



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT EMOR

Representing Who?

As a Jew was once driving along the freeway, he noticed another Jew stuck on the shoulder standing outside his battery-dead car, trying to see if anyone would stop and help him. He immediately pulled over, gave his fellow's car a jump-start, and wished him well. The individual thanked him profusely, tossing his kippah back into his glove compartment as he was about to drive off. Seeing the confused look on the kind man's face, he explained: "Oh, I'm not actually Jewish. My mother would just tell me to always keep one of these skull-caps in my car, and that if I ever got into any trouble on the road, a Jew would undoubtedly pull over and assist me."

"You shall not profane My Holy Name, and I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel; I am Hashem, Who makes you holy" (Leviticus 22:32).

I remember explaining the concept of *kiddush Hashem* and *chilul Hashem* to a group of middle-school aged, public school boys whom I would teach every week. I presented them with the following scenario. Imagine you were to walk into a Dunkin Donuts and one of the employees there has a nasty attitude. You try placing your order but are subjected to insults, cynicism, sarcasm, and disparagement. The clerk aggressively hands you a coffee and carelessly tosses a donut in your direction only after having made sure to embarrass you in front of the entire shop and yells, "Get out! Next!"

I asked the boys, "If that happened to you, would you ever go back to Dunkin?" They unanimously agreed: not a chance. "Do you think anyone else in the shop who witnessed this drama would feel like going back?" Again, the boys responded in the negative.

I then presented my final question: "Why? Even if just one individual acted wrong, why 'boycott' the entire Dunkin? It's not like Dunkin itself did anything bad to you!" The boys, being very keen, explained that the employee represented Dunkin, and by insulting you, it was like a slap in the face from Dunkin itself.

With this, I was able to drive the point home. As the Chosen People, we represent G-d in this world. Just think about that for a moment; it's a powerful reality. As Jews, we are Hashem's ambassadors of light, hope, and moral clarity on this earth, and with that great power comes even greater responsibility. When we mess up, it's not just personal – there are big stakes, since we stand for something much, much greater. That is why *chilul Hashem* is such a grave sin – it undermines the purpose of everything and has dastardly ripple effects. But on the flipside, that is also why making a *kiddush Hashem* is so tremendous, because it promotes to the world just how amazing G-d and His ways are.

You are a walking billboard for Hashem. Everything you do matters.

Providence

R' Paysach Krohn shared an incredible story. There was a salesman who would always listen to *divrei Torah* in his car. He would constantly travel, and loved to listen to *shiurim* to maximize every moment.

On one trip, while driving, he was listening to a recorded shiur from the Klausenberger Rebbe. The class was in Yiddish, a language he understood well, and it was recorded decades earlier, as the Rebbe had passed away many years ago.

As he drove, he dozed off at the wheel. He didn't realize he had fallen asleep until he was startled awake by the sudden sound of a horn blaring behind him. He jolted awake and saw that he was just inches away from rear-ending the car in front of him, which had stopped at a red light. He slammed the brakes – just in time – and avoided what otherwise would have been a disastrous crash.

Grateful but confused, he glanced in his rearview mirror to see who had honked... but there was no one there. He looked to the right – no car. To the left – no one. Behind him – empty road. He was completely alone. Bewildered, he asked himself, "*Where did that horn come from?*"

Puzzled, he hit rewind on the CD. And that's when the mystery unraveled. Thirty-five years earlier, as the Rebbe was giving the shiur, someone outside the shul had honked their horn, and the sound had been picked up in the recording.

That very honk, preserved by Providence, played at the exact moment needed to wake him up – and saved his life.

It was no coincidence. Hashem orchestrated everything, down to a car-horn honked decades earlier, to protect a Jew who made every effort to fill his journeys with Torah.