



The First Resolution
Parshas Beresheis

It happened during these months last year, I returned home for some bed rest after undergoing surgery. I was delightedly surprised by a delegation of Migdal Ohr students who came to visit me. They presented me with a list of mitzvos, such as learning more or acts of loving kindness which they had accepted upon themselves in my merit.

Deeply moved, I could not have hoped for more than this. I sat and began to go through the long list of mitzvos. My eye caught one name – Tsachi – a student at the Migdal Ohr Metivtah middle school, whose resolution was long and emotional.

I know Tsachi, a good boy who had made great progress in recent years. I called the Metivtah and asked that they arrange for me to meet with him.

He came to my house excitedly, and I shared with him a story which has accompanied me for many years.

In 1971, one of the Lelover Rebbe's followers decided to buy him a new car. A few weeks later a new Peugeot 404 arrived in Bnei Brak, and all the town's children came to see it.

The Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai, needed nothing, not to mention a new car. His followers were waiting to present him with the gift. One day, as the Rebbe lay in bed in pain, he asked to go to the Mikvah. His followers thought this was the right opportunity, but when he emerged from the Mikvah he refused to listen to them and kept his eyes shut.

They became fearful that he was not happy with the new car, and waited for another opportunity.

In our weekly parsha we read about the beginning of the creation.

The holy books discuss the beginning which leads to a continuance, as "a mitzvah brings another mitzvah."

Why is this so? There was nothing before the initial mitzvah? The answer is that the first mitzvah is done by the person himself, and he receives help from Above in fulfilling further commandments.

The Mishnah in Zevachim states: "All offerings which are not offered for their own sake are valid, but they have not

fulfilled the obligations of their owners, except for the Passover offering and the *Chatas* [brought to atone a sin]."

Rabbi Avraham Mordechai, the Ger Rebbe, explains that the Passover offering and the *Chatas* are first commandments. The Israelites were first commanded the sacrifice the Passover, while the *Chatas* is first offered when a person repents. Both of these first commandments must be offered for their own sake.

Rabbi Zadok Hachohen of Lublin writes that when a person enters the service of G-d he must do so hurriedly, as he must disconnect himself from the temptations of the world, to which he has been connected, and therefore he must preserve the moment in which he has awakened to G-d and move quickly as possible away from these distractions.

The beginning – of the day, of the year and of life – is the best and most cherished time, which must be safeguarded. Therefore, one should begin his day with Torah study, a child should start his life in sanctity, and the year should begin with elation, as the beginning sets the pace for the rest to come. The beginning must be cherished and reserved.

After a period of time, the Rebbe recuperated and went out to serve as a *Sandek* at a nearby Bris. "How shall we get there?" he asked his Gabai. The Gabai told him about the new car, which has been waiting for him for many weeks.

"Yes, we shall drive," the Rebbe said, and explained in his own way why he initially disregarded the car.

He went to the Mikvah even though he did not have strength. He was afraid that if he stopped on his way out to look at the car he would lose this special status and would possibly be harmed.

"A car you brought me? Let's first use it for a mitzvah. Let's ride it to the Brits" he said in an unforgettable statement.

"Tsachi," I concluded. "You have accepted upon yourself a mitzvah at the beginning of the new year, and you will surely merit 'a mitzvah brings another mitzvah' and your entire year will be filled with success and good deeds."