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THE COW MASHAL

Our first *mashal* of the night is about a cow and her *balabusta*.

Once upon a time, there was a farmer who worked very hard all week, as did his wife. Every Motzoei Shabbos, the farmer would go down to the well and haul up a bucket of water. He would bring it to his wife, who would use it to wash the *cholent* pot and then the kitchen floor. Afterward, she would take the dirty water and bring it to the cow.

The cow loved and looked forward to her weekly treat of water filled with bits of *cholent* and whatever scraps her mistress had mopped up!

One Motzoei Shabbos, as usual, the farmer's wife washed the *cholent* pot and then the floor. But as she was walking to the cow with the bucket, lo and behold, she dropped it and all its contents! The woman shrugged her shoulders, said, "*Gam zu letovah*," and went to bed.

But the cow...

The cow simply could not understand what the delay was about. "Where is my weekly treat?" she mooed. She even tilted her head to try to see the heavens, and yes indeed, there were the three stars. For sure, Shabbos was long over! What could have happened to her delicious *cholent* water?

Finally, she figured it out: "The *balabusta* must have drunk it herself!"

SIMILES, METAPHORS, AND THEN SOME

There are infinite *meshalim* used to explain Moshiach and for a Lubavitcher, that's no surprise! Chassidus uses *meshalim* for everything. And sometimes we try to come up with the best *meshalim* to explain the *meshalim*. But with Chassidus we also know that the *meshalim* themselves are not random, are not simply a means to an end, but an end unto themselves. The *nimshal* and *mashal* both exist, albeit on different planes of existence.

A mother-child relationship is not just a fitting way to describe the dynamic between our *sechel* and *middos* in which our intellect births our emotions. The mother-child relationship is yet another manifestation of *sechel* and *middos*, of *mashpia* and *mekabel*, of Hashem and Bnei Yisroel.

And perhaps this is why there are so many, many *meshalim* for Moshiach.

To clue us in to a reality beyond our comprehension. To explain that which is unfamiliar with what we can already grasp.

HOW TO PLAN A PARTY

In any relationship, the question is, what does the other person *really* want? Like the cow, I sometimes project what I'd appreciate onto others. Here's a *mashal* for the *mashal*:

This is a principle I try to keep in mind when giving a gift,

paying a compliment, or planning a party. Let's take planning a party and break it down into three steps as our *mashal* for the *mashal* of the home-building Hashem asks of us and the Rebbe describes to us, first in the *maamar* of *Basi Legani* and then in a Yud Shvat *sichah* (*Likutei Sichos*, Vol. 16):

Step 1: The Birthday Girl's Vibe

Hashem asks that the dwelling place He desires should be “*sheyehei lo*,” for Him, His essence.

Imagine planning a party game and making the questions all about everyone *but* the birthday girl! Imagine planning an art activity when the guest of honor is entirely left-brained! It's important to consider said friend's personality, what makes her who she is, and find ways to show that you thought about her when planning, that these aren't just games or activities or *shtick* that could have been prepared for anyone, it was prepared just for *her*.

During the year of class *bas mitzvahs*, I remember my mother, every time she dropped me off at another party, giving the same reminder: “This *bas mitzvah* is for the *bas mitzvah* girl, not for you and your friends. Make the girl of the night feel special, dance with her, and ensure that she is the center of attention!”

We fulfill Hashem's desire to be served when we serve Him without ulterior motives, for the sake of pleasing Him alone, and this allows for step two...

Step 2: A Set Time

Hashem asks that the dwelling place He desires should be a “*dirah*,” that His essence should be found here in His home *permanently*.

We pop in and out of *l'chaims*. But Hashem wants all His guests and all His children there to celebrate with Him forever, not just for a quick stop-in. For a good friend or a close relative, you take a seat, give their *simchah* your full attention, and show you're here for them for the long haul, at their disposal whenever you're needed.

How is this accomplished? It is only when we serve Hashem for Him alone, not based on personal reasoning, intellect or passions, that our service is permanent and reliable. Because if it is for any other reason, the moment one of those reasons fluctuates, our *avodas Hashem* loses its footing! We're here for the long haul.

Recently, one of my sixth-grade students asked how she can be sure that Torah and *mesorah* are indeed true; she worried

that maybe the texts and all their *meforshim* were just made up by good writers! So I prepared a lesson that would present multiple proofs and explanations. But before we started this philosophical class, I laid down the following: *Kabbalas ol* comes first. Only with that strong foundation can we learn and explore and attempt to understand. And even then, when we finish, the final proof is simply *emunas Hashem*. We are believers. Hashem promises Torah is true and for a Yid, that alone is enough.

Step 3: Location, Location, Location

Hashem asks that the dwelling place He desires should be “*lematah*,” specifically down *here* in the lowest realms, through physical Torah and *mitzvos*, to properly satisfy His desire.

Don't plan a party without a venue! It would be insensitive to throw a party in California for someone who lives in New York, just because *you'll* be in California on her birthday. Do it where *the birthday girl* wants it. Where she'll feel most at home and in her happy place.

This idea of bending over backward to serve Hashem in the ways He sees fit, while common sense enough, could be easy to forget. Like my teachers used to remind us before Pesach break: Find ways to help your parents that are the ways in which they *need* your help, not just the ways in which you *prefer* to help.

We may prefer to only meditate as a way of connecting to Hashem. But He wants us to also verbalize the set words of *tefillah*. We may think it's

admirable to share Torah and Chassidus in whichever channels get the message out, but to Hashem, it matters that it not be by methods that breach His nitty-gritty *halachos* of *tznius* and *yichud*. We need to invest where Hashem wants our investment.

THE COW NIMSHAL

The cow *mashal* was told by my great-uncle Reb Zalman Deitsch, *a"h*, who summarized the lesson as: “Don't assume that just because you like something, someone else likes it, too. Be smarter than the cow.”

Let's serve Hashem as He wishes to be served. Then He'll create an oasis of Moshiach that we can delight in as much as the cow did in her *cholent*-water. ❧

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BE SMARTER
THAN THE
COW.