

* There will be a shiur (Gemorah Brachos) at Mark Franck's house on Shabbos afternoon at 4:35pm.

Katanga

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Caulfield
Beth Hamedrash Weekly Newsletter

D'var Torah

THE INHERITANCE...

by Rabbi Stephen Baars (aish.com)

Parents will warn their children to avoid drugs and teenage pregnancy. Yet why don't we hear with such frequency a father instructing his child to refrain from being pessimistic or unkind? I have yet to meet the person who said that his father pressured him more about developing good character than he did about developing a high-paying career.

Do you want your child to be wealthier than you? What about more kind and generous, more caring and considerate? If so, where is he going to learn these values from? Maybe you think comments made now and again, such as "share your toys," or "be nice" are the keys to generous and caring children. Or maybe you think they will learn to be good people in school - from a school that in fact teaches there are really no absolute values!! Unlikely.

Where do you think your child is going to learn values? Are you teaching them? Is the school? Is not your precious child going to spend much (if not more) time with their teacher than you? Would you place your child in the chair of an unqualified dentist?

When you select a school for your child, do you examine the teachers for their morals and values as well as for their diplomas? Is the school even qualified to teach values?

You may claim that you don't want your child learning values in school. But there is no such thing as a vacuum. Be assured that one way or another, your child is absorbing an approach to life.

This week's parsha points out that a child is not punished for the crimes of a parent (Deut. 24:16) nor a parent for a child. But the Torah also tells us (Deut. 5:9): Children will suffer the consequences for crimes they commit, even if they have inherited such delinquencies from their parents.

Will your child inherit your bad traits? Do you want to inflict your child with all the pain that you have suffered? Will he not most certainly inherit these

flaws from you... if there is no instruction to the contrary?



It is true your child will probably inherit your good side, too. But does that mean you should not try to make things better for him?

At the very least, we should worry over the dangers of him acquiring our traits of selfishness, anger, pride and frustration. A child will see and imitate these traits, just as a child will often imitate a parent's drinking habit.

The image of a pregnant women smoking is one for which we all have disdain. But what about a pregnant woman being unkind? None of us seem too concerned! Yet what terrible harm is awaiting that unborn child!

How noble it is to leave one's heirs a nest-egg in case of hard financial times. But are we giving our children a similar repository of wisdom to know how to deal with the hard times of life?

Does your child's school curriculum have a course on building relationships, a class on personal crisis management, or a seminar on developing a system of personal values?

Are we living such wonderfully happy lives, care - and problem-free, that our only concern is that our children's teeth are straight and the right college diploma hangs on the wall? Shouldn't we be equally concerned that our children may lack the fortitude and wisdom to deal with the kind of personal problems we have faced?



When we look back in our final days, will we say with confidence that we made the right choice for each of our children's inheritances?

Aren't we just wishing upon a fallen star that against great odds our children will figure all this out by themselves?

Thoughts for the week:

"A friend doubles the joy and halves the grief."

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter a word before God; ...let thy words be few."
(Ecclesiastes 5:2)

"He who loses money, loses much; He who loses a friend, loses much more; He who loses faith, loses all."
(Eleanor Roosevelt)

"A ship in harbour is safe - but that's not what ships are for."
(John Shedd)

"We have enough youth, how about a fountain of Smart?"

Other Developments

* After davening on shabbos, Mark Franck gave a personal account of his recent trip to Europe. Mark spoke at length about the oldest surviving shule in Prague - 'Altenai', famous also for being the centre of the Golem story. Recounting famous Gedolim who presided over the shule, Mark told of the current status of the Jewish community. Speaking of the mass destruction of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, he spoke of the eternal prayers and optimism of the Jews even in times of intense distress - a poignant message increasingly applicable in current times. Yasher Koach and welcome back.

* Mazal Tov to Steven & Tess Goldman on the occasion of the Pidyon Haben of their son, Moshe, last Sunday. Sheyigdol leTorah, leChuppah, uleMa'asim Tovim.

* At Shaleh Seudos, Mendi Slodowitz spoke about the reasons that the Torah was divided into two parts - the Written Law and the Oral Law. Mendi explained why it was imperative that part of the Torah was not 'confined' or 'limited' to a specific written formula. Yasher Koach.

Optimism in Elul

By Rabbi Schoen (ohr.org.il)

Teshuvah, repentance, seems illogical. True, a sinner must change his ways to avoid further punishment. Yet by what logic can a previous sin be forgiven? Why shouldn't he be punished for the bad he has done?

When G-d judges a person, He doesn't simply weigh his sins and mitzvot on a scale. Rather, Hashem judges the individual himself. What is he? What does he represent? Does he embody good or evil?

True, a person's essential being depends on his past actions; but he is actually judged for the gestalt of his being, the whole and not the parts.

When a person truly regrets his past, he is stating that those actions do not embody him. When being judged for what he represents, those sins that he regrets - are not factors in judgment, since they do not represent him anymore.

Rambam says that it is only the third sin and on that are counted. Why should Hashem "ignore" the first two sins?

Announcements

- Sholom Aleichem to Family Steiner who are visiting from Israel. Also, wishing them a hearty Mazal Tov on the occasion of the recent engagement in the family.

- Next motzei shabbos (8 September), Katanga will be hosting its annual Elul Shiur Night. The shiurim provide a fitting prelude to the selichot which begin on the same evening. Further details to follow. If you are interested in presenting a shiur on the night, please contact Ezra May.

- Minyanim times for this coming week are: Mornings: first minyan @ 6:15am, second minyan @ 7am. Mincha at 6:00pm followed by shiurim. Ma'ariv at 6:40pm.

Parsha Overview – Ki Tetze

Another jam-packed Mitzvah parsha this week. Topics include: Women Captives, First-Born's Share, The Rebellious Son, Hanging and Burial, Returning Lost Articles, The Fallen Animal, The Bird's Nest, Guard-Rails, Mixed Agriculture, Bound Tassels, Laws of Marriage, Divorce & Relationships, Ammonites & Moabites, Edomites & Egyptians, The Army Camp, Sheltering Slaves, Deducted Interest, Keeping Vows, Worker in a Vineyard, Field Worker, Kidnapping, Leprosy, Security for Loans, Paying Wages on Time, Testimony of Close Relatives, Widows and Orphans, Forgotten Sheaves, Leftover Fruit, Flogging, Weights and Measures, Remembering What Amalek Did to Us.

Bearing in mind our explanation of teshuvah, the reason is quite clear: It is a principle of Jewish law that for an action to establish a status quo (chazakah), it must occur three times. Thus, the first two times a person sins he had not indicated that he is a person who embodies that particular transgression. He simply gave in to his evil inclination. Only when he transgresses three times can one say that he represents the sin itself, and can thus be judged for his embodiment of the evil, not for one particular sin.

Among the ways to repentance, the Rambam mentions changing one's name, "as if to say: I am another, and am not the same person who did those deeds." (Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 2:4)

How can one change his name and claim to be someone else? According to our explanation, this is exactly the point of teshuvah. One must resolve that those moments spent in sin do not represent him. He is a different person, represented by mitzvot.

- Chayeinu for Women is having a Shiur this coming Wednesday (September 5th). The speaker will be Rabbi Yonosan Abraham on the topic "The King & I: Monarchy in Democratic times". The shiur will be held in the Ezras Nashim (Women's section) of Kollel Beth HaTalmud at 362a Carlisle Street, Balaclava. Women are encouraged to attend. For further details, please contact Devorah Levinson on 9527 3706.

- World renowned speaker Rabbi Lewis Furman (from Ohr Somayach South Africa) is currently touring Melbourne (until September 4). There are still a few opportunities to hear this dynamic speaker. For a detailed itinerary of shiurim he will be giving, please email us here.

Suggestions or comments regarding our website or newsletter? Email us – we would love to hear from you.



Shabbat Shalom & Gut Shabbos to all!

“The Editors”