



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Emor

HAMELECH

The Requirement to Feel the Pain of Another

Questions:

1. In *Parashat Emor* [22:28] we learn about the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day. Once the Torah has permitted us to slaughter animals, what does it matter if he slaughters an animal and its offspring if the need arises?
2. The Torah's admonition concludes with a warning not to desecrate Hashem's Holy Name, and that by doing so, Hashem will be sanctified amongst the Jewish people, and that it is He who sanctifies the Jewish people. How and why does abiding by this transgression increase our holiness?

The Reason for this Transgression is Because it Causes an Animal to Suffer

See the Targum Yonatan ben Uziel who explains that the prohibition to slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day is rooted in the fact that since Hashem is merciful in Heaven, as it were, so too, we are instructed to be merciful on earth. In *Moreh Nevuchim* [22:6] the Rambam quotes the Ramban as saying that the reason for this prohibition is the same as that of *shiluach ha'kan*, sending away the mother bird and not taking her together with her young. The reason for them both is to prevent us from acting cruelly and without mercy. [See there for an additional reason as well.] In a different place [ibid. 3:48], the Rambam states that animals worry greatly lest their offspring be slaughtered before their eyes.

He writes that that there is no difference between man and animal when it comes to worrying about their offspring. The *Sefer HaChinuch* [mitzvah 294] writes similarly, that the prohibition is meant to instill in us the trait of compassion and to distance the trait of cruelty. The *Rabbeinu Bachya* adds that if this is the extent to which the Torah displays compassion for animals, how much more so does it take into account man's well-being. The *Akeidat Yitzchak* explains that the requirement to show compassion for our fellow applies even to individuals with whom we do not have a specific bond or pact, etc.

From Here it Can be Derived that One Must be Careful not to Distress His Fellow Man

We see from the words of the holy Tanna, R' Yonatan ben Uziel and the *Rishonim* that although the Torah permitted slaughtering an animal to eat its meat, nevertheless, it did not permit causing an animal distress. To whatever extent man is able to limit the distress of the animal, he is obligated to do so. This is how man sanctifies himself, as we discussed in last week's *parashah*. The Torah wishes that man sanctify himself by refining his character traits. If this is the degree that the Torah took care to obligate a person to consider the distress of an animal, how much more so must he take care not to distress his friend, as the *Rabbeinu Bachya* and *Akeidat Yitzchak* wrote. For all distress caused to another is taken into account by Hashem, and the individual who causes distress is punished accordingly. This is as stated in *Pirkei Avot* [2:7],



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"He also saw a skull floating on the water. He said to it: 'Because you drowned others, you were drowned. And eventually, those who drowned you will be drowned.'" Similarly, in *Bava Metzia* [88a] it states how Rabbi was punished because of the distress caused to an animal. The Gemara relates that on one occasion, Rabbi passed a slaughterhouse. There was a young calf that was soon to be slaughtered. It ran to Rabbi and placed its head beneath Rebbe's garment. The calf was crying over the fact that it was going to be slaughtered. However, Rabbi told the calf, "There is nothing that can be done – for this purpose you were created. Therefore, go and allow yourself to be slaughtered." In Heaven it was announced that since Rebbe did not display mercy on the calf, he would now have to suffer. For the next 13 years Rabbi endured terrible suffering. It did not cease until one day Rabbi's maidservant saw a group of weasels in Rabbi's yard, and she asked Rabbi what she should do with them. He replied that it states that Hashem acts mercifully with all of His creations and that she should therefore allow them to remain in the yard. It was then announced in Heaven that since Rabbi had evoked mercy on their behalf, his suffering should cease, and so it was. If this is how Rabbi was punished because of the distress caused to a calf, how much more so is an individual punished because of the distress he causes his fellow man.

An Individual is Required to Prevent Even Imagined Distress

In *Parashat Ki Teitzei* [22:10] the Torah prohibits plowing with both an ox and donkey together. In

the *Midrash Aggadah* (Bober) it explains that it is prohibited due to the fact that the ox and donkey have different natures. The ox chews its cud, and as a result, it appears to the donkey as if he is eating. This causes the donkey distress. This is another lesson of the regal character that a Jew must possess, shaped by adhering to the Torah's path. It merely appears to the donkey that the ox received food and that it did not, but this form of distress must also be avoided. Again, how much more so, should one take care not to distress a human being.

A Story that Teaches How Much One Must Consider His Fellow

There was a yeshiva student who was walking through the hallway of the yeshivah. He noticed a piece of paper on the floor and thought that it contained words of Torah. He picked it up, but then realized that it was actually not *divrei Torah*. He therefore threw the paper back onto the floor. Standing on the side, R' Yerucham Levovitz took notice of what the boy had done. He therefore called him over and asked him why he had thrown the paper on the floor. The boy responded because it had previously been on the floor; once he realized that that it did not contain Torah, he simply returned it to where it had been previously. R' Yerucham responded, "After you saw that it was not *divrei Torah*, it must have bothered you that you had bent down in vain. Now someone else will pass and also mistakenly think the paper contains *divrei Torah*, and he will bend down in vain to pick it up. This will, in turn, cause him distress! This you could certainly have prevented by not returning the paper to the floor!"



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Story About the *Divrei Emet*

The son of the *Divrei Emet*, R' David Becher *zt"l* was soon to be married. On the evening of the wedding, R' Becher hired a wagon-driver to transport them to the hall. However, the wagon was moving slowly, and the *Rav* therefore suggested that he move faster, for they were waiting for him to conduct the *chuppah* ceremony. However, the wagon driver did not heed the *Rav's* words. After being ignored time and time again, the *Rav* remarked derogatorily, "How much longer will this go on, you simpleton? How much longer will you fail to hear that it is late?" The wagon driver was offended, but indeed drove faster, and they arrived at the wedding on time. Following the *chuppah*, the *Rav* asked where the wagon driver was, but he was told that he had already left. He immediately requested that another wagon driver be hired. He requested the driver to drive speedily so that they would catch up to the previous driver. They indeed caught up to him, and the *Rav* asked forgiveness for what he had said. He asked him to understand that that he had been under pressure to perform the *chuppah*, and he had asked him to drive faster a number of times. He therefore beseeched his forgiveness. Yet the driver refused. He tried to implore him to understand that he had left his son's wedding in order to request forgiveness, but it did not help. He offered even to appease him by paying him for the entire trip, but to no avail. He then asked him what he had to do for him in order to earn his forgiveness. The driver replied that he would be willing only if the *Rav* would give him half of his share in the World to Come. The *Rav* immediately agreed, and signed a contract to that effect. The driver then forgave him. All who hear this story will certainly

be astounded how the *Rav* was willing to forgo half of his share in the Coming World, because of one word he had uttered. But this is indeed how grave a sin it is to even slightly offend another, to the extent that he was willing to relinquish half of his share in the World to Come.

Words of Mussar

From here one can learn just how much he must be careful not to slight the honor of his or her spouse, family members, or friend. For as stated above, if this applies to an animal, how much more so to a human being. It was specifically during the period of *Sefirat HaOmer* that 24,000 students of Rebbi Akiva perished because they did not treat one another with the proper respect. Therefore, during this time period each individual must be twice as careful with this matter. It also must be understood: Is a mere slight of another's honor enough of a reason to issue such a harsh decree resulting in the death of 24,000 *Tannaim*? However, I would like to add that, without a doubt, not honoring the other fellow caused him pain and distress. When there is pain caused to another, it awakens a Heavenly prosecution and he is therefore punished. This is why the great *gaon*, R' Becher was willing to forgo half of his *Olam Haba* to earn forgiveness for a small offence that was even justified given the situation. All the more so, if one severely offends his friend. When we overcome our negative character traits and correct our ways, we will increase love and unity. By doing so, we will soon merit the redemption and the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*, speedily in our days. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka