

They shall take for you pure oil...to kindle the lamp continually. (27:20)

Chazal teach that Hashem gave us the *mitzvah* of lighting the *Menorah* in the *Bais HaMikdash*, “not because I need the light.” After all, Hashem is the light of the world. “Rather, I command you to light for Me just as I provided illumination for you in the Wilderness. This will give you the opportunity to return the favor.” *Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl*, derives an important lesson from *Chazal*: A beneficiary who may, somehow, want to return the favor – let him do it. *Chazal* are teaching us a lesson in Torah etiquette. When someone does a favor for another person, the beneficiary may want to repay the kindness. However, the benefactor has it all and does not need anything. What should he do?

The *Mashgiach* notes that most of us would say, “Forget about it. No problem; Don’t worry about it. I’m actually good.” *Chazal* are teaching us that this is wrong. We must permit the beneficiary to repay the favor. Someone who is truly sensitive to the feelings of the beneficiary will say, “Yes, I will be happy to receive a favor in return.” He will not want his friend to feel indebted to him.

A relationship between two people should be one of unity and harmony. Allow the fellow to maintain his dignity by paying back the favor. The main objective is that his dignity will have been preserved.

Rav Yeruchem cites the *Rosh* in *Sefer Orchos Chaim L’Ha’Rosh*, who asserts that the ramifications of sensitivity apply even under such circumstances in which someone offends us. He now stands before us with pleading eyes, asking forgiveness. What should we do? The *Rosh* writes: “Do not consider it a sin if a person wishes to excuse himself in front of you.” The *Rosh* is addressing a situation whereby Reuven offended Shimon. Reuven now wants to explain his behavior and somehow achieve forgiveness. Most of us would simply say, “Forget about it. It is over, don’t worry. I am not upset.” However, what if he wants to explain? The *Rosh* says that a *baal middos*, one who possesses refined character traits, will listen to what the individual has to say.

This is probably against our basic instinctive reaction. No one wants to hear someone’s excuse concerning why he insulted him, why he hurt him, why he caused him a monetary loss. The usual reaction is: “Forget about it. I will not weep over spilled milk. What is done is done!” In truth, the reason the victim does not want to listen to the offender’s excuse is that he wants him to suffer. Thus, whenever he meets him, he will be able to subtly rub it in. “You hurt me, and I never really forgave you. I never listened to your justification.”

The *Rosh* is teaching us to let a person have his say – even if it’s an excuse that is not worth much. At least, the offender has the satisfaction that he was allowed to have his say, and in his mind this means that he was forgiven.

The *Mashgiach* cites the episode with Yosef and his brothers as an indication of how a Torah Jew should act. The ten brothers felt terrible. They had gone through life justifying their hatred and eventual sale of Yosef. While this was a step up from their original intention to kill him, they still acted badly toward him. Years later when they stood before him, they were speechless. Indeed, words cannot soothe Yosef's pain or adequately express their share of the blame. What possible excuse could they render to gloss over two decades of suffering? Apologies are insufficient at a time such as this.

Yosef gave them the excuse: "It was not your fault. Hashem wanted this to occur. Thus, He manipulated the events and you were mere pawns in Hashem's hands." By saying this, Yosef was removing from them the burden of guilt, allowing them to preserve their dignity and face him after all these years.