

Dvar Torah for Parshat Bereishis

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Based on Rebbe Nachman's Stories, The Seven Beggars (The Third Day, The Stammering Beggar)

"It was evening and it was morning, one day...a second day...a third day..." (Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23,31).

Someone got up and said, "I'm wiser than all of you because I'm as wise as an entire day."

"Like which day?" I [the stammering beggar] asked.

"He's smarter than I am because he knows to ask 'like which day'! But I'm as smart as any day you like."

Some things are just counter-intuitive. Generosity is one of them.

Most people, especially we Jews who are bashful, merciful and kind (Yevamot 79a), are willing to give charity and help others when they have the money and time. But when we are short of either, our generosity shrivels. We aren't on the outlook to give tzedakah (charity) and we don't consider volunteering, formally or informally, to help others or even ourselves (for example, to help out our shul). What we need to remember—and it ain't always easy—is that giving creates.

Our Sages teach this in regard to money (Gittin 7a). if a person see his wealth shrinking he should make some of it tzedakah; certainly if his wealth is great. The yeshiva of Rebbe Yishmael provides an analogy. If a person has two sheep to take across the river, one full with wool and the other recently balded, the shorn one will pass through the water and make it to the other side. The one weighed down by its wool will sink and drown. Giving away your money (to a worthwhile charity!) will help you "cross the river." Somehow you'll have

enough to get you through.

Rebbe Nachman teaches a similar lesson in regard to time. Some of us are always too busy to do something for someone else. All of us are occasionally too busy to help anybody. But we need to keep in mind a message the Stammering Beggar is trying to tell us: time is created by acts of kindness. He goes around collecting the honest kindnesses that we do for one another and gives it as a gift to the grosser man, der emeser ish chessed (the great man, the genuine man of kindness) who gives it to the Heart of the World who gives that it to the Spring for which it yearns.

The Spring is the sefirah of Chokhmah, the source of tikkun olam, the key to finding the good points within. "You created everything with Chokhmah" (Psalms 104:24). By doing kindness we buy ourselves time to repair and re-create the world anew (see Likutey Moharan I, 34:5).

Ozer Bergman
agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom

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