



## KOLLEL UPDATES

### Parenting with Chassidus

A packed crowd of close to 200 men and women joined the Kollel for *Parenting with Chassidus*, a chinuch evening with Rabbi Yossi Paltiel.

Rabbi Paltiel addressed some of the challenges involved in Chassidische Chinuch and emphasized the need to instill the value of discipline and hard work in our children, alongside the joy and excitement of Yiddishkeit.

A beautifully presented Melave Malka of hot soup, bagels and salads made the evening a perfect night out.

### "Kosher" Switch?

30 men joined Rabbi Michael Stern for part one of the Shabbos technologies series.

Rabbi Stern addressed the status of the recently marketed "Kosher" switch. After analysing the arguments put forward by the developers Rabbi Stern proceeded to show through Halacha and Poskim how the switch is "not so Kosher" and is unsuitable for Shabbos use.

Part two will address what is described as the "Shabbos App". 8:30pm this Tuesday night in the Kollel Beis Medrash.



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## Excuse me, how much does this cost?

In Parshas Behar we learn about two types of forbidden behaviours that are hurtful to others. One is *Onaas Mammon* - wronging another by over-charging or under-paying. The second type is *Onaas Devorim*, wronging or aggrieving another person through our speech. This includes embarrassing, misleading, insulting or upsetting others through our speech.

*Onaas Devorim* is considered worse than *Onaas Mammon*. Whereas an overcharged amount can be repaid, the affect of hurtful words can not be recompensed. Further, whereas *Onaas Mammon* affects a person financially, *Onaas Devorim* affects them personally.

The Mishna (Bava Metzia 58b) brings examples of speech or conduct which violates the Torah prohibition of *Onaas Devorim*. These are codified as Halacha in Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpot Simon 228.

The first example in the Mishna is that one may not ask a merchant how much an item costs when they have no intention of buying it or do not have the money to do so. Sefer Hachinuch explains that this seemingly insignificant practise highlights the great lengths that the Torah goes to be sensitive to others' feelings.

The Rishonim offer various reasons why such behaviour is forbidden.

Meiri explains that it could cause the merchant financial loss. The browser, feeling uncomfortable to say that he has no intention of buying, will claim that his reluctance is because the price is too high. The merchant will lower the price as a result and be deprived of his income from other customers.

Rashbam suggests that another potential customer will not want to purchase the product (if it is an only product), since they presume that the browser is planning to buy it. Even when there are multiple products available, the browser is taking away the storekeeper from other genuine customers who may leave or not enter the store because they see that it is busy.

Ritva writes that when the store-keeper realises that the browser had no interest in buying and was just

messing him around, he will be aggrieved. This explanation is brought in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. The Raava'd says that this is a form of *Gneivas Daas*. It is also a form of stealing time.

Sefer Chassidim writes that the opposite is true as well. One may not advertise or pretend to be selling something when in fact there is no real intention to sell.

*Onaas Devorim* is also violated when the enquiries are made over the Telephone or email.

An example of this type of *Onaas Devorim* would be asking questions to a real-estate agent at an open-house when there is no real intention to buy and one is just checking the "value of the market".

### When is it permissible?

If one explains at the outset that they are not planning on buying, the *issur* will not apply (one may still not take up the storekeepers time or take their attention away from other customers).

Some Poskim say that if one is asking a sales person and not the store owner there is no problem, since the sales person is not affected if no purchase is made. However, if they are paid a commission or if you will be taking them away from other customers it is forbidden.

If one is genuinely interested or may consider buying the product one may make enquiries about the product and pricing and shop around at multiple stores.

If it is the nature of the particular type of business and is therefore expected that browsers can ask questions "out of interest" or if the proprietor genuinely does not mind, the *issur* will not apply.

### Browsing

Entering a store to browse may raise the hopes of the storekeeper. This will generally only apply in small stores where each customer who enters will be noticed. One should declare that they are just browsing. In larger stores one may browse. However they should not occupy the sales staff. Browsing online will be permissible.





# Shemittah, a lesson in parenting

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

What does farming have to do with parenting? The Mitzvah of Shemittah from this week's Parsha offers a powerful message in how to approach raising our children.

*“And it will be when you enter the Land that I am giving you, the land shall rest a Shabbos for Hashem. For six years you shall sow your fields and for six years you shall prune your vineyards, and you shall gather in its produce. And the Seventh year shall be holy for you, a Shabbos for the Land.”*

**“And it will be when you enter the Land...”**

When parents bring a child into the world, they are ‘entering into the Land’ to plant and raise a flourishing Jewish family.

**“That I am giving you...”**

This is the land that I have given you. Hashem has entrusted us as parents with the merit and the awesome responsibility of cultivating a Jewish soul – His child.

**“The land shall rest a Shabbos for Hashem.”**

The first Shemittah was only observed after 14 years of conquering and settling Eretz Yisroel and after the 6 preliminary years of work. Nonetheless the Torah seems to instruct that Shemittah be observed immediately upon their arrival.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the Torah is setting up the goal, which must be established before the work begins. During the six years of reaping and harvesting, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture; that we exist in this world to infuse it with G-dliness. The Posuk teaches that our focus must constantly be on the seventh year when the land must lie fallow and the farmers have respite to engage in more spiritual activities such as Torah study.

Parenting is the same. When raising our children, we need to have a goal, a vision to work towards. What do we want to raise our children to be? What values do we want them to possess as they grow up?

These goals must be resolved and appreciated from the very outset, even before the child enters the world. Then, everything we do in raising, disciplining and educating the child, including the example we set for them, must be in congruence with this goal.

As Jews, the greatest priority in raising our children is that they be connected to Hashem through observance of Torah and Mitzvos. Our goal should be that the ‘land’ be a ‘Shabbos for Hashem’. We hope and pray that each child will be devoted and attached to Hashem and His service; that each child be a spiritual being – a *Shabbosdig* child – where Yiddishkeit permeates his or her very being.

This is not an easy objective when raising a child in a materialistic world. How is it possible to ensure that after all our efforts, when our children grow up, that they will be the *Shabbosdig* child that we so much want them to be?

**“For six years you shall sow your fields and for six years you shall prune your vineyards...”**

Chinuch, much like farming, takes a lot of hard work. Raising children takes effort. There is no ‘day off’ from parenting. We have to invest the time, energy, love and devotion to this awesome and holy task.

The word used for sowing, *tizra*, refers specifically to grain (*zera*). Grain is the staple of a man’s diet. Bread represents that which is necessary for survival. On the other hand, vineyards produce grapes which ferment into wine – a beverage of luxury and delight. *“Wine brings joy to the hearts of man and also to Hashem”*. Wine and fruit are not consumed out of need. They are imbibed for pleasure.

The ‘bread and water’ of a Jewish home is the basics necessary to survive. Every Jewish home must observe Shabbos, kosher, family purity – observance as defined in the Shulchan Aruch. Every home must also have the experience of Torah study. Without them, the home cannot be a Yiddishe home and we cannot hope to raise Yiddishe children.

However, when teaching our children the value of Torah and serving Hashem, we

cannot suffice with the bare minimum in our observance if we desire to raise children who are committed and passionate. We need to bring in the dimension of ‘wine’.

Yiddishkeit should be alive and exciting. In keeping the Mitzvos, we go beyond the basic requirement, looking for opportunities to enhance our service of Hashem with Hiddur Mitzvah. We need to be passionate about our Torah study, davening and keeping of the Mitzvos. These need to be infused with *chayus* – vitality. This is in contrast to doing it because we have to, looking to be *Yotzai* and “get away” with the most basic standard.

In taking care of our children’s physical needs, would we feed them just bread and water? Would we suffice with the bare necessities when it comes to their clothing and toys? How about with regards to the furnishings in the homes that we build?

Certainly not! Then how much more so when carrying out the most sacred and primary role that we have of raising our children to be inspired, connected and observant Jews.

The specific activities of *tizra* (sowing) and *tizmor* (pruning) represent two different but necessary approaches in our Chinuch. Like sowing, pruning is also necessary for the healthy development of plants. One who prunes on Shabbos is also liable for the Melacha of planting, since pruning promotes the growth of the plant.

Parenting requires *tizra* – active positive engagement, planting and instilling our values. We also need *tizmor*, to prune away negative influences which may be harmful or obstruct our children’s spiritual development.

We find ourselves in a Shemittah year. Let us reflect on our ‘farming’ techniques and on how our ‘produce’ is growing. Let us invest the effort – the ‘grains’ and the ‘grapes’ – all the while keeping our goal in the forefront of our minds. Then we will have the nachas of seeing our young saplings grow and bare ‘fruit’, raising a new generation of Jewish children who are ‘Shabbos laHashem’.

(Based on a Sicha from the Rebbe Parshas Behar 5735)