



ב' אלול תשפ"ז

ME TOO (PART II)

In 5773, in Issue 342 of *Zichron Avinoam*, we shared something truly enlightening, which perhaps we can continue to discuss this year as well:

The Torah speaks about the concept of testimony, and it expresses that regarding something that was done and witnessed by witnesses, the witnesses will share their testimony on the case; in accordance with what they say, the judgment on matter will be upheld.

In a fascinating *pasuk*, the Torah says that with either two or three will it be settled and decided. The obvious and glaring question is, why does it say, "two or three"? If a matter can be decided by two witnesses alone, why is the third one even there? And what lesson is there for us in the fact that a third party joined?

Rav Avigdor Miller explains: Even though it is true that a judgment of any particular matter is surely decided based on the testimony of two people, if a third party decides to join, even though he is absolutely not needed and his testimony is redundant, he is considered a part of it too; and if, for example, the witnesses testify falsely, he will be included in every part of their punishment, *R"l*. And if they are part of saving a marriage, saving money, helping in any way, even though his particular place in this testimony is not needed, he too will be rewarded for it as well.

We learn from here, says Rav Miller, that when any group of Jews come together to fulfill something good, we should join with them in their holy endeavor. Even if we are not necessarily needed per se, just joining a good matter brings great reward. And surely vice versa as well, *R"l*. If a group of people is doing a bad thing, we should do everything in our ability to stay far away from them, because being amongst them, *R"l*, means that we are part of their wrongdoing.

While being in camp for a month, I witnessed this concept repeating itself in many ways, and in so many different conversations too. We are all affected deeply by

peer pressure, and when that peer pressure is used for good, it is such a benefit for us. But unfortunately, when peer pressure leads *chas v'shalom* to error, it is so important for a person to stay clear from those who are making very wrong decisions.

As the Chofetz Chaim writes, if a person is sitting among those who are saying *lashon hora*, he should do everything in his capability to move away from such a group, so that he is not considered a member of it. For even if he keeps his mouth closed and does not add to the conversation, *just being present in such a gathering does not bode well for the person*.

What inspired me to share this *dvar Torah* again was an occurrence that took place this past week in camp:

Similar to that which, Baruch Hashem, I do in yeshivah, I organized a program in camp for the 7th and 8th graders. They were to sign a *shtar* that they would not watch movies for one week after they returned home, to try to retain the separation from all outside influences they gained from being away for two months. I was amazed at the response. Within a few minutes, there was line forming to sign the *shtar*, with a holy call from within calling out, "Me, too! I too want to be among the ones who uplift their first week of Elul...."

And then a young man came over to me and asked me for a favor. "May I please sign after everyone else and not receive any of the incentives you are offering?" I was stunned. Here is a boy who felt a fire of enthusiasm to lift himself up and join just *lishma*.... I was so moved by his request that I just stood there in complete amazement....

In a time in history when we are surrounded by so many negative influences, a young boy of 13 stands up and says, "I want to become great and join all the ones before me with that holy call of 'Me, too.'"

B'Siyata DiShmaya.