

KS2 unit 3 - Stories from the Talmud

Everything that we do affects others for good or bad.

A group of people were travelling in a boat. One of them took a drill and began to drill a hole beneath himself.

His companions said to him: "Why are you doing this?" Replied the man: "What concern is it of yours? Am I not drilling under my own place?"

Said they to him: "But you will flood the boat for us all!" (Quoted in Midrash Rabbah, [Vayikra 4:6](#)).

We should do good and bring up our children to do the same.

A man was travelling through the desert, hungry, thirsty and tired, when he came upon a tree bearing luscious fruit and affording plenty of shade, underneath which ran a spring of water. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water and rested beneath the shade.

When he was about to leave, he turned to the tree and said: "Tree, O tree, with what should I bless you?

"Should I bless you that your fruit be sweet? Your fruit is already sweet.

"Should I bless you that your shade be plentiful? Your shade is plentiful. That a spring of water should run beneath you? A spring of water runs beneath you.

"There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d's will that all the trees planted from your seeds should be like you . . ."

TALMUD, TAANIT 5B

God commands us to be generous in our giving.

One time, some rabbis needed charity. They sent Rabbi Akiva, together with another rabbi [to collect money].

Together, the two came to the home of a man named Ben Maivi Yayin, where they heard the man's child asking him, "What should I buy for you today?"

"Some endives, not fresh. Leftovers from yesterday. If they're wilted they'll be cheap."

Hearing this, Rabbi Akiva and the other rabbi decided that this man who used to be rich and generous must have lost his money, so they left without asking him for charity, choosing to first collect from the others in the city. After they had made their rounds, they came back to him. He asked them, "Why didn't you come to me first, as you usually do?"

"We did come to you first, but when we heard you talking to your son . . ."

He said to them, "You heard what was said between me and my son, but you don't know what is said between me and G-d. Even so, go tell my wife to give you a bag full of money."

So they did. She gave them a bag overflowing with money.

"Why did you do this?" They asked Ben Maivi Yayin.

He replied, "With my own needs, I am allowed to take liberties and be stingy, but when it comes to the commandments of my Creator, I am not."

JERUSALEM TALMUD, PESACHIM 4:9; ESTHER RABBAH