

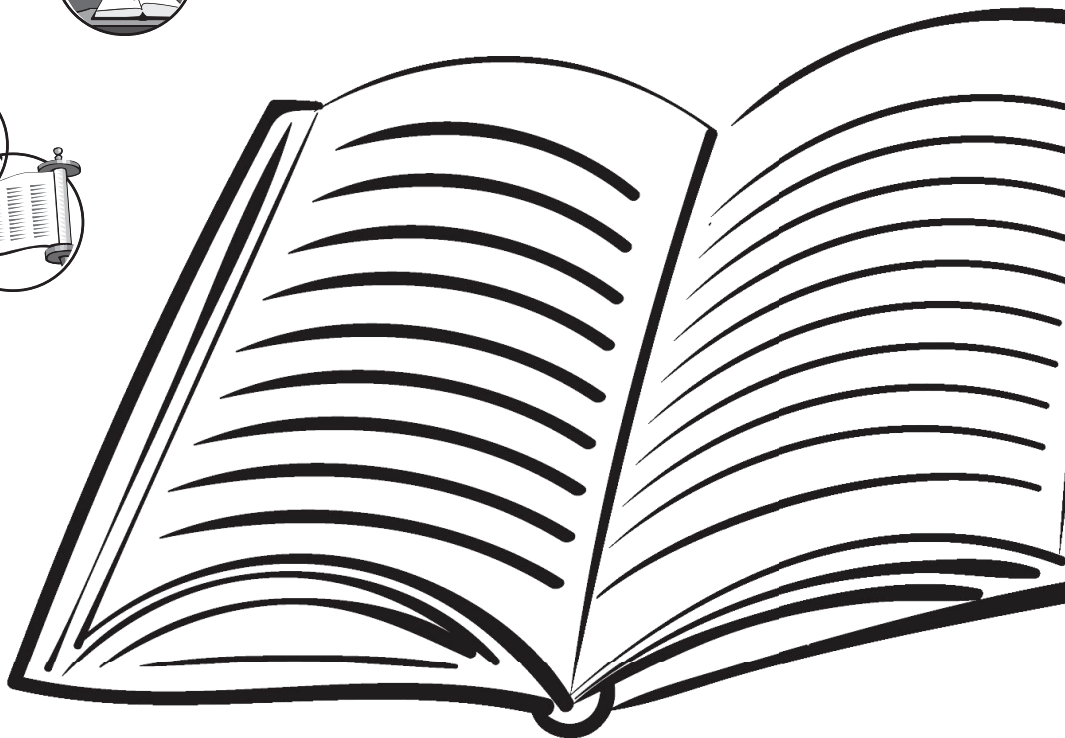


KIDS4CHAI

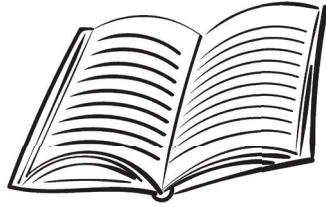
COMBINING TORAH STUDY WITH CHESD



Chai Lifeline



SHEMOS



KIDS4CHAI

**gives kids across the
country the chance to
combine Torah study with
the performance of chesed.**

**BE PART of a nationwide
project that has helped
thousands of seriously ill
Jewish children and their
families!**

פרשת שמות



אהבת בני ישראל – LOVE FOR FELLOW JEWS

While the young משה רבינו was growing up in the palace of פרעה, בני ישראל were suffering. Forced to toil as slaves, they were treated badly and punished frequently.

The תורה tells us, “משה grew up and went out to his brothers.” He “saw how his brothers were suffering,” and how cruelly they were being treated.

According to רש”י, the passage “משה saw how his brothers were suffering” can be explained as, “He put himself out with his eyes and heart and was concerned about them.” Thus, caring is an essential quality of a true leader and a character trait that we can emulate.

משה lived in a palace! He could have concerned himself solely with the latest toys and games and the riches that every prince had. Instead, he went out to his brothers. He saw their suffering and cared about them, displaying the highest level of אהבה.



How can you really reach a high level of אהבה – caring about others? Put yourself in their place and try, to the best of your ability, to imagine how they feel.

1. When we see someone in school that is being made fun of, we should try to imagine ourselves in his or her situation. Surely then we will understand a little bit more of how they are feeling. You can then reach out as a friend and show true אהבה.
2. When we see classmates choosing teams and you know whom they will leave for the last, stop and think about how your classmate feels. Select him/her for your team: Give them a boost of אהבה and you might be in for a surprise!
3. Maybe there is a classmate that rarely gets invited for Shabbos. Give it a try! Invite him or her over; everyone needs to feel אהבה.

Now you are already so much more sensitive because you are working on imagining how others feel!



The Rosh Yeshiva knocked on a rich man’s door. It was bitterly cold outside and the rich man hurried to open the door and welcome the Rebbe inside.

“No, thank you,” said the Rosh Yeshiva. “Let me quickly tell you why I am here without taking too much of your time.”

The rich man was not dressed for the cold weather outside, but he did not want to be rude to the Rosh Yeshiva. He stood in the doorway of his home, listening.

The Rosh Yeshiva began by telling the rich man about the students in the yeshiva. He described the high level of learning, the התמדה, the diligence in learning תורה. He went on to talk about how difficult it had become for the boys because the yeshiva lacked the funds to provide heat for the building.

By this point the rich man, who thought the discussion was going to take only a minute, was shivering and practically jumping up and down to keep warm! “Please Rebbe,” he begged, “Let us continue our talk inside, where it is warm. I am freezing and can hardly think in this cold. I’ll give you the whole amount if you will please just come inside.”

The Rosh Yeshiva finally agreed. Sitting by the fireplace in the majestic living room with its thick carpeting and plush furniture all around him, the Rebbe turned to the rich man.

“I wanted to talk to you in the cold so you could feel the pain of my תלמידים. Only then would you give from your heart. Sitting here in this warm, cozy living room, you could not have felt their cold. You might not have been so generous.”

The Rosh Yeshiva understood that the best way to have true אהבת ישראל and feel for others is to try and put oneself in another’s place. As we see in this פרשה, when we can feel the plight of others, we respond with true אהבה.

פרשת וארא



הכרת הטוב – SHOWING GRATITUDE

The Egyptians treated the Jewish people badly. They wanted them to remain as slaves and would not let them leave מצרים.

ה' decided to punish the Egyptians by sending ten plagues. The first would turn the Nile River into blood. The second would cause frogs to come out of the Nile River and completely cover the land.

While משה רבינו was chosen as the נביא who would advise פרעה to change his mind, ה' did not command him to place his staff over the Nile River and thus bring the plagues down on the מצרים. That job was left to אהרן – his brother.

Why didn't ה' have משה perform this task? רש"י explains that the Nile River saved משה when he was a little baby. (פרעה had decreed that all Jewish boys were to be drowned in the river.) It would show a lack of appreciation and gratitude (הכרת הטוב) if משה caused damage to the river that saved him.

You might argue that the Nile is not a person. It doesn't have feelings and therefore can't feel a lack of gratitude. Why was משה concerned with the river? Why couldn't he initiate the plagues?

We learn here that הכרת הטוב involves two people, the giver and the recipient. In this case, the Nile River is the recipient. Since it is not a person, it does not need to receive משה's gratitude, but משה is still obligated to show his appreciation. Showing appreciation is so important that it must be done even when there is no one to receive the gratitude.



We learn from חז"ל, "Don't throw stones in a pit (well) that provides water to drink." Our Sages wanted us to appreciate everything that provides a benefit, even if it is not a person.

There are many people who do things that benefit us. Our parents brought us into this world and take care of us. Our teachers teach us the things we need to know. Our grandparents give us their time and wisdom. These people care for us and teach us knowledge and מדות. They receive נחת from our growth.

We need to be careful to always show gratitude and thanks. Sometimes it is the people who love us the most and with whom we spend the most time that we forget to thank.



Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mirrer Yeshiva from 1902-1978, was famous for the מדה of always showing הטוב.

Rav Chaim would always try to attend the שמחות of his students, whether it was a bris, bar mitzvah or wedding. He even went to the שמחות of people who only attended his weekly shiur.

Whenever he was asked why he felt obligated to attend (and he would usually be among the first guests to arrive), he would answer, "I owe it to them. I have such הכרת הטוב."

We can understand a student who feels such gratitude towards his Rebbe or teacher. Here the Rebbe appreciated every student, even those he saw only once a week.

This is a good example of the essence of הכרת הטוב. Both parties, the person who gives and the person who receives, feel and show gratitude towards one another.

פרשת בא



APPRECIATING THE LITTLE THINGS

When יציאת מצרים began, משה told בני ישראל that this would be set as a special time and remembered forever. He said (שמות 13:2), “Remember this day as the time that you left מצרים, the place of slavery, when ה' brought you out of here with a strong hand. Do not eat חמץ. You left this day, in the springtime.”

We can understand why משה רבינו told us that we should remember the day. We can also understand why we cannot eat חמץ. (We don't eat חמץ (bread and flour products) as a remembrance that we left מצרים in such a hurry that our bread did not have a chance to rise.)

Why does משה say, “You left this day, in the springtime.” Everyone knew that it was spring. Why does משה mention the season?

רש"י explains that משה taught בני ישראל an important lesson. By emphasizing the season, he was really saying, “Look at how lucky you are! Not only did ה' take you out of מצרים, but He took you out at the best possible time. We didn't leave in the summer, when it would have been too hot, or in the winter, when it would have been too cold, or in the rainy season, when everyone would have been wet. ה' took us out of מצרים at the best possible time to make a long journey, and we need to recognize and appreciate this part of ה'’s plan.



משה רבינו teaches us to appreciate both the great and little things in our life. When ה' works things out for us, He always does it in a way that is most beneficial to us.



Some people are blessed with intelligence, some with beauty, some with money, and others, ב"ה, with everything. Regardless of all the gifts and talent that ה' has given us, sometimes it is the little things that have the most meaning. The following story illustrates this point.

Shlomo and Dovid were both bright eighth graders. Both wanted to attend a prestigious yeshiva known for its high standards and selectivity in accepting new students. Both boys were extremely bright and motivated and both were sure all would go as planned. In truth, both boys met all the criteria for admission, but since space was limited, the Rosh Yeshiva could only accept one. The two boys went for a test, an oral examination given by the Rosh Yeshiva. Both did extremely well.

Sometime later, when the principal of the elementary school received the acceptance letter for Shlomo, he called the Rosh Yeshiva. He was curious as to how the Rosh Yeshiva made his decision. The Rosh Yeshiva answered that both boys were very bright and had performed extremely well, but that Shlomo stopped to kiss the מזוזה upon entering the room. The Rosh Yeshiva was impressed with the boy's sensitivity to this מצוה, the reminder of ה'’s presence. It was not the big test that won him a place in the Yeshiva, but the less noticeable deed that set him apart from his friend.

פרשת בשילה



ACTING DECISIVELY

When the בני ישראל left מצרים, they did not use the road called דרך ארץ פלשתים (the Philistine Highway), even though this convenient coastline route was the path most people took. Instead, ה' led בני ישראל on a longer, much more difficult route.

ה' understood that this generation of בני ישראל had been slaves their entire lives. He also knew that fear can make people change their decisions. Had בני ישראל traveled the easier road, they might have changed their minds about leaving מצרים at the first signs of fear. By sending them on the longer road, he assured that no one would think about turning back.

בני ישראל had performed a great מצוה when they prayed to ה' to take them out of מצרים. By selecting the longer route, ה' was able to make sure they stayed on the path of מצוה by making it impossible for them to change their minds and return to מצרים.

In this פרשה ה' is teaching us to act decisively whenever we do מצוה so that we do not change our minds.



Sometimes even when we act decisively, we must take steps to ensure that that we don't turn back to our bad actions or decisions. For example, if someone is trying to eat only healthy foods, he can remove all the candy from his house. He will not be tempted to nibble on the unhealthy food, because he knows there is none to be found in his home. His decisiveness has helped him stick to the right decision.

The שמחה teaches us that true שמחה - happiness and relief come only when we settle our doubts, when we make a decision and resolve to stick with it.



A man who was previously convicted of a minor crime once came to a Rav for help with making a decision. The man's wife had previously come to see the Rav to seek his advice concerning personal matters. The Rav called to his שמש and asked him to send the man away.

The שמש was quite surprised by this request and asked why the man had to be removed from the room. The Rav answered, "As a Rav, I must decide halachic matters and cannot be swayed by what was said in confidence about him by another individual. I can no longer decide with total אמת. Perhaps he should visit another Rav."

As hard as it was to turn away someone in need, the Rav understood that when one must make a decision, it is important to act resolutely in order to fulfill ה' commandments.

פרשת יתרו



מנוחת הנפש – PEACE OF MIND

When בני ישראל receives the עשרת הדברות, they are told, “זכור את יום השבת לקדשו” (שמות: 20:8). The תורה then continues, “six days you shall work and you shall do all your labor. The seventh day shall be a day of rest.”

We know that there is hardly ever a time when all of our work is finished. If we are a farmer, there is work that must be done. There are weeds to pull, land to plow, products to harvest (pick) and then sell. If we are in school, we know there is always חומש to review and many more subjects and upcoming tests. How then can ה' tell us that in six days we should do all our work? Why didn't the Torah say that for six days we should do our work without the word “all” being used in the דבור (commandment)?

The מכילתא, the oldest פירוש (commentary) on ספר שמות gives us an interesting answer. It tells us that in order to completely appreciate שבת, we have to feel as if absolutely all our work is done.

When all work is totally finished, we can have true peace of mind (מנוחת הנפש). We can then put aside all thoughts of work, jobs, financial concerns, errands and the other distractions of the world. שבת is a מדה that we can work on in order to truly fulfill the fourth commandment and appreciate the beautiful gift of שבת.



Peace of mind is an important tool for getting along in life. We can never enjoy or appreciate what we have if we are always worried about something.

ה' gave us the gift of שבת, but only those who have peace of mind can enjoy it. Our worries and concerns will not go away, but the “off time” during שבת may put us in a better frame of mind to deal with them.



A man and his wife were preparing for their daughter's wedding when they learned of the sudden illness of a close relative. The wife was so distressed about the uncertainty of the condition that she could not completely enjoy the wedding. Throughout the שמחה, she looked upset and even spoke in an unfriendly manner to several people.

Her son-in-law's parents thought that the woman was angry with them. They began to feel that perhaps the girl's mother thought her daughter was too good for their son. They left the wedding angry and didn't talk to the כלה's parents for several years.

The friction between the families was a direct result of the כלה's mother's frame of mind during the wedding. Had she been able to be honest about her worries and to try and put her feelings aside for the evening, she would have been able to truly enjoy the wedding. Not only did she miss a very special occasion, her worries about a situation that was out of her control for the evening caused a needless falling-out with the חתן's family.

פרשת משפטים



פרשת משפטים teaches us the many laws (דינים) of how people should treat one another. These laws of לחבירו בין אדם discuss the laws of honesty and tell us how one is judged and punished for different crimes. The תורה teaches us laws regarding other people's property or money, the laws regarding missing objects, the laws of being a witness, and the laws pertaining to borrowing money. We learn about the ביכורים, bringing the first fruits to the המקדש בית, in this פרשה as well. We also learn the laws about coming to the המקדש בית three times each year - פסח, שבועות, סוכות. At the end of the פרשה, when בני ישראל accept the תורה with a resounding נעשה ונשמע, משה goes up into the clouds to receive the לוחות. He is there for 40 days and nights.

PARSHA FACTS:

This פרשה discusses many מצוות and laws. Some are listed here:

1. Laws regarding גר.
2. Laws regarding lending money to people in need.
3. Laws about helping unload another's animal.
4. Laws about שמיטה.
5. Laws about caring for one's workers.
6. Laws about repayment for damages.
7. Laws for בית דין and punishments they must carry out.
8. Laws about courts.
9. Laws about בשר וחלב - בשרות.
10. Laws about observance of the שלש רגלים (פסח, שבועות, סוכות).
11. Laws about bringing ביכורים to the המקדש בית.
12. Laws forbidding the making of treaties with the 7 עמים in כנען.



Our תורה is made up of two types of מצוות, those that are בין אדם למקום - between man and ה' and those that are בין אדם לחבירו - between man and man.



תלמידים once bought a donkey from an Arab. A short time later, one of his תלמידים found a small package in a pocket of the donkey's saddle. When he unwrapped it, he was surprised to find a beautiful diamond. The תלמיד was so excited. The stone looked like it could be worth a lot of money. If his Rebbe sold it, he would never want for anything. And just imagine how many מצוות he could perform with this fortune!

His Rebbe's reaction to the news was not at all what the תלמיד expected.

He shook his head, saying that honesty was more important than any מצוה he could perform with the money. He went off to find the Arab to return the stone to him. The Arab was astounded that anyone would be so honest. A true קידוש ה' was created. It is possible the Arab would never have missed the diamond or known where it was, but שמעון ר' knew that he had not earned it. His יראת ה' and desire to follow ה' laws overrode any personal desire he may have had.

פרשת דרומה



‘ה commanded משה רבינו to build a משכן, a special place to house ‘ה’s holy קדש. As בני ישראל traveled through the desert they would have a temporary המקדש – a special place to daven and feel ‘ה’s presence. Though ‘ה is everywhere, human beings feel more comfortable when they can daven in a special place or building (like a shul).

was chosen to build the actual משכן. All of בני ישראל helped him by supplying gifts like metals, fabrics, wool, oil, spices and precious stones.

Within the פרשה, there is a description of all the different rooms and furnishings of the משכן. We learn about the חצר (courtyard), the קדש and the קדש קדשים. We learn that there was a מזבח (altar) on the inside of the קדש as well as one on the outside, and the שלחן and מנורה are described in detail.

The קדש קדשים was the special room that housed the ארון and could be only entered by the כהן גדול, only on יום כפור. In this ארון were the two לוחות that משה had brought down from הרים סיני. The instructions to construct all the utensils and the measurements used to build the משכן are discussed in full detail in this פרשה.

PARSHA FACTS:

כיור, מזבח – חצר (the outer court) contained

מזבח הקטרת, שלחן, מנורה – קדש

לוחות (which held the לוחות) – ארון – קדש הקדשים



בני ישראל were asked to make two separate contributions towards the building of the משכן.

The amount of the first contribution was the same for everyone, rich or poor. The amount of the second contribution was left to the individual; each person gave what he could afford. This was meant to teach a lesson for the future. By donating a set amount, a person acknowledges that everything he has is from ‘ה, and though he may be poor, there are others who are more needy. The second donation teaches us that though everyone must give צדקה, the wealthy are expected to give more to help the poor. By doing so, they show הברכה הטובה to ‘ה for their blessings and riches.

The תורה not only teaches us to give צדקה, it teaches us how to give.

Did you know that the best way to give צדקה is to...

1. Give a poor person a job so he can support himself and not need צדקה.
2. Give in such a way that the giver doesn't know who received it and the recipient doesn't know who it came from. This makes it less embarrassing.
3. Give before the needy person has to ask for צדקה.
4. Give with a friendly smile and a pleasant attitude. The lowest level of giving צדקה is to give it grudgingly.



Rav Landau, the Rav of Prague, was once approached by two important men who were collecting money to free Jewish people from jail. Knowing that the מצווה of redeeming captives “פדיון שבויים” is an important one, Rabbi Landau asked how much money was needed. The reply was 300 gold coins. Rabbi Landau immediately went to his office and, to the surprise of the men, returned with 290 coins. He explained that חז"ל teach us not only to give צדקה, but to share the opportunity with others. “I have given you almost the entire amount,” said Rabbi Landau. “Let us collect the last ten coins from other Jews so they too can be part of this incredible מצווה.”

פרשת תצוה



This פרשה tells us how אהרן and his sons - איתמר, אלעזר, אביהו, אביהו, אביהו, אביהו - were chosen to be כהנים to serve ה' in the משכן. They were told about the special clothing that had to be sewn both for the כהן גדול and כהן גדול and about the important jobs they would have. משה anointed אהרן, his brother, with oil. The responsibilities of the כהנים were many, among them the bringing of קרבנות each day. The most special קרבן, brought both in the morning and afternoon of each day, was the קטרת. This קרבן was not brought as תשובה for עברות like other קרבנות, but purely to bring joy and happiness.

PARSHA FACTS:

Every כהן who served in the בית המקדש wore four garments. They were called הדיוט.

All four garments were made of white linen.

1. כתונת - shirt 2. מכנסים - knickers 3. אבנט - belt 4. מגבעת - hat (turban)

The כהן גדול wore all these garments plus an additional four golden garments.

They were called the זהב.

1. מעיל - coat 2. אפוד - apron 3. חשן - chest plate 4. ציץ - head plate (headband)



Why is it that משה's name, which up until this פרשה was found in many פסוקים is not found anywhere in תצוה? The בעל הטורים gives us an answer that teaches us an important lesson. When the Jews worshiped the עגל הזהב, the Golden Calf, ה' became angry and wanted to destroy the entire nation. משה davened to ה' and begged Him to forgive בני ישראל. He said that if ה' was so angry with His favorite nation, משה did not want his name to be written anywhere in the whole תורה. ה', of course, did forgive בני ישראל, but prayers are special. ה' listens to them all carefully. Just as He answered משה's prayer to spare בני ישראל, He also answered the other prayer to a small degree. משה's name was not omitted from the whole תורה, but it was left out of this one פרשה.

A powerful תפילה sends our words soaring up to the heavens. Although they seem invisible they are real! Whenever we pray, something very special is happening. Our prayers are heading straight up to the King of Kings! Imagine there was a special time and place one could go to speak to the President of the United States. Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing? With ה', we are given that chance every day! Unlike kings and presidents, ה' listens closely to each and every one of our requests and He finds a way to answer each and every תפילה. Even if we don't see it answered in a way we expect, it is always answered. Let us never forget that ה' watches over us, cares for us, and listens to every single תפילה.



Many years ago, there was a terrible drought in ארץ ישראל. The leaders of that generation came to חוני המעגל, a great צדיק, and begged him to pray for rain. חוני took a stick and drew a circle on the ground. He then stood inside the circle and, turning towards שמים, cried out to ה'. "Your children, בני ישראל are suffering from this drought and have turned to me for help. I am like a You, ה', for I hold your תורה and מצוות very dear. I am making a שבועה - a promise, in Your great name, that I will not move from this circle until You take pity on Your hungry children." As soon as he finished his prayer, it began to drizzle, small drops of rain falling from the sky. His תלמידים said to him, "Rebbe, ה' has given enough to release you from your promise. But this is not enough rain to make our plants grow." חוני המעגל turned to heaven once again saying, "ה', this is not the type of rain I asked for." Heavy clouds formed in the sky and gushed forth torrents of rain. The תלמידים ran to their Rebbe and begged him to pray once more. חוני said, "גשמי ברכה will be destroyed by such heavy rain. I plead to you to send rain of blessing. With this the rains stopped and the winds blew away the clouds, letting the sun shine forth. "צדיק גזור ודה' מקיים" - "A צדיק decrees and ה' fulfills".

פרשת כי תשא



SUMMARY OF THE PARSHA

Each male over the age of twenty was asked to give half a שקל. These coins were used to count בני ישראל. Later this silver was used for the sockets forming the structure of the Mishkan. בני ישראל and בצלאל were assigned the major job of building the Mishkan. In this פרשה we learn משה רבינו had been up on הר סיני for forty days and forty nights. The ערב רב feared משה had died and would not be returning. They spread their fear among the people. Out of confusion, they begged אהרן to create an image as a leader for them. אהרן trying to gain some time, had all the gold collected and thrown into a fire. A Golden Calf was fashioned, and the Jews began to sing, dance and worship this image. When משה came down from הר סיני on י"ז תמוז, he threw down the לוחות at the sight of this עבירה. He destroyed the Golden Calf, punished those that worshiped it and begged ה' for מחילה. משה went back up on הר סיני for another forty days and nights to receive the second set of לוחות. He returned on כיפור. משה had not needed to drink or eat during those forty days and nights and when he returned, his face shone with a radiant glow. Thereafter, he kept his face covered at all times, except when he was speaking to ה' or בני ישראל.

PARSHA FACTS:

1. The collection of the שקל to count מחצית השקל בני ישראל marked the third time they had been counted. The first time was when בני ישראל's family traveled from מצרים to כנען; they numbered seventy people. The second time was when בני ישראל left מצרים; they were 600,000 strong. The third counting took place now, in the מדבר.

2. משה teaches His 13 מדות (qualities) of רחמנות (mercy) to use when davening to Him at times that בני ישראל need His רחמים.

ואמת-8 ורב חסד-7 ארך אפים-6 וחנן-5 רחום-4 קל-3 ה'-2 ה'-1 ונקה-13 וחטאה-12 ופשע-11 נושא עון-10 וצר חסד לאלפים-9



POINTS TO PONDER

בני ישראל explain that during the counting of בני ישראל, each person brought his own coin specifically to teach us that each person counts. חז"ל also tell us that each man gave only half a שקל and not a whole, because the combining of every two מחצית השקל to make a whole teaches us the importance of אחדות.

בני ישראל is unique in the way we all help one another. We have so many גמ"ח funds and groups. We never think just of ourselves; we care about others. No individual is complete when alone. People need each other, and ה' loves אחדות - togetherness and friendship.

Throughout your school day, you probably help many friends in many ways. Sometimes you do little things like picking up a friend's notebook that fell to the floor or lending someone a pencil. Or you might hold the door for a friend or help someone carry a heavy schoolbag. At other times you do things that take more time and effort, like helping someone figure out a hard math problem or helping a friend find a lost possession. When we help one another, we are brought closer together - אחדות - and we can accomplish so much.

When a group of men join to daven, the individual תפילה is joined together and the one תפילה that results is a stronger and more powerful one when it reaches שמים. When a person davens separately, ה' might closely examine who he is and whether his davening was really sincere. When the תפילות come together as one, ה' takes the entire group into consideration. ה' love of אחדות makes Him consider our תפילות in a more favorable way.



A STORY

There was once a king who wished to present a gift to one of two towns under his rule, but he couldn't decide which one. When the two towns under consideration heard of the king's dilemma, they each began to come up with ways to win his favor. The first town decided that each day a different citizen would send a present to the king. While the king was pleased with the steady stream of gifts, because he had the time to examine each one, he found fault with many of them. The second town collected gifts from everyone and sent the king one enormous bundle. Since he did not examine each gift separately, the king was far more impressed with this town's offering, and it received his special present.

כוננה ה' carefully examines them for the proper שמים one at a time. When they come up with a group - behind them. Individual lapses are outweighed by the overall intent of the מנין.

KIDS4CHAI

For more information call Chai Lifeline: 732-719-1772 | email: kids4chai@chailifeline.org