

פרשה וזאת הברכה. A wonderful פרשה. I saw something very interesting while preparing for this. It's a remarkable thing which we don't pay much attention to. At the very end of וילך, משה רבינו is finishing giving מוסר to כולל ישראל. Giving מוסר to somebody so that they'll listen ain't easy, and often times they even resent it, even if only unconsciously. Now of course, משה רבינו could tell כולל ישראל anything. He always was their beloved leader. But still, there's the question: were they really being מקבל what he said? Did he perhaps suspect, even for a moment, that they might resent him for giving that מוסר? And what did he do even with that אמינא in mind? וזאת הברכה, he gave them a ברכה. He bentched them like a father would bentch his children.

Now, at the very end of the parshas it says וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד ה' (34:5). In his הספד for the חפץ חיים, the גדול of his generation - and in my very humble opinion, the greatest leader of the 20th century - R' Elchonon Wasserman questioned why משה, the greatest person who ever lived, was given a הספד of only two words, עֶבֶד ה'. Surely, the one who took them out of מצרים, brought the תורה down from סיני, sacrificed his entire life for the welfare of his ציבור, deserves a little bit more of a הספד than עֶבֶד ה'?

R' Elchonon gave a very clever, למדיש, beautiful answer based on the Gemara in ע"ב פ"ה דף פסחים. We know there's a principal קנה רבו עֶבֶד קנה רבו - Whatever an עבד acquires, belongs to his master. Therefore, if the תורה says that משה רבינו was an עֶבֶד ה', it is giving us a tremendous עדות that משה רבינו was a real עֶבֶד ה'. Why? Because every single thing that he did in his life, מה שקנה עֶבֶד, all of the things that he acquired were strictly for his master's sake, for Hashem's sake. As such, these few words offer משה רבינו the greatest praise of all.

Although we cannot reach the unparalleled level that משה רבינו reached, that's not to say that we are unable to make every action in our lives into a holy act. R' Shimshon Pincus teaches us a lesson that there's nothing pareve from what we do. Everything can become a מצוה. For example, says R' Pincus, if I put butter on my toast in the morning, why am I doing it? Am I doing it in order to say ברכת המוציא with a greater appreciation of the words? Then it's a big מצוה. But if I'm doing it for no purpose other than to indulge, I enjoy butter on my bread, so what good is it? What am I doing it for? Just to have הנאה? It's a very פשוט example, but it gets right to the point. Every simple thing that we do can make us an עֶבֶד ה'. It just takes a minute of concentration, a minute of thought before we act.

Everybody knows you should always think before you open your mouth. Not just before you open your mouth, but we should think before everything that we do. The more that we learn to think like this throughout our day, we, little us guys, little pipsqueaks, can learn to emulate the ways of משה and lead a life full of קדושה, all to become a better עֶבֶד ה'. What a way to end the תורה.

