

# ONE MAY LEARN A SPIRITUAL LESSON (EVEN) FROM TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 92, Selling Non-Kosher Foods. Good Shabbos!*

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## One May Learn A Spiritual Lesson (Even) From Taking Out the Garbage

This week's Parsha contains the mitzvah of offering the Korban Olah [Burnt Offering]. Aharon and his children were given the tremendous responsibility of the Service of the Temple. The first task that Aharon and his children are instructed to perform is the mitzvah of Terumas HaDeshen -- the removal of the ashes that were consumed by the previous night's fire on top of the Mizbayach [altar].

The Chovos Halevovos [Duties of the Heart, by R. Bachye Ibn Paquda; 11th century Spain; classic sefer on ethics and mussar in Judaism] says that the rationale is that the Torah is particularly careful that people not let things go to their heads, lest they become ba'ale ga'avah (haughty). It would only be natural for Aharon to consider himself special. He was one of the select few who had the merit of performing the Temple Service! Nevertheless, the Torah instructed him that the first thing that he must do every morning is -- remove the ashes! The function of this job, according to the Chovos Halevovos, is to lower the self-image of the Kohanim and remove haughtiness from their hearts.

If we remember this concept, we will not let other thoughts, which could mislead us into believing that we are better than we really are, go to our heads.

### The Torah Is Concerned With the Pride of the Poor

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The Torah is also very meticulous regarding the pride of the Ani (poor person). On the one hand, the Torah is worried lest Aharon the Kohen Gadol become haughty. On the other hand, the Torah is also worried that the impoverished individual should not become despondent and emotionally broken.

There is an interesting Gemara in Bava Kama. The Gemara says that when the Jews would bring the

first fruits (bikkurim) to the Kohanim in Yerushalayim [Jerusalem], the rich would bring their bikkurim in gold and silver baskets. The poor people, however, brought their meager crops in baskets that were made out of reeds. They could not afford gold baskets.

The Gemara says that the Kohanim returned the gold and silver baskets to the wealthy people but kept the reed baskets from the poor people. The Gemara says this is an application of the old rule that (loosely translated from the Aramaic) the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It's ironic! The rich fellow's basket is returned to him, but the poor person's basket is not returned!

Rav Aharon Bakst explains that the reasoning is as follows. The rich have orchards full of fruit and bring large quantities of fruit to give to the Kohen. The poor person has a meager crop and probably has a very small quantity of bikkurim to offer. By keeping the fruit in the basket, at least the bikkurim look a little more substantial. The Torah says that we should let the Kohen keep the basket and let the Ani [poor person] suffer the financial loss, in order to keep the Ani's pride intact. This is an example of how far the Torah is willing to go to avoid shaming a person!

A number of years ago, a person who I know was going to raise money for Hachnasas Kallah [bridal expenses], for another person, in the recipient's own home town. The collector came to me with the following question: If he told people for whom he was soliciting, there was no doubt that he could raise a significant sum of money, because the person was a known and well- respected individual. However, if he would make an anonymous appeal for Hachnasas Kallah, he could not expect to collect so much -- because such appeals are very common. The dilemma was if he should mention the person's name and raise more money, or keep it anonymous and raise less money.

At that time, I asked the Rosh HaYeshiva (Rav Yaakov Ruderman z"tl) which approach should be used for the collection. The Rosh HaYeshiva said, without any hesitation, "It should be anonymous, because a person's honor is worth a great deal."

That is the lesson of the baskets. A person's self-respect is very important. It is even worth losing money to protect it. Money can always be replaced, but a person's honor and pride are much harder to repair.

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Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.

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This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Tzav are provided below:

- Tape # 004 - When to Make the Bracha of HaGomel
- Tape # 049 - Purim: Shalach Manos
- Tape # 092 - Selling Non-Kosher Foods
- Tape # 140 - Pessach: The Mitzvah of Daled Kosos
- Tape # 187 - Pessach: Does Marror Require a Kezais
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