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לע"נ נעמה חנה ע"ה ב"ר יהודה איסר נ"י



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שבת פרשת וירא ט"ו חשוון תשע"א

### Lesson #7: Clean Up After Yourself

(Prepared by Rabbi Azriel Bodner)

One of the greatest pleasures in life is watching little children when they are at play, going from toy to toy and game to game with seemingly endless energy. That is until it's time to clean up when all of a sudden they have just enough strength to groan out, "I'm too tired."

It may actually be that cleaning up one's mess is not something that one would naturally feel inclined to do, especially since the same mess tends to repeat itself constantly. Nonetheless we always expect, or at least wish, that the messes would somehow get cleaned up.

Obviously when the mess infringes on someone else's lifestyle the need to act responsibly is greater. However the lesson of cleaning up one's mess goes beyond the need to protect the interests of others. It is about respecting the harmony of the world that Hashem provided, and not treating our environment as landfill.

Chazal tell us that after creation Hashem presented the world to Adam Harishon with a request, "this is the world, please don't destroy it." Clearly the message was alluding to a spiritual type of destruction, that man should not misuse his abilities. However, on the simple level, the message was that man must appreciate and protect his environment, and not be destructive.

This idea goes past the basic rule of not littering. Many of the messes that we create are financial or emotional and need to be cleaned up. The Netziv was the Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin. In order to maintain the Yeshiva he had borrowed money that he was expecting to repay through donations. Under pressure to allow other values to infiltrate the Yeshiva he closed the Yeshiva and was left with the debt. In his last years he wrote several letters describing the emotional strain of raising funds for a defunct institution. But he always felt personally responsible to clean up.

Similarly we find that Moshe Rabeinu was given that task of preparing the second set of luchos, as Rashi explains the passuk of P'sal lecha that we read on public fasts. The reason, explains Rashi, is that since Moshe had broken the first luchos it was therefore his responsibility to prepare the second ones. Even though Moshe was lauded for breaking the luchos following the sin of the eigel hazahav, nevertheless since his action separated Bnei Yisroel from Hashem even more, it was upon him to bring them back together.

Our human frailty almost dictates that messes will be made. However, our strength of character, our sense of responsibility, and our appreciation of Hashem's gifts give us the ability and the desire to clean up after ourselves.