WARMTH & WISDOM

Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Seuda Shlishis Parshas Vayishlach
(ספר חדוותא דזעיר אנפין עמוד שה)

In this week's *Parsha* we learn about the *petira* of Rachel Imeinu *a"h*. In my youth, I had the *zechus* of hearing a wonderful *shiur* on *Maseches Bava Kama* from *Rosh Yeshivas Mir*, *Hagaon Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l*, in the *Yeshiva*. At the end of the *shiur*, he went on to present a *chidush* in *divrei agada*, illuminating the *pesukim* in *Parshas Vayechi* in which Yaakov Avinu explains to Yosef why he buried Yosef's mother, Rachel Imeinu, by the side of the road.

וַאֲנִי בְּבֹאִי מִפַּדָּן מֵתָה עָלַי רָחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּעוֹד כִּבְרַת אֶרֶץ לָבֹא אֶפְרָתָה וָאֶקְבְּרֶהָ שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרָת הִוא בֵּית לָחֶם .(בראשית מ"ח:ז)

Rashi explains that Yaakov Avinu told Yosef:
"Even though I am troubling you to bring me to burial in *Eretz Knaan*. And I did not do so for your mother. For she died near *Beis Lechem* within the two-thousand *amos* of *techum Shabbos*. And don't say that rains prevented me from taking her to be buried in *Chevron*, for it was at the time that the earth is dry….and I buried her there. I didn't even bring her to *Beis Lechem*… And I know that in your heart you must harbor complaint against me. However, you should know that I buried her there according to what I was told from above, so that she will help her children when Nevuzaradan will exile them. They passed that location and Rachel went out on her grave and was crying and beseeching Hashem to have mercy on them. As it says, **קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל בָּנֶיהָ יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לִפְעֻלָּתֵךְ נְאֻם ה' (ירמיה ל"א:י"ד)** . And Hakadosh Baruch Hu answers her **וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב** ." There is reward for your deeds and they will return from the land of the enemy.

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at
hamaortolna@gmail.com

Rav Chaim asked, "Yaakov Avinu detected complaint and anger in Yosef's heart because he asked Yosef to bury him in *Mearas Ha'machpeila* with his forefathers, while he didn't do so for Rachel Imeinu. Therefore, he wanted to appease Yosef and seek his forgiveness. If so, why did he keep adding details that would only serve to awaken and strengthen Yosef's complaint?

He said, "Don't think that your mother died far from Chevron. It wasn't very far and I could have buried her in *Mearas Hamachpeila*. Also, don't think that heavy rains prevented me from bringing her to Chevron, for it was warm and sunny and the earth was dry. Despite that, I didn't bury her there for I received instructions from above."

In order to appease Yosef, wouldn't it have been enough to simply explain that Hashem told him where to bury Rachel? Why would he add in so many details that could upset Yosef even more?

Rav Chaim addressed this question with a wonderful *yesod* (fundamental principle).

If Yaakov Avinu had told Yosef that his mother died far from any settlement at a time while the rains made travel difficult, especially with children, and Hashem told him to bury Rachel there, Yosef may not have fully believed Yaakov. Yosef could have said to himself that when a person has to bury his wife who has died far from any settlement, while the rain pours down both on the *nifteres* and on his wives and children, it's no wonder that he hears a *bas kol* telling him to bury his wife where she is.

If someone hears a *bas kol* that relieves him of a potential burden, it's possible to suspect that there was no such *bas kol*. The source of the voice that he heard was a projection of his own hopes that a *bas kol* would come out and relieve him of his burden. As R. Shmuel bar Nachmani says in the name of R. Yonasan, "A person is only shown what comes from the thoughts in his heart." (ברכות נ"ה.)

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at
hamaortolna@gmail.com

By explaining to Yosef that it would have been easy to bury Rachel Imeinu in Chevron, he helped Yosef understand why he knew that the *bas kol* was reliable. He had no ulterior motive for burying her by the road. It was only by divine decree that he did so.

Rav Chaim *zt"l* then added that the same principle helps us understand a *Gemara* in *Maseches Gitin* (מ"ה.) which tells the story of Rav Ilish who had been captured by bandits.

"One day, he was sitting near another captive who understood the language of birds. A raven came and called out to him. Rav Ilish asked the man what the raven said. He responded that the raven said 'Ilish flee! Ilish flee!'. Rav Ilish said, 'the raven is a liar and I don't rely on him'.

Meanwhile, a dove came and called out. Rav Ilish asked the man what the dove said. He replied that the dove also said 'Ilish flee! Ilish flee!' Rav Ilish said, '*Knesses Yisrael* are compared to a dove. I understand that a miracle will take place for me.' He got up and escaped, and he was miraculously able to cross over in a boat."

The *Maharsha* in *Chidushei Agados* explained that the raven repeated itself in order to establish what he was saying. Nonetheless, Rav Ilish didn't believe him because it is the way of a raven to lie, as he did to Noach. The dove certainly wouldn't lie, as we saw in the story of Noach. However, Rav Ilish was concerned that the man who translated the words of the dove may be lying. Only because *Knesses Yisrael* are compared to a dove did he believe that he would miraculously escape his captors.

Rav Chaim posed a question. If that anonymous prisoner understood the language of birds, Rav Ilish certainly must have possessed that skill as well. He was an angelic *Amora* from whom no secret was hidden. Why did he need that man to interpret for him, if he could understand the birds himself?

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at
hamaortolna@gmail.com

He explained that since Rav Ilish was suffering in captivity, (which the Gemara in Maseches Bava Basra defines as one of the worst forms of suffering), he certainly yearned throughout each day for the opportunity to escape his cruel captors. Therefore, when he heard the birds telling him to escape, he didn't want to rely on himself. He feared that because he wanted to escape so badly, he also wanted the birds to tell him that he could escape. This is why he asked his fellow captive to translate.

Only when the man translated the words of the *yona*, to whom *Knesses Yisrael* are compared, did Rav Ilish conclude that this was truly a message *min hashamayim*.

Rav Chaim concluded 'א מענטש הערט וואס ער וויל הערען' – A man hears what he wants to hear.

We must all internalize Rav Chaim's message. So many people hear what they want to hear. They may imagine that they heard a *bas kol*, or they may imagine that they heard something from a *Rav* or *Poseik*. They may be certain that they heard one thing or another from the people around them. In truth, nothing of the sort was said. Their imagination enabled them to construct entire conversations that never took place.

Unfortunately, when reality hits them, and they realize that they were mistaken, they may sink into depression and despair. The disappointment of realizing that they had built a tower of hopes on a foundation of nothing but imagination, can be both painful and harmful. If only they had taken care not to get into the habit of hearing what they wanted to hear.

***Megillas Esther* reveals that this is exactly the way Haman's mind worked.**

וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן בְּלִבּוֹ לְמִי יַחְפֹּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יְקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי – And Haman said in his heart, 'to whom would the King wish to do honor more than to me'? These thoughts prompted him to suggest great ceremonies that he assumed would honor him. However, in the end he suffered the fulfillment of the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* - בּוֹר כָּרָה וַיַּחְפְּרֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל בְּשַׁחַת יִפְעָל (ז:ט"ז)

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at
hamaortolna@gmail.com

He dug a pit and fell into it to destruction. The beginning of his downfall was the painful realization that his own delusions caused him to be ridiculed in public. From there he kept falling until he lost everything.

His story teaches us not to rely on our own emotions and interpretations. Instead, we must clarify everything carefully.

The best path to follow is to always get advice from *Morei Horaah* who are great in Torah and *chochma*. *Chazal* present this recommendation in the *Midrash* (שמו"ר ג:ח)

"The *zekeinim* have always maintained *Am Yisrael*.. and *Am Yisrael* always asked the advice of the *zekeinim*, as it says שְׁאַל אָבִיךָ וְיַגֶּדְךָ זְקֵנֶיךָ וְיֹאמְרוּ לָךְ (דברים ל"ב:ז) - Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders and they will say to you. For whoever gets *eitza* from the *zekeinim* will not stumble."

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א
The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at
hamaortolna@gmail.com