver trumpets. These trumpets were to be used to signal the *Bnei Yisrael* — one blast to summon the leaders, two blasts to summon the entire nation, and short blasts to indicate that it is time to move on in their travels.¹

Though it makes sense to have an efficient system in summoning the entire Jewish nation, why did this need to be a commandment from Hashem? Is there anything particularly important about these trumpets, or this system, that Moshe needed to be directed to adopt this?

The Ralbag² (Reb Levi ben Gershon, 1288–1344) explains that there is an important lesson to be learned here. This system of gathering *Klal Yisrael* exhibits sensitivity to the individuals of *Klal Yisrael*, and serves as an example for all of our actions.

The usage of trumpets ensures that every member of *Klal Yisrael* is invited at the same time. Had *Moshe Rabbeinu*, instead of trumpets, chosen to send messengers to *Klal Yisrael*, informing each person, personally, that they were invited to a meeting, those that were invited last may have felt insulted. True, it is certainly understood that someone will be invited last — but why did that person have to be me? Or perhaps, when seeing others invited to a meeting, there will be a period of time where a person may feel left out, until they themselves are invited as well. These two possible scenarios are solved when inviting everyone at the same exact time.

If the Torah is careful to prevent hurt feelings, even for a few moments, then certainly it would wise to do what we can to make sure that we don't slight others.

When we are inviting others for a birthday party, do we think about how those who are left out will feel? When we are having a private conversation, whispering to a friend, do we do it where others can see us, and wonder why they aren't included in the conversation?

By focusing on others' feelings, not only will we prevent needless hurt, but we might be surprised that we make a few new friends in the process!

1 *Bamidbar* 10:1-5

2 *ibid.* תועלת הרביעי

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We have all heard the message, and we all know how important it is to be careful about someone else's feelings. It is an idea that we relate to, as unfortunately, many of us have been on the receiving end of insults and indignities.

Yet, it appears that we all forget, at times, what it means to hurt another person. How can we remember, and truly be in touch with the sensitivities of our friends and neighbors?

The Ramban¹ gives a great suggestion — practice! In the heat of the moment, we may slip, we may forget, or worse, we may want to intentionally hurt someone's feelings.

However, if we practice beforehand we will be better equipped to deal with real-life situations as they come up. We can do this practice mentally, by thinking of various situations that may occur, and how we would respond, and physically, by always speaking in a pleasant tone, even in casual conversation.

If we do so, we can be assured that we will be better prepared to respond, even when the situation is tense.

1 *Iggeres HaRamban*

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How great is the mitzvah to teach a person to learn Mussar! Chazal say, "Heaven has mercy on those who have mercy on others," and there is no greater mercy than teaching and inspiring others to the fear of Heaven.
- R' Yisrael Salanter, *Iggeres HaMussar*

SIMPLY NOT WORTH IT

Rabbi Moshe Chait* (1922-2009) was a rav for many years in the United States, before heading the Yerushalayim branch of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim. As Rosh HaYeshiva, he would deliver a weekly *mussar shmuess* where the students would gather to hear a deep, impactful, and inspiring message that they could apply to their daily lives.

Unfortunately, as Rabbi Chait got older, he grew weaker and weaker, and was unable to perform many of his regular duties. Nevertheless, the weekly *mussar shmuess* was going strong.

At this point in his life, his voice had grown so weak that the yeshiva had set up a microphone system, which he would use to allow the students to hear him speak. One day he arrived, and gave his regular *shmuess*, but this time without the aid of a microphone. He explained that he had visited with a world-renowned specialist, and this doctor had advised that he not use any speaking aid. He should yell with all of his strength, and perhaps by doing so, he would strengthen his failing voice.

The next week, though, he delivered his *mussar shmuess* with the microphone in place. "Rebbi, what happened? Didn't the doctor say it's important to not use the microphone?" asked a student.

Rabbi Chait nodded. "Yes, but I don't feel comfortable yelling at another person."

"But Rebbi, if you don't, you might lose your voice forever!"

"That may be, but it's not worth yelling at another person."

**"That may be,
but it's not
worth yelling at
another person."**

**Based on a true story.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- One should not look through merchandise that they know they will not buy, as it will needlessly raise the hopes of the store owner.¹
- Hurting someone with words is worse than hurting someone monetarily. Money can be returned, but it is very difficult to 'return' someone's hurt feelings.²
- One who cries out because of hurt feelings is answered by Hashem.³
- One should not say, "It's not my fault they are hurt, they are just being sensitive." In fact, the more sensitive a person is, the more one must be careful regarding their feelings.⁴

1 *Sma"g, Lavin 171*

2 *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat, 228:1*

3 *Bava Metzia 59a, cf. Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 228:1*

4 *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 228:1, Sma ibid. 5*