

## And you shall fear your G-d – and let your brother live with you. (25:36)

*Tapuchei Chaim* derives from this *pasuk* an important lesson concerning interpersonal relationships. *V'yareisa mei Elokecha*, “And you shall fear your G-d” – How do we know that you truly fear Hashem? What is the barometer, the litmus test, that determines your level of *yiraas Shomayim*? *V'chai achicha imach*, “And let your brother live with you.” If you look and perceive the needs of your fellow/brother, when you show that you believe that life and living is not only about you, but about others as well, this is a sign that you are a *yarei Shomayim*. Otherwise, you have not fulfilled the criterion which would confirm you as G-d-fearing. Only one who has *yiraas Shomayim* will adhere to the *pasuk* of *V'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho*, “Love your fellow as yourself.” One who is not G-d-fearing will not constantly think about his fellow. Without *yiraas Shomayim*, one sees only himself – no one else. Furthermore, *mitzvah* observance does not override one's responsibility to his fellow. It is incumbent that you must figure out a way to do both. If it is one or the other, then your *yiraas Shomayim* is deficient.

The *Belzer Rebbe*, *Horav Yissachar Dov, zl*, received a *kvitel* (written petition for a blessing) from his son, *Horav Mordechai, zl* (future *Rav* of Bilgoire, Poland), asking that he not be drafted into the army. (Being inducted into the army was both physically and spiritually dangerous.) While reading the *kvitel*, the *Rebbe* emitted a *krechitz*, groan. Seeing this, his *Rebbetzin* immediately asked, “Hundreds of young men have beseeched your blessing. Why is it that when it involves your son, you groan? He should be no different than anyone else you have helped.”

The *Rebbe* replied, “This is not why I groaned. It has nothing to do with our son's chances of blessing. I groaned because I sensed a greater heartfelt affinity to this *kvitel* than to the others. (He felt that he should love all Jews as he loved his son.)

A short while later, representatives of a nearby community came to the *Rebbe* to petition his blessing. Apparently, the poverty level of their community had become so grave that people were unable to tolerate it. They were emotionally distressed and physically weakened by the hunger and deprivation that prevailed. The *Rebbe* responded to their pleas with a parable. (Apparently, his goal was to convey a message to them.)

A young man studied for years to become a physician. It was grueling work, since he did not have the conveniences available to us today. He mastered the educational aspect and was now ready to employ his book knowledge practically. In order to do this, he required a license to practice medicine. He could obtain the license only after passing a test administered by a world-famous physician who could ask any question accessible to him as one of the most knowledgeable physicians in the country.

Prior to getting into the multifaceted details of medicine, the physician asked the young man how

he would treat a wounded man who was bleeding profusely. He replied that he would administer a certain medicine. "What would you do if that medicine were unavailable?" the physician asked. The young man suggested a different medicine that could also stop the bleeding. "Let us say, for argument's sake, that medicine is also inaccessible. What would you then do?" The young hopeful replied, "I would burn a piece of cloth and apply it directly to the wound." "If that, too, were not available – no medicine, no cloth – now what?" the physician asked. The young man replied, "I have never been confronted with such a situation. If I have no medicine and no cloth, I would be hard-pressed to save the patient" was the young man's emphatic reply.

When the physician heard this, he bid the young man "good day" and refused to grant him a medical license. The young man was flabbergasted. What did he do wrong? He had answered every question correctly. He had even answered the last question (he felt) correctly. If he were to have no available cure, what else could he do? He had spent years preparing for this moment. Should one question crush his chances of receiving the coveted medical license?

The physician explained, "If you have neither medicine nor a piece of cloth readily available, the doctor improvises. He does not give up. If you could not locate a piece of cloth, then tear up your suit jacket, your shirt, your pants! To sit there with folded hands and say, 'I have done all there is to do,' is not the way a doctor acts! Obviously, the patient's best interests are not your overriding concern. You have no business becoming a physician."

The *Belzer Rebbe* looked sternly at the representatives of the community who stood before him, "The reason that your community is stricken with overwhelming poverty is that you have no leaders/people who are willing to tear themselves away for their fellow man. The success of a community is contingent upon the willingness of every member to give of himself for the *klal*, greater community. Only then will you be granted the *siyata diShmaya* Divine assistance.