



Imrey Noam

Parashat Bereshit

Shabbat Mevarchim Cheshvan

October 10

29 Tishrei

5787

SHABBAT TIMES



City	Candle lighting Oct. 9	Shabbat ends Oct. 10
New York	6:06	7:04
Los Angeles	6:08	7:02
Chicago	6:00	6:58

Local time in each city · All times PM

Don't Leave the Door Open

A thought on the parashah
Rabbi Reuven Kuklin



"Sin crouches at the door; its desire is for you, but you can rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)

The Dubner Maggid quotes the Vilna Gaon: the evil inclination can gain a hold on us only where we leave an opening. It suggests a sin; instead of rejecting it, we hesitate: perhaps just this time? While disobeying G-d remains an option, the door is open, and temptation can overcome us. As our Sages say, "A breach invites the thief."

Rejecting temptation outright leaves it nothing to grasp. A firm decision — this is simply not an option — closes the door.

This explains why righteous men such as Boaz and David swore not to sin when facing a test. Breaking their oath was unthinkable, removing their uncertainty. In his commentary on Proverbs (2:7), the Vilna Gaon similarly describes one who follows the Torah wholeheartedly as having no inner intellectual battle.

The Torah teaches this approach through the words "You cannot," as in "You cannot eat within your gates the tithe of your grain" (Deuteronomy 12:17). This means "You are not permitted." But it



also hints at an attitude: regard the forbidden act as impossible. Righteous people applied this even to seemingly minor prohibitions.

After Rabbi Moshe Feinstein finished the Amidah, he was told that an important caller from abroad wanted him. But another Jew was still praying nearby. Reaching the telephone meant walking in front of him, which Jewish law forbids. The rabbi said he could not come. They insisted: the call was important! He replied, "What can I do? There is a wall in my way. How can I walk through a wall?" For him, the prohibition was a real wall.

CHESHVAN: NOW IT IS OUR TURN

Recall the Song of Songs: "Listen! My beloved is knocking: 'Open to me...'" She hesitates: "I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on? I have washed my feet; how can I soil them?" Then "my beloved stretched his hand through the opening, and my heart stirred for him." Seeing his hand awakens a surge of love. She rises to open, but "my beloved had slipped away." She goes searching: "I sought him, but did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer" (5:2-6).

Why leave just when she responds? Was that not why he reached out? Now he wants her to seek, yearn and make an effort. Her search deepens their love.

As we know, the entire Song of Songs is an allegory of the love between G-d and the Jewish people. These verses illuminate our season: festival-filled Tishrei gives way to Cheshvan, with no festivals or fixed fasts observed by all Israel. Hence the interpretation "bitter Cheshvan" for Marcheshvan. Why such a contrast?

In Tishrei, G-d figuratively reaches out His hand, awakening our love. Now He awaits our response: seeking His closeness through prayer, Torah study and mitzvot on ordinary days. The love awakened by the festivals can become a love we choose to live daily. Now it is our turn.

Why Did Rabbi Feinstein Hide His Pain?

Caring for another's feelings

Rabbi Reuven Kuklin

In Parashat Bereshit we read: "G-d created man in His image." (Genesis 1:27)

Rabbi Akiva teaches in Pirkei Avot: "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of G-d" (3:14). By respecting a person created in G-d's image, we also honor that person's Creator.

The Talmud relates that Rabbi Eliezer's disciples visited him during his illness, asking: "Our teacher, teach us the paths of life through which we may merit the World to Come." His first instruction: "Be mindful of the dignity of your friends" (Berachot 28b).

The Torah sages treated others with extraordinary sensitivity. Consider Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. After class at the yeshiva, a student would drive him home. One day, closing the car door behind his teacher, the student accidentally trapped the rabbi's finger.

Sharp pain shot through Rabbi Feinstein's hand, but he neither cried out nor spoke. While the student stood there, he did not even try to release his finger. Only when the student turned toward the driver's seat did he quietly open the door, free his finger and cover his bleeding hand.

They set off. Unaware of the accident, the student began asking questions, eager to learn during these precious minutes together. Despite his pain, Rabbi Feinstein answered calmly and clearly, as though nothing had happened.



About ten minutes later, they arrived. The rabbi said goodbye, waited until the car had driven away, and only then sought medical attention.

The doctor asked how it had happened. Hearing about the car door, he was astonished: how had the rabbi endured such pain without crying out?

Rabbi Feinstein explained: the student had not noticed. A cry would have made him realize he had hurt his teacher, causing shame and distress. To spare him that burden, the rabbi remained silent. His finger hurt terribly, but he also saw the pain his student might feel.

The doctor marveled: even in acute pain, the rabbi had considered the feelings of someone who had accidentally hurt him. The student never knew how thoughtfully he had been treated.

We may not possess such self-control. But we can learn this

sensitivity: before correcting someone, consider how our words will sound; before rebuking, remember the heart that will hear us. A gentler phrase, a private conversation or a pause before responding can preserve another's dignity. Respect for the Divine image is expressed in these small moments, too.

HELPING WITHOUT EMBARRASSING

One day in New York, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein met a yeshiva head he knew from Israel. Asked what had brought him to America, the visitor explained that he was traveling from city to city, collecting donations for his yeshiva.

"Will you be going to Boston?" asked Rabbi Feinstein. "Could you do me a favor?" "Of course! It would be a great honor," the visitor replied. The rabbi went inside, wrote a few lines and sealed the letter in an envelope.

Returning, he handed it to the yeshiva head. "When you have an opportunity, please give this to so-and-so. I would be very grateful." The visitor

gladly accepted. He felt privileged to be helping one of the generation's greatest Torah scholars.

Only on arriving in Boston did he discover the letter's purpose. It was addressed to a wealthy man, asking him to give generously to the very yeshiva for which the bearer had undertaken his long and difficult journey.

Rabbi Feinstein had considered not only how to help, but how the help would feel. Asking for support and receiving it can be uncomfortable. He arranged matters so delicately that the beneficiary left feeling he was the one doing a favor. The assistance preserved the recipient's dignity.