

MESIVTA'S MESSAGE

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FEATURED TORAH *Message*

Rabbi Menachem Wachsman

Before Yaakov Avinu's death, he called in his son Yosef and requested that he bury him in Eretz Yisrael and not Mitzrayim. In his request he asks Yosef, "ועשית עמדי חסד" וְאִמַּת Rashi explains that chesed that one performs for the deceased is a *חסד של אמת*, a genuine chesed. This is because one who acts with kindness toward the dead does not do the chesed anticipating repayment for his act of kindness. Yaakov was asking Yosef to perform this genuine act of kindness by burying him in Eretz Yisrael.

The *ט"ז* in his sefer *דברי דוד* asks, was Yosef's act a true *חסד של אמת*? After all, a few pesukim later in the parsha, Yaakov promises the city of *שכם* to Yosef for the effort and *טירחא* that he would have to exert by burying him in Eretz Yisrael. Yaakov told Yosef that he was going to reward him for his act of chesed that he would perform.

The *ט"ז* answers, it's true that Yosef was going to get rewarded for his act of chesed. However, Yaakov was requesting that Yosef perform the chesed as one would perform a *חסד של אמת*. He was asking Yosef *not* to perform the chesed in order to receive the reward.

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THOUGHTS *on the* PARSHA

Mordechai Goldman, 11th grade

At the beginning of the parsha, Yaakov Avinu requests that his son Yosef not bury him in Egypt but rather to bury him in the Mearas Hamachpela together with his fathers. Later, Yaakov mentions that when Rachel died on the road, he buried her outside of Eretz Canaan, saying he buried her on the road near Bais Lechem. Rashi explains why Yaakov brought up the story of Rachel's death. He was telling Yosef that despite the hard feelings he may have that Yaakov didn't bury his mother in the Mearas Hamachpela, or even just bring her to burial in the nearby city of Beis Lechem, Yosef should know that he buried her on the road because Hashem told him to. This was so that when the Jewish people would be exiled by Nevuzaradan, they would pass by Rachel Imainu's grave while on the road and she would daven for us. Because of these prayers, Hashem would say, "I'm rewarding Rachel for giving Leah the signs, and I will return Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael."

Rav Henoch Lebowitz, zt"l, asked: Why did Yaakov have to explain why he buried Rachel on the road at the time that he is asking Yosef to bury him in Eretz

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SPARKS *of* MUSSAR

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Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

R' Nosson Zvi strove to create an atmosphere of happiness and well-being in the yeshiva. On Shabbos the melodies of zemiros floated from R' Nosson Zvi's

apartment and from the students' quarters. During the festivals, the happiness reached a peak. The Slobodka Yeshiva was renowned for its joyous melodies and enthusiastic dancing, and crowds of people came to enjoy the celebration.

Even on ordinary weekdays, the yeshiva was

pervaded with an atmosphere of happiness. Does Torah not gladden the heart? R' Nosson Zvi saw joy as a prerequisite to scholarship and creativity. If he ever saw a talmid looking sad or depressed, R' Nosson Zvi would try to change the boy's mood.

Yisrael? Yosef shouldn't have any grievances against Yaakov! There is an obligation to judge an average person favorably and a yarei shamayim even more favorably. Also, how could Yosef imagine that his great father Yaakov Avinu, who is considered the choicest one of our great Avos, would treat his beloved wife Rachel Imeinu without the highest levels of respect?

He explained that Yosef certainly judged his father favorably. He understood that Yaakov treated Rachel with respect and was acting lesheim shamayim. Still, even after someone judges the actions of another favorably, there can sometimes still remain the smallest doubt. Maybe he could have done better. Even though Yosef was assured that Yaakov was acting lesheim shamayim, there was still the tiniest feeling of doubt. Knowing this, Yaakov explained himself by saying he was following the word of Hashem, dispelling that little feeling that Yosef may have had.

This leads to another question, though. Why did Yaakov feel the need to get rid of this doubt? You can't say that it was to fulfill "veheyisem nekiim m'Hashem um'Yisrael," the command to behave in a way that others will understand to be proper, because if this was Yaakov's intention, he should have explained himself to Yosef long before. It also

seems remote that Yaakov was concerned that Yosef would refuse to bury him in Eretz Yisrael because of a tiny hint of a grievance that he knew was unfounded. So why did Yaakov explain himself?

Yaakov was concerned that if Yosef had this tiny doubt, he wouldn't be able to fulfill the mitzvah of listening to his father and burying him in Eretz Yisrael with fullness of heart. Without this full heart, Yaakov was concerned that if Paraoth objected to burying him out of Mitzrayim, Yosef wouldn't be able to stand up to him. Only with a full heart and no hint of doubt about his father's burial of Rachel would Yosef be able to stand up to the opposition.

Two points to glean from this are how easy it is to have a grievance and how important it is to deal with it. Yosef HaTzadik was susceptible to having a grievance against his father and rebbi, the great Yaakov Avinu, and this tiny feeling could have spelled the difference between Yosef being able to do the mitzvah and not being able to stand up to the opposition. We have to be very careful not to have hard feelings towards people. These feelings may be beneath the surface, so it helps to examine ourselves, asking why we treat people in certain ways. Small feelings can have a big impact.

MAZEL TOV

- Moshe Greenspon on his engagement to Ms. Shoshana Levin from Los Angeles!
- Rabbi & Mrs. Shmuel Wasser on the bar mitzvah of their son Yochanan!

FEATURED TORAH *Message* continued

The ר"ט explains that Yaakov was concerned that if Yosef were to do the chesed with the anticipation of receiving the reward of שכר, it would create a risk. If for some reason the process of burying Yaakov in Eretz Yisrael became very difficult, Yosef might give up on the chesed because it's just not worth the reward. "איני מבקש לא הן ולא שכרן" - the reward is not worth the difficulty of performing the chesed. Therefore, Yaakov asked that Yosef perform his request as if he was performing a חסד של אמת. This would ensure that Yosef would stay focused and motivated to perform the chesed for the true purpose and not just for the reward.

At times, incentives and rewards can serve as powerful motivators in encouraging our children, talmidim, and ourselves to learn Torah, do mitzvos, and serve Hashem. At the same time, we must always be careful to stay focused on the inherent value and purpose of what we are doing. Rewards can sometimes put a "price tag" on what we are trying to accomplish, and when we are faced with difficulty, we are at risk of responding with the feeling of "it's not worth it." We must always remain focused on the true reason for our Avodas Hashem, and this will b'ezras Hashem help us reach the goals we set out to accomplish.

ONGOING COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- SUNDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S MESILAS YESHARIM (ZOOM)
- TUESDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S ORCHOS TZADDIKIM (CHESTERFIELD)
- DAILY AHAVAS CHESSED (WHATSAPP)
- DAILY SHMIRAS HALASHON (WHATSAPP/EMAIL)
- DAILY ORAYSA (WHATSAPP)

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