Assembly Notes
PARSHAS VAYEIRA 5786
Assembly Theme: Giving

Dvar Torah

In this week's Sedra, we read about Avraham Avinu and how he practiced Hachnosas Orchim and Gemilas Chasadim (kindness) together with his wife Sarah. They set up a home, made an inn and we even learn about how he was desperate to have visitors. In a letter, the Rebbe tells over a story that he heard from the Frierdiker Rebbe:

There was a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek, (the 3rd Chabbad Rebbe) named R' Yisroel, a shopkeeper from Polotzk. Once, he came to the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch and he heard a Mammer, a deep discourse, being said. He didn't really follow, but one piece he did catch: Avraham Avinu did Gemilas Chasadim (generous giving) with his Guf, Mamon and Neshama- his body, resources and soul. By doing so, he replaced the Sefira of Chessed of Atzilus (the highest of the emotion attributes, from the highest of the spiritual worlds), and now this Sefira had nothing left to do in this world, since Avraham was doing it! Avraham was even doing better than Chessed of Atzilus, because he was operating it in a physical world, with all types of challenges! R' Yisroel heard this idea and took it back with him to his town of Polotzk, where he made a Chassidishe Farbrengen, and shared it with everybody.

The next day, he had an idea. He would ask his friend R' Nachman for a loan of 100 Roubles, even though he did not need it! In this way, he could give to his friend R' Nachman the merit of giving a loan. This amazing act became a custom among all his friends who heard about this Maamer. They would borrow money from one another just for the day, then they would pay the money back, just so that their friend would have the tremendous Zechus of lending out money. The next time that R' Yisroel went to Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek called him personally into his room, out of the thousands of visitors, and he asked him to tell him what he was doing. Later, the Rebbe Mahrash, the son of the Tzemach Tzedek, went to the Rebbe and asked him, " What did you see in this R' Yisroel, that out of all the thousands of people here you called him in for a private audience?" The Tzemach Tzedek answered, " When R' Yisroel arrived, I saw a pillar of light from Chessed of Atzilus, coming with him. That's how I knew he was doing something very special.' After recounting this story in the letter, the Rebbe says that we can learn from it how great it is to do kindness to another person. R' Yisroel didn't even need the loan- he asked for it only to give his friend the Mitzva! Imagine what tremendous spiritual light you generate and draw down if you give kindness to someone who needs or wants it! It doesn't always have to be a loan of money; it could be with your body- that includes giving someone a smile, a listening ear, a little bit of sympathy, a "Good Morning".

It is about caring and thinking, 'how can I be of benefit to other people?' The greatest Lender in the world is Hashem Himself, because he gives us our Neshama on loan. It is Hashem that gives us our capabilities, sensitivities, and our understanding. If we use it, and it guides us to change the world by helping people, Davening, and doing all the things we are meant to do, then we get profit and benefit, like the recipient of the loan.

When the Neshama goes back to heaven it is on an entirely different plane, and that is the profit that we get for our work. Not only that, but the Lender Himself also benefits, Kevayachol, because it is written that we add to the holiness above of Hashem by fulfilling His will and doing Mitzvos in this physical world! We can take a lesson from our great- great - grandfather Avraham, and seek how we can advance, improve and increase in various aspects of kindness to each other. We think about the kindness of the people who gave their lives for their country. Some people didn't necessarily die, or they weren't even in the army, but their lives were disrupted, in order for there to be a world that there is today. Their sacrifice is what enables us to have a country where Thank G-d we are able to serve Hashem, and everyone is able to serve G-d in their own way.

Each of us in our own way should learn how to use our power of Gemilas Chessed, for those who are near and dear, and for others. Even "small" acts of kindness are significant. We learn to be a giver of material, and especially spiritual or emotional support to other people.

גוט שבת!

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Story of the Rebbe

I heard this story from Rabbi Deren, who heard it from a modern orthodox man in Connecticut, who was a high-ranking executive in a major national company. He met Rabbi Deren and said 'I have a story of the Rebbe!'

This man told how he had met an Israeli man who he does business with from time to time. During the course of their meeting, the Israeli man opened his wallet to take something out, and a picture of the Rebbe slid out! He asked this Israeli, who seemed quite secular, what he had to do with Chabad! The man smiled and said, 'if not for that man, I wouldn't be here.' He explained that he had been brought up in a secular home in Israel, and had gone to the army, where they saw that he had special talent. So they put him in a special forces unit that worked undercover in different villages, to try prevent terrorist occurrences from happening. It was tremendously pressurising, constantly, and he stayed there for a few years. Even though it took its toll, he was happy to be able to do something for the people. He even risked his life for the safety of other people. But then, he decided that he wanted to try his luck to use his talents in earning a bit of money, and then to settle down. He came to America with all the savings he had, and he was looking for an opening to be able to use his special abilities. He got some jobs, and he was able to keep himself going for a while, but he was really looking for an opportunity to 'make it big.'

At one stage, his funds were dwindling, so he wrote a letter to about 150/200 Jewish organisations and leaders, explaining how he had risked his life for his country, to save innocent people from terrorists and to do good. He wrote that he had been in a highly demanding position and was able to give, and all he was looking for was to be able to use his talents. Only one person replied out of the 200 organisations he wrote to - the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The Rebbe sent him a Bracha, wishing him well, and enclosed a cheque for $50. This donation actually made this man disappointed, even more than any of the 199 people who hadn't answered, because he reasoned that maybe they didn't have anything to give him. But $50? He wasn't looking for a donation! That's enough for a supper, or perhaps two! He had been looking for an opening, and introduction! So he put the letter in the bottom drawer in his room.

A few weeks went by, and he still hadn't gotten the job he had hoped for, so the $50 became important to him and he went to the bank, to cash the cheque. There, he met a friend who had been in the same unit in the army. He said hello and asked his friend what he was doing there. His friend told him, "I live here, and I made it big, and I was actually thinking of you this morning! I have 5 companies, and I am looking for someone to manage and coordinate between them and I was thinking that you are the exact profile of the person that I need." His friend hired him, and he never looked back. He was able to do what he had planned to do in his life.

This is the story that Rabbi Deren heard from the man in Connecticut, who had met the Israeli man in the story for business. This Israeli person now has a tremendous respect and love for the Rebbe, and he does more Mitzvos than he had been doing as a result. The lesson of the story is: we all have a cheque- the loan that Hashem gave us. We should cash the cheque! Use the special abilities that we have, to do kindness to Hashem with the Mitzvos, and kindness to other people. With this, we will bring Moshiach.

Good Shabbos!

גוט שבת!