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MASKIL LE'DAVID

Accurate Soul Searching

"And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him" (Bereishit 45:3).

Our Sages tell us (*Midrash Tanchuma*) that when the brothers realized it was Yosef who was standing in front of them, they wished to kill him. However, the angel Gavriel scattered them.

How do we understand that the brothers wished to kill Yosef? Were they not the G-dly tribes who lived their entire lives with great righteousness? They constantly searched their souls to ascertain if they were correct in selling Yosef. They would assess themselves at every opportunity and came to the conclusion that their actions were justified. Therefore, even though they witnessed their father's great pain when he realized Yosef had been taken from him, nevertheless they did not regret their actions. They believed they had acted correctly and had judged Yosef justly.

However, they now understood that their reckoning was flawed since the truth was revealed in front of their eyes: Yosef reveals himself and they realize the Creator of the World has elevated him above everyone. They see he has been appointed as viceroy and placed in charge of the entire land of Egypt.

The dreams he had told them about have come to fruition, yet he has remained righteous and converses with them in Lashon Hakodesh. His children too were as righteous as their father. All this certainly brought them to understand that they had made a grave mistake. So why did the angel Gavriel have to disperse them to prevent them from killing Yosef?

The answer is that even when a person

examines his deeds to determine if they are correct, it can happen that he makes a mistake and doesn't weigh up the matter in the correct manner.

This was true with the holy brothers. When Yosef revealed himself to them and they were confronted with the truth, they once again considered the matter. But they came to a mistaken conclusion and said: this is the person we previously sentenced to death (as per the law of someone who pursues another person with the intention of murdering him), and he is now standing in front of us. If so, we must fulfill the law and kill him.

When Gavriel scattered them, they once again understood they had made a grave mistake. This time their regret was deep and they immediately repented. This is why when they took leave from Yosef to return to their father's house, Yosef said to them, "Do not become agitated on the way." Yosef requested that they should not blame each other for their mistaken decision to kill him, for it was enough that they realized their mistake and had now repented.

The lesson we can derive is that to make a correct self-assessment, one needs good judgment and special Divine assistance. Sometimes a person can be at war with his friend since he saw him acting against the halacha. He weighs up the matter and convinces himself that his sole intention is for the sake of Heaven.

But in truth, this might not be the case. Deep inside he harbors negative feelings of jealousy or hatred against his friend. Since the *yetzer hara* sketches a picture of his battle as being for the sake of Heaven, he must know how to evaluate his deeds with level-headedness, to identify if he is correct or not. He must ask himself if Hashem, who examines thoughts and emotions, would be happy with this deed. If he does this, he is guaranteed to be on the correct path to constant spiritual growth.

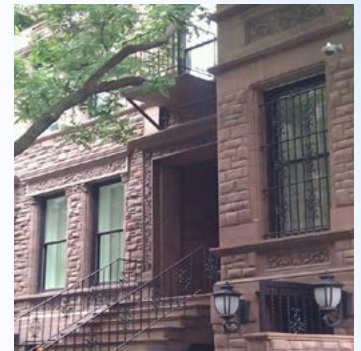
4 Tevet 5785

4 January 2025

1093

Yayieash

The fast of the Tenth of Tevet is announced



Hilula

4 Tevet
Rabbi Shaul Duwek
Hakohen

5 Tevet
Rabbi Avraham Yaakov of
Sadigurah

6 Tevet
Rabbi Yehoshua Amram

7 Tevet
Rabbi Rafael Shlomo
Laniado

8 Tevet
Rabbi Mordechai Karbilyo

9 Tevet
Rabbi Chaim Shor
Ashkenazi

10 Tevet
Ezra Hasofer





WORDS OF THE SAGES

Why Did the Balozhover Rebbe Hurry to Manhattan?

“And provide seed so that we may live and not die” (*Bereishit* 47:19).

In the Torah publication *Tiv Hakehilla*, Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz, *shlita*, brings a story about the Admor of Balozhov, *zt”l*. Toward the end of his life, when he was already close to ninety years old, one of his acquaintances came to see him and complained that he was having a hard time with *parnassa*.

“How can I help you?” asked the Rebbe.

“I own a factory where we manufacture different kinds of belts. I have a friend who owns a huge clothing store in Manhattan, and he sells thousands of pairs of pants every month. If this store-owner would agree to buy belts from my factory, this would be a great salvation for me! So I would like to ask the Rebbe if he could please speak to him on the phone and ask him to buy his belts from my factory.”

The holy Rebbe listened to his request and said: “Helping a Jewish person with his income is a Torah obligation and is included in the commandment of ‘You shall strengthen him’! This important mitzvah one doesn’t perform on the phone. Let’s travel together to his store in Manhattan and I will speak to him face to face. This way he will also take my request more seriously!”

The man was astounded at the offer and immediately started apologizing. “I did not intend to trouble the elderly Rebbe. I am sure that a phone call from the Rebbe would also be beneficial.” But the Rebbe would not be dissuaded and asked him: “Do you have a car?”

“Yes.”

“If so, let’s go!” declared the Rebbe. Despite the tzaddik’s advanced age and resulting weakness, he braced himself, stood up, took his stick

in his hand, and started slowly making his way to the car. .

They then set out on the long journey and finally arrived at the large business boulevard in Manhattan. The elderly, dignified Rebbe laboriously made his way up to the fourth floor, to the large clothing store, arriving without any prior notice!

The Jewish owner was most surprised to see the elderly Rebbe standing at the entrance of his store. He ran over to him, welcomed him, brought him inside his office, and asked him with awe: “Why did the Rebbe trouble himself to come to the store? If the Rebbe requires clothing, I would have happily come to the Rebbe’s home and brought whatever the Rebbe requires!”

The Rebbe smiled and said: “I did not come here for clothing. I am well aware of your good heartedness and know you would certainly bring whatever I need to my home. Now I have a different request. You sell many pairs of pants and most pants are worn with a suitable belt. There is an honorable Jew, who lives in New York, who manufactures a wide range of beautifully designed belts. I ask that you buy your belts from this Jew! It is certainly preferable for us to support a fellow Jew than to purchase from the many non-Jewish factory owners!”

“Certainly, I will be happy to do so!” he replied. “I will do as the Rebbe asked.”

The Rebbe blessed him that his business should be successful, and then he returned home.

The holy blessing indeed accompanied these two businessmen, and for many years this belt manufacturer continued supplying belts for the clothing store. Both of them were blessed with great wealth, in the merit of the tzaddik!



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu
v’Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi **David**
Chananya Pinto, shlita

The Courage to Question

A yeshiva student came to ask me a question regarding a nuance of a mitzvah. As we were talking, he discovered that without realizing, he had been transgressing a serious prohibition. Of course, I explained the matter to him. I taught him how to correct his misdeeds and told him how to behave correctly in the future.

This matter taught me how crucial it is to ask advice of a Torah teacher.

In the merit of setting aside his embarrassment and approaching me to ask the Torah’s opinion on a specific matter, he merited touching on a completely different topic which demanded correction. Had he not had the courage to ask about the original difficulty, he may never have corrected this unintentional sin.

Meriting Mitzvot

I was once presented with the opportunity of performing a certain mitzvah, but until I got around to doing it, it slipped away from me. I felt very bad that I had lost out on this mitzvah, which I felt I should have hurried to do.

Hashem must have seen my sorrow, for only a few minutes passed when the exact same mitzvah presented itself again. *Baruch* Hashem, this time I did not procrastinate and merited doing it correctly and with pure joy.

This was a lesson for me that when a person regrets overlooking a mitzvah, Hashem helps him by presenting him with another opportunity to perform that same mitzvah. This proves how precious our mitzvot are in Hashem’s eyes.



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

A False Report

Unfortunately, many stumble with the following situation: It is not uncommon for several townspeople to be supported by charity. If someone spreads a false rumor that these poor people are not really deserving, and as result, people refrain from supporting them, then the person who spread the original rumor has transgressed the prohibition of speaking *lashon hara*.



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Serving Hashem Without Stress

The parsha of Vayigash is read following the festival of Chanukah, and the connection is the way we light the Chanukah menorah – according to the opinion of Beit Hillel. Beit Hillel holds that on the first night one lights one light, on the second night, two, and so forth, until on the eighth day one lights all eight lights. The word שמנה (eight) contains the same letters as the word נשמה (soul), because slow progression is the only way a person merits kindling the light of his soul. It is impossible to reach high levels in one leap; this could cause a person to slip and fall. Spiritual work requires steady effort, stage by stage, layer by layer. With patience and forbearance, one should add a small measure each day. Today a little and tomorrow a little more, and so forth, just like Yosef Hatzaddik whose name signifies “continually adding.” In this way man merits strengthening his connection with Hashem, for with each additional effort he comes closer and closer to his Creator.

One of the main predicaments of today's generation is the great pressure people find themselves caught up in. They wish to achieve everything in an instant and have little patience. When a person marries and sets up a home, he immediately wants to be blessed with children. Similarly, he hopes for abundant income in the quickest possible way. He wants to increase his possessions and has many other demands too, but of course one cannot achieve everything at once. This causes a person great stress, and from here the path to all kinds of problems is not far off.

We can apply the same idea to our *avodat* Hashem. If a person starts his day with the desire that his prayers should be pure without any foreign thoughts whatsoever, and that his Torah study should be perfect in its toil and effort, and he also wishes to immediately perform all the mitzvot in the best possible way, what will happen? He will suddenly collapse under the strain and lose everything. This is a result of wanting to climb the mountain of Hashem quickly and arrive at the peak before setting out.

Chazal tell us (*Chagiga* 17b) “One who grabs hold of a lot has not grasped [anything].” Instead, the correct conduct is to be like Yosef, to keep adding a little more each day. This is the way to forge ahead and ascend in levels of holiness. To what can this be compared? To one who places a bottle of water under the tap to fill it up. If the stream of water is reasonable, the process might take a bit of time, but in the end the bottle will fill up. But what does an impatient person do? He turns on the tap full strength, and due to the force the water splashes out of the bottle and nothing enters besides a few drops.



PARSHA PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Gates of Parnassa

“And to his father he sent the following: ten he-donkeys laden with the best of Egypt” (*Bereishit* 45:23).

Rashi explains the word כזאת, (the following) as, “like the following reckoning.”

The *sefer Irin Kadishin* brings a question that the author asked the Rozhiner Rav, *zt”l*: What does Rashi add with his explanation? The verse details exactly what Yosef sent, so what does “like the following reckoning” teach us?

He answers that it is known that the name of the angel appointed over *parnassa* is חתך (Chatach). This word is made up of the last letters of פותח את ידך, “You open Your hand,” and has the same numerical value as the word כזאת.

Yosef was implying to Yaakov that since now is a time of famine, Yaakov should have in mind the name “Chatach,” and then maybe the famine will disappear and he will find relief.

Rashi, in his beautiful way, is explaining that the word כזאת must be coming to teach us something additional. “Like the following reckoning” means like the reckoning of the word כזאת which has the same numerical value as חתך, implying that Yaakov should have this name in mind.

The Osem Company Symbol

“And he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, then the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived” (*Bereishit* 45:27).

Sending these wagons, as Rashi explains, was a message from Yosef. The word עגלות – wagons, can also be translated as calves, alluding to the last topic Yosef had studied with his father before they were separated. This was the topic of *eglah arufah* (the ritual of expiation of an unsolved murder by breaking the neck of a calf).

Yaakov rejoiced when seeing the wagons. It was proof for him that even after twenty-two years Yosef's thoughts had remained pure. His mind was occupied with the give and take of Abaya and Rava on the topic they had been studying together all those years ago.

How was Yosef sure that when Yaakov would see the wagons, he would connect it to their learning? Because Yosef knew that what occupied Yaakov's mind was one thing only – Torah. Therefore, he knew without a doubt that when Yaakov would see the wagons, he would immediately connect it to *eglah arufah*.

The following incident involving Rabbi Avraham Genichovski, *zt”l*, is a telling demonstration of living with this kind of ideal.

At the entrance to Bnei Brak, there used to be an area which housed the large Osem factory. It was a conspicuous building, with a large sign hanging on the outside that depicted the company name, OSEM. Rabbi Avraham once travelled to Bnei Brak, and when he noticed the sign he smiled and said, “This sign reminds me of a subject discussed in the *gemara*.” In answer to the surprised look of those accompanying him, he explained with a smile, “It reminds me of the *gemara* in *Baba Kama* that tells about a stone (אבנו), a knife (סכינו), or a bundle (משאו), that fall from a roof. The word אסם (Osem) is an acronym for אבנו, סכינו, משאו!”

The only thing that occupied his mind was Torah! When we see an Osem sign, what do we think of? Bissli or Bamba! This tzaddik saw *Baba Kama*.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Contradictory Rebuke

"I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?"
(Bereishit 45:3).

"And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?'" Surely Yosef knew that Yaakov was alive? When they returned to Egypt from Eretz Yisrael, Yosef asked them, "Is your aged father at peace? Is he still alive?" And they replied: "He still lives." Now too, in his argument with Yehuda, Yehuda said, "For how can I go up to my father if the youth is not with me, lest I see the evil that will befall my father!" And throughout his words, Yehuda mentions that his father is alive, for example, "We have an old father." The Beit Halevi explains that the answer can be found in the famous words of Abba Cohen Bardela, quoted by the Midrash: "Abba Cohen Bardela said: 'Woe to us from the day of judgement, woe to us from the day of rebuke. Yosef was the youngest of the tribes and they could not stand up to his rebuke.' All the more so when Hashem will come and rebuke each one according to what he is, as it says, 'I will rebuke you and lay it clearly before your eyes!'"

The obvious question is, what lies behind the repetition of "day of judgement" and "day of rebuke"? And what is the significance of "according to what he is"?

The Beit Halevi answers these questions. He begins by saying that even though many commentators have clarified this *midrash*, he wishes to explain it according to his own understanding.

Yosef was not asking his brothers if their father was alive. He knew he was alive. It was not a question, it was rebuke! He was essentially saying, "You Yehuda said that you cannot leave Binyamin behind because it will affect your father's health. But do you know what? I am Yosef. Is my father

still alive? What happened twenty-two years ago? When you sold me, how come you weren't concerned for his health, for father's life?!"

And for this they had no answer. This is a rebuke that leaves the person with nothing to say in his defense.

The Beit Halevi continues: It says that in the future when a person is judged, there will be both judgement and rebuke. He will be asked questions and he will have to supply answers. And sometimes, the excuse he offers in his defense, will be accepted by the Heavenly court (i.e. "judgement"). Perhaps with difficulty, but it will be accepted. However, on the other hand, "rebuke" immediately invalidates his excuse.

He brings an example: A person arrives in the World of Truth and he is asked, "Why did you not give charity? You lived in the world for so many years, how come you never gave any charity?" He answers: "How could I give?" And he describes his financial situation, his large family, his small income etc. Even though this is not an excuse, for even a poor person who is supported by charity must give charity, there is still room to take his limited means into account. He will present his excuse, and in terms of the "judgement" he will more or less get away with it.

But suddenly they will ask him another question: "How come when it came to other things you had money to squander? How did you suddenly have the means?"

When it came to disagreements he did not lack money; when it came to matters of his honor, he had money. And when it came to his children's education, he had money to send them to learn in institutions like college or

university. From where did he suddenly have the means? This is the meaning of rebuke! His very own actions contradict what he is saying! This rebuke renounces the excuse that he didn't have money.

This is the explanation of the verse that the *midrash* quotes, "I will rebuke you and lay it clearly before your eyes!" In the future Hashem will rebuke each person, *according to what he is*. He gave an excuse that he wasn't able to do a certain thing, and Hashem will rebuke him using his own excuse.

First to Arrive for a Trip

The most piercing rebuke is when a person is presented with circumstances that contradict what he is saying. How can you ask me to have pity on my father if you did not have pity on his sorrow?

A person does not give charity and excuses himself that he barely has enough to provide for his family. However, he has no problem being extravagant when it comes to certain luxuries!

"He sits and chatters the whole day and does not grow tired. He gets up to pray and learn, and he is tired" (*Esther Rabba* 3:4).

Rabbi Shalom Shwadron, *zt"l*, used to decry this inconsistency we see in people's lives. He brought a practical example we can all relate to: **A child who constantly comes late to school is the first ones to arrive on the day of a trip...**

How much care we must take that our actions shouldn't contradict themselves!

Fortunate is the one who has no discrepancies in his ways and his path is paved with consistency!



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

Exciting update: With *siyata diShmaya*, the *shiurim* of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit"a, are now available in Hebrew, English, French and Spanish

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