



Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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פרשת כי תצא

Making Things Count

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Making Things Count

In Parshas Ki Seitzei, we learn about *shikchah*, the mitzvah of forgetting. Now, that's interesting! A mitzvah to forget sounds easy, because forgetting is something we're all good at. Aren't we always forgetting to clean up our rooms or forgetting to rinse out our bowl when we finish eating breakfast? Our mothers would probably say that we're very good at forgetting things!

But let's see what this mitzvah is all about.

When a farmer is working in his fields collecting his bundles, so sometimes he's so busy with all of his work that he forgets a bundle or two in the field. So at the end of the day, when the farmer goes back to his house, sometimes there are bundles of wheat left behind.

Now, imagine the farmer wakes up in the morning and remembers those bundles in the field. He wants to run back to his field to go get them. But the passuk in our parshah says: **לֹא תָשׁוּב לְקַחְתָּם** — Don't go back to get them!

The Torah forbids him from returning to collect those forgotten bundles. Instead, he must leave them in his field for the needy to find and bring home to their own families. And the Torah says **לְמַעַן יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ** — so that Hashem will bless you in the zechus of this mitzvah. For doing that mitzvah of forgetting, and leaving the bundles right where you forgot them, Hashem will bensch you with a lot of wonderful brachos.

Now, there's a midrash on our passuk that says as follows: "We see from here that if a man drops some money in the street and a poor man finds it and uses it to feed his family, the one who lost his money will receive blessings from Hashem."

Imagine that! Let's say you're walking down the street to the 99 Cents Store with a dollar to buy yourself a prize. But when you get to the store, you reach into your pocket for the dollar bill and all you feel is a hole. Your dollar fell out somewhere on the street and now you'll

never find it. You feel terrible because you really wanted to buy that eraser for your first day of school.

But now, instead of feeling bad, you should feel happy! The mitzvah of *shikchah* teaches us that you shouldn't feel bad, because if a fellow Jew finds it and he's able to buy something he needs — maybe he's that boy behind you in line buying school supplies — so you get a certain *s'char*, a reward for the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and *chessed*, even though it was an accident.

Just like the man who forgot bundles of wheat in the field gets a great reward for forgetting, the boy who lost his money on the street is also going to get a great reward for simply forgetting to hold on tightly to his dollar. And the mitzvah he gets is much more valuable than that eraser!

Now, you all should be scratching your heads trying to figure out this mitzvah. Why should this man get a mitzvah? Why should you get a mitzvah? Why should we receive any reward at all for making a mistake? We didn't want to leave the bundle or the money behind for the poor person to find. We would have been happy to run back and find it ourselves. But the farmer is not allowed to go back for the bundle



— the Torah says, “Don’t go back to the field and take what you forgot.” And you can’t go back for the money you dropped because there’s no point; it was lost on a crowded street and was probably taken already. So why is there any reward?!

And that brings us to the secret of this mitzvah, the hidden lesson in this *passuk*, which is that a person can choose to do a mitzvah even after the mitzvah is done.

That means that a person can be standing after the fact, long after the *ma’aseh*, and become greater and greater because of something that happened already, even a long time ago.

If this farmer who forgot his stalks of wheat or you who lost your money starts thinking, “If a worthy person, comes along and finds my bundle of wheat or my dollar bill and he needs it, I’m happy about that. After the fact, I’m satisfied that he should use it and enjoy it.”

If you’re thinking that, then you get *s’char* for the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. Of course, it won’t be the same as if you did it *l’chatchilah* — it’s not as good as if you would have met this boy who couldn’t afford his school supplies and you would have chosen to give him your dollar — but it’s still an important opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of *tzedakah* and receive *brachos* from Hashem.

This lesson is not meant only for farmers who lose bundles of wheat. It’s a lesson for all of us. Because, although we do hundreds of mitzvos everyday, very often we forget to do them with *kavanah*, with any thought at all. We just go through the motions and don’t actually choose to do them.

But here we’re learning that afterwards we can still “save” them. So it could be that you weren’t thinking when you did the mitzvos, but at night before you go to sleep, you can review them and add *kavanah*. “I’m happy I washed *negel vasser* in the morning.” “I’m happy I said *brachos*.” “I’m happy I listened to my mother and took out the garbage.” “I’m happy I learned Torah in school.” And all of these thoughts that you think after the fact are counted as mitzvos by Hashem, and stored up for you for a great reward in the future.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

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