

Moshe did according to everything that Hashem commanded him, so he did. (40:16)

The construction of the *Mishkan* was meticulously executed with perfect order as instructed by Hashem. There was no concept of approximate size. Everything was clearly delineated to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, and everything was followed precisely as ordered. The *Alter, zl, m'Kelm, Horav Simchah Zissel Broide*, quotes the *Talmud Chullin* 18a in which *Chazal* state, "If there would be a blemish/imperfection in the *Mizbayach* (even) like (that of) a hair breadth, it would abrogate the *kedushah*, sanctity, of the *Mikdash*." As a result, none of the wondrous miracles that were manifest on a regular basis in the *Bais Hamikdash* would have occurred. Were one hairbreadth to be off –the entire *Bais Hamikdash* would no longer have been worthy of being the receptacle of *kedushah*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was instructed to speak to the rock. Instead, he made a slight change: he struck the rock. The consequences that resulted from that alteration meant that the man who led us out of Egypt, who gave his life for the Jewish People, could not enter *Eretz Yisrael*. This meant that we would be eventually exiled from the Land, following the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*. We have been dispersed throughout the world and slaughtered like cattle, persecuted mercilessly and hounded wherever we were – all because of that "slight change."

The *Alter* adds that one who lives with order in his life understands how to act in his home, with his community, and with the world at large. The individual has no room for error when it comes to *sefer*, order. The **Malbim** explains that the knowledge of order, knowing the reasons for connections and divisions, the relationship and interaction of each part of a whole to its neighbor, to the preceding and succeeding, is the essential element of all knowledge and the root of all wisdom. In the realm of educational studies, order is the key to unlocking many sealed passageways. It permits the individual: to grasp and comprehend the various issues in a debate; to understand the qualities, benefits and demerits of an issue; and to have access to making a proper decision. In a successful thought process, one first searches for the order, delineating how everything is connected and what its relationship is to the next object in position. This awareness gives the individual insight into what is the true meaning of a subject and what motivates it; and also allows one to see the matter both in its entirety and in its parts. Without order, we are unable to really find a lasting solution for difficult problems. Order gives us the ability to see, to think, to analyze, to solve. A mind in disarray is unable to think through a subject successfully, because it does not really understand it.

Seder, orderliness, was one of the watchwords of Kelm. It was another aspect of the *Alter's* philosophy of education, which was based upon the complex interplay of thought and action. Improper actions indicated faulty thought. One's external and internal expressions are inextricably linked to one another. By underscoring the need for external order, the *Alter* believed one could, over time, give structure and order to the internal thought process as well. A lack of external order reveals a cog in one's internal thought process, indicating a lack of structure and methodology in his thoughts. When the *Alter* visited his son in *yeshivah*, he first inspected his son's room to

ascertain that it was neat and tidy. Then he would greet his son.

Each student in Kelm was assigned a specific place for his possessions, and anyone whose possessions were not neatly arranged or were in the wrong place would incur the aversion of the *Alter*. Originally, I thought this was taking it too far, but when one analyzes it further, it is apparent that in order to have a precise mind for Torah study, one's external actions must be meticulously structured. This was the type of student the *Alter m'Kelm* cultivated and developed.

A visitor once entered the Kelm *bais hamedrash* during one of the *Alter's shmuessen*, ethical discourses. From the somber tone of the lecture, it appeared that he was delivering a *hesped*, eulogy. Only midway through the *shmuess* did the visitor realize that the *Alter* was not talking about any deceased person. He was, in fact, addressing the fact that a student had placed his galoshes upside down in its assigned compartment. To the *Alter*, this was an infraction in *seder* and needed to be seriously addressed. The visitor later reported that the *Alter* had delivered a *hesped* over an incorrectly placed pair of galoshes.

The *Alter* writes: "We have spoken concerning the overriding significance of adhering to *seder*. It goes so far that a person cannot live one moment without *shemiras ha'sedarim*, meticulously adhering to order and structure. One who does not do this misses out on everything."

The above gives us insight into the definition of a non-functioning person and why so many distinguished people demand *seder* in every aspect of their lives. **Rav Moshe Pardo, zl**, was such a person. First, a little background on *Rav Moshe Pardo*. Moshe Pardo was a wealthy Jewish businessman in Turkey. He also had a number of orchards near Bnei Brak. This was before Bnei Brak became the bustling city that it is today. He had one daughter, who was engaged to be married. A few weeks before her wedding, she contracted meningitis, which caused her untimely demise. Her father was heartbroken and inconsolable.

He was advised to speak with the **Chazon Ish**, who was the *gadol hador*, preeminent Torah leader of the generation. The *Chazon Ish* and his *Rebbetzin* had not been blessed with biological children. *Rav Moshe* told the *Chazon Ish* that, with the passing of his only child, he had lost his desire to live. "She died. I also want to die," he said.

With his piercing eyes, the *Chazon Ish* looked at him and said, "It is prohibited for a believing Jew to think like that." He paused a moment and then said, "I will tell you what. You give up your business, Pardo, and you make a school for *Sephardic* girls. You will see what is taking place here in Bnei Brak. The *Sephardic* girls are being destroyed. You make a school here; sell some of your orchards and start; I promise you hundreds of children and thousands of grandchildren!"

Rav Pardo accepted the *Chazon Ish's* advice, and, in 1952, he established Or HaChaim Seminary for girls from kindergarten through high school. The school addresses the needs of girls from disadvantaged homes, who would otherwise probably find themselves on the street. Thus, they are

accorded a Jewish education and taught the skills required to earn a livelihood. The school exists today with an enrollment of fifteen hundred students. On the day that *Rav Moshe* related this story to Rabbi Berel Wein, he pulled out a notebook from his pocket. In it, he had recorded the name of every girl who had attended his school, what had happened with her, and how many children she had. On that day, he told Rabbi Wein, his 4,000th grandchild had been born.

Now that we have his history, let me share one of his primary educational maxims: “A *rebbe/morah* must be on time.” Often when the bell rang, he was found standing in the hall, indicating to his teachers that they were late, that this had better not happen again. Many times, he would emphasize that even a slight tardiness, a few moments, throws off the balance of the class. When the teacher demonstrates a lack of organization, the students immediately sense it. This creates an air of general instability and deficiency within the entire school – all because one teacher has arrived late.

The Torah is firmly entrenched in the concept of punctuality, meticulousness and order. One who performs a prohibited labor on *Shabbos*, one minute prior to sunset, is liable for the death penalty. If he does so one minute later, he is, of course, exempt, since it has already become a weekday. One minute spells the difference between life and death. A hairbreadth determines whether an animal has been slaughtered properly. One must slaughter *rov*, the majority. One hair breadth beyond the halfway mark renders all the difference in the world. One drop of water spells the difference between a *mikveh* which is kosher and one which has less than forty *saah* of water, and thus, is not a *mikveh*. The *Machaneh Leviah*, camp reserved for *Shevet Levi*, was separated from *Machaneh Shechinah*, the holy camp, by one step. The list goes on.

One year, prior to the *Yamim Tovim*, High Holy Days, the school sent out *Shanah Tovah*, Happy New Year, cards to its supporters. This mailing was in gratitude of the past support, and a subtle reminder that the school was still in need of funds. The school had a beautiful card printed, and the girls were charged with folding the card, wrapping it in a gold ribbon, and placing it in an envelope. As is usually the case, there was a group of girls who took their work seriously and responded responsibly, folding the card perfectly on the prepared crease and tying the ribbon exactly in the right place. Another group of girls just folded the card and put on a ribbon in a manner that showed they could care less. *Rav Moshe* praised the former group of girls who had meticulously carried out his request. He relieved the other group of girls of their cards and threw them away: “I cannot send such a card to a supporter of the school. It conveys a bad message!”

When the girls complained and demanded a reason for his “putting down” their work, he patiently explained the following: “I knew a man who, for the most part, was in perfect health. He had one slight problem concerning a facial nerve that every once in a while would twitch. As a result, he made an involuntary response with his face every time the nerve twitched. Is this so bad? After all, among tens of thousands of nerves in his face, one nerve was ‘loose.’ Does this mean that something is wrong?”

When he saw the girls looking at him sympathetically, as if they did not understand the point that he was trying to make, he stopped momentarily, allowing his message to sink in, and continued. The heart is a pump which pumps constantly from the moment a person is born until he takes his last breath. Seventy, eighty, ninety years, without rest, it never stops pumping. What tragedy would there be if it “took it easy” once in a while and stopped a beat here and there? The person would go into cardiac arrest. He might even die! Do you now understand that when perfection is required, there can be no “second best” or “almost” or “not quite” or “most of the time”? Everything in this world is placed by the Almighty in its perfect place. It must function at an optimum level exactly as G-d wanted it to – or else. If this is what is expected from inanimate objects, how much more so from man?”