

- How do The Gemara and Rashi take it to a larger level? Where has the text gone now?
- Why do you think Rashi links this particular mitzvah to tzedakah? Is he portraying a picture of an ideal, or at least, better society?

❖ **Text Study B: Bikur Holim - Visiting the Sick**

Text 4: Devarim 13:5

<p>You should walk after God and revere none but Him; to observe His mitzvot alone and listen to His voice and worship none but Him and cling to Him.</p>	<p>אַחֲרַי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶתוֹ תִירָאוּ וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּבְקֹלוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּ וְאֶתוֹ תַעֲבְדוּ וְבוֹ תִדְבְּקוּן :</p>
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Text 5: Bereshit 17:24-18:1

<p>Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. Thus Abraham and his son were circumcised on that very day; and all his household, his home born slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.</p> <p>The Lord appeared to him by the terebinth (trees) of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of his tent as the day grew hot.</p>	<p>וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן תִּשְׁעִים וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה בְּהִמְלוֹ בְּשָׂר עָרְלָתוֹ : וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בְּנוֹ בֶּן שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בְּהִמְלוֹ אֶת בְּשָׂר עָרְלָתוֹ : בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִמּוּל אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בְּנוֹ : וְכָל־אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּיתוֹ יָלִיד בַּיִת וּמִקְנֵת־כֶּסֶף מֵאֵת בֶּן נֶכְר נִמְלוּ אִתּוֹ :</p> <p>וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלְנֵי מִמְרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֵהָל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם :</p>
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Discussion Question:

- How do you connect the first half of the sentence in Devarim 13:5 to the second half?
- The Rabbis like to use some of the narratives in the Torah as a source for mitzvah practice. How do they connect the two lines in Bereshit together as an example of “walking in God’s ways”?

Text 6: Babylonian Talmud Sotah 14a

<p>Rabbi Hama said in the name of Rabbi Hanina: “Follow the Lord your God” (Dev. 13:5). What does this mean? Is it possible for a mortal to follow God’s presence? The verse means to teach us that we should follow the attributes (midot) of the Holy One. As God clothes the naked, you should clothe the naked. The Bible teaches that the Holy One visited the sick, so you should visit the sick. The Holy One comforted those who mourn; you should comfort those who mourn. The Holy One buried the dead; you should bury the dead.</p>	<p>ואמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא מאי דכתיב: ”אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו” (דברים יג:ה) וכי אפשר לו לאדם להלך אחר שכינה? והלא כבר נאמר כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא אלא להלך אחר מדותיו של הקב”ה מה הוא מלביש ערומים, אף אתה הלבש ערומים. הקב”ה ביקר חולים, אף אתה בקר חולים. הקב”ה ניחם אבלים, אף אתה נחם אבלים. הקב”ה קבר מתים, אף אתה קבור מתים.</p>
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Discussion Questions:

- Spend a minute thinking about your last experience visiting someone in the hospital. How did you feel?
- What did you talk about with the patient?

Text 6 Babylonian Talmud Berachot 5b

<p>R. Eleazar fell ill and R. Yohanan went in to visit him.</p> <p>He noticed that he was lying in a dark room and he (R. Yohanan) bared his arm and light radiated from it.</p> <p>He noticed that R. Eleazar was weeping, and he said to him: Why do you weep? Is it because you did not study enough Torah? But we have learned that one who sacrifices much and one who sacrifices little have the same merit, provided that the heart is directed to heaven. Is it perhaps lack of sustenance? Not everybody has the privilege to enjoy two tables (the table of wealth and the table of scholarship). Is it perhaps because of [the lack of] children? This is the bone of my tenth son!</p> <p>He replied to him: I am weeping on account of this beauty that is going to rot in the earth.</p> <p>He said to him: On that account you surely have a reason to weep. And they both wept.</p> <p>In the meanwhile he said to him: Are your sufferings welcome to you? — He replied: Neither they nor their reward. He said to him: Give me your hand, and he gave him his hand and he raised him (back to health).</p>	<p>רבי אליעזר חלש על לגביה רבי יוחנן חזא דהוה. קא גני בבית אפל גלייה לדרעיה ונפל נהורא חזייה דהוה.</p> <p>קא בכי ר' אליעזר א"ל: אמאי קא בכית? אי משום תורה דלא אפשת? שנינו אחד המרבה ואחד הממעיט ובלבד שיכוין לבו לשמים. ואי משום מזונאי? לא כל אדם זוכה לשתי שלחנות. ואי משום בני? דין גרמא דעשיראה ביר!</p> <p>א"ל: להאי שופרא דבלי בעפרא קא בכינא.</p> <p>א"ל: על דא ודאי קא בכית. ובכו תרוייהו.</p> <p>אדהכי והכי א"ל: תביבין עליך יסורין? א"ל: לא הן ולא שכרן. א"ל: הב לי ירך יהב ליה ודיה ואוקמיה.</p>
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Discussion Questions:

- What do you think R. Yohanan's assumption was when he came to visit R. Eleazar?
- Does he stop to let R. Eleazar answer any of his questions?
- Why do you think he shows R. Eleazar the bone of his tenth and final son who has died?
- R. Yohanan is known from other sources in the Talmud, to have been a very handsome man? How does this factor into the encounter?
- When does the story reach a climactic moment?
- Who is changed during this visit?
- What does this mitzvah have to say about an encounter between human beings?