

שמח בחלקו and אמת - Parshas Vayigash

ה' טבת **Whose Yahrtzeit is** נחמה רייצא בת ר' אברהם אבא חיים ע"ה **Tribute to a Tzadekes**

And Yosef settled his father and his brothers, giving them land in the best part of the land of Egypt, in the region of Raamses, as פרעה had commanded.

וַיֹּשֶׁב יוֹסֵף אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אֶחָיו וַיֵּתֶן לָהֶם אֲחֻזָּה
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּמִיטֵב הָאָרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ רַעַמְסֵס כְּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה פַּרְעֹה: (בראשית מז, יא)

All of this indicates the ישרות of Yosef, and that he was not into luxuries and extras. Therefore, he did not ask פרעה for permission to give to his father more than the amount that פרעה wanted to give on his own.

רלבג: והנה זה כולו מורה על יושר יוסף והיותו בלתי פונה אל היתרונות ולזה לא שאל מפרעה שירשהו לתת לאביו יותר מהשעור אשר נתרצה בו פרעה מעצמו:

Instructions For Teaching This Lesson:

Present to your class the importance of the אמת of מדה.

Step 1:

Impress upon the students the significance of אמת. Stress that the world exists on אמת and אמת is the seal of Hashem.

Step 2:

Teach the students the how careful we must be with אמת. Show them examples of great people and the levels that they took to avoid even a trace of falsehood.

Step 3:

Discuss with the students how שמח בחלקו enables one to remain fully honest.

Step 4:

Show the video of Naomi Adir

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/k2l834ckwqfe90q94kldr/Naomi-Adir-Tribute.mp4?rlkey=a2mm8bzgzz4ozzf1nkj145i3&e=1&st=au6hfg8p&dl=0>

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רלבג:

התועלת ה' הוא במדות. והוא שאין ראוי לאדם השליט בקניין איש אחר לעשות מהם כחפצו שיתן לאוהביו מהם כאשר רצה זה בעל הקניינים כי אם בשעור שרצה ואע"פ שהקניינים ההם הגיעו לבעלים ההם בסבת זה השליט עליהם. הלא תראה כי יוסף עם היותו שליט בארץ מצרים לא רצה לתת אחוזה לבית אביו במיטב הארץ אם לא ברצון פרעה ולזה ספר שהוא נתן לו אחוזה במיטב הארץ כאשר צוה פרעה וכן תמצא שמעניין התבואה שהיה ביד יוסף לתת ממנה למי שירצה לא רצה לתת ממנה כי אם לפי הצריך להם לבד ... והנה זה כולו מורה על יושר יוסף והיותו בלתי פונה אל היתרונות ולזה לא שאל מפרעה שירשהו לתת לאביו יותר מהשעור אשר נתרצה בו פרעה מעצמו:

It is not proper for a person who is managing someone else's property to do with the property as he desires. Rather he should only give to his relatives what the property owner wanted. This holds true even if the one managing the property is the cause of the owners wealth. This is derived from Yosef. Despite the fact that he was appointed to manage Egypt, he did not want to give his family property in the best part of the land without Paroah wanting that. This is why the Torah emphasizes that, 'Yosef gave them property in the best part of the land like פרעה commanded.' So too, we find in regards to the produce that was under Yosef to distribute to whomever he wanted, he did not want to give them more than they needed... All of this indicates the ישרות - honesty - of Yosef, and that he was not into luxuries and extras. Therefore, he did not even ask פרעה for permission to give to his father more than the amount that פרעה wanted to give on his own.

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The רלבג seems to imply that if Yosef was interested in luxuries, then he would not have been capable of acting with Yashrus to the extent of only giving his family what פרעה wanted. This is difficult to understand, as Yosef was such a great צדיק, and his מדה of אמת was thus so solid. We would think that nothing would affect his ability to act with complete אמת. However, we see from the רלבג that even with his tremendous ישירות, if Yosef would have been focused on luxuries, that Yashrus would have been affected. We see from here how important it is to develop the מדה of being satisfied with less, and being happy with what we have.

The רלבג highlights two important middos that often affect one another:

- The מדה of אמת - honesty
- The מדה of שמח בחלקו - being happy with what one has (and not desiring luxuries)

אבות א"י

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם קיים, על הדין ועל האמת ועל השלום
 Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel used to say: on three things does the world exist: On justice, on truth and on peace

אמת is so important that it is one of the מדות that the world exists on.

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When Yosef's brothers were upset with him, the פסוק points out that they were not able to speak with him peacefully.

בראשית לז, ד

וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי־אֵתוֹ אָהֵב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֶחָיו וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלָם:

And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him so that they could not speak a friendly word to him.

רשי:

ולא יכלו דברו לשלום. מתוך גנותם למדנו שבחם, שלא דברו אחת בפה ואחת בלב:

THEY COULD NOT SPEAK PEACEABLY TO HIM — from the תורה's criticism of the שבטים, we learn something praiseworthy about them: they did not speak one thing with their mouth and a different thing in their hearts

The שבטים did not speak nicely to יוסף when they were upset with him. That would be dishonest. If your actions don't match your feelings, that is a degree of dishonesty.

In the time of the rebuilding of the second המקדש, the Navi זכריה encourages בני ישראל that good times are coming. At the same time, he warns them that they must do a few important things to be זוכה to the גאולה.

זכריה ח, טז

אלה הדברים אשר תעשו ודברו אמת איש את רעהו אמת ומשפט שלום שפטו בשעריכם:

These are the things you are to do: Speak the **truth** to one another and judge with **truth** and justice.

רדק: אלה, דברו אמת. שלא תדברו אחד בפה ואחד בלב:

The רד"ק says that אמת over here refers to not speaking one thing with your mouth but thinking something different in your heart.

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מעשהו של רב ספרא מובא ברש"י מכות כד א ד"ה רב ספרא:
 "בשאלות דרב אחא (שאלתא לו) והכי הוה עובדא: דרב ספרא היה לו חפץ אחד למכור.
 ובא אדם אחד לפניו בשעה שהיה קורא קריאת שמע, ואמר לו: תן לי החפץ בכך וכך דמים.
 ולא ענהו מפני שהיה קורא קריאת שמע. כסבור זה שלא היה רוצה ליתנו בדמים הללו.
 והוסיף אמר: תנהו לי בכך יותר. לאחר שסיים קריאת שמע, אמר לו: טול החפץ בדמים
 שאמרת בראשונה שבאותן דמים היה דעתי ליתנם לך"

Rav Safra was once in the middle of reciting Krias Shema when someone came along to purchase one of his goods. The buyer offered him a certain amount of money, but Rav Safra didn't respond. Thinking that Rav Safra was unsatisfied with his offer, the man offered to pay a higher price. When Rav Safra finally finished saying Shema, he told the man that he would sell the item for the lower price, because when he had heard the man's initial offer, he had already decided in his heart that he would sell it at that price.

This is the middah of "דובר אמת בלבבו" – when you make a decision in your heart, you stick to your decision with your actions.

Since אמת is such an important מדה, Rav Safra even went beyond what was required of him - לפנים משורת הדין -

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The 613 מצוות of the תורה have been summarized at different stages by different great צדיקים.

מכות כד.

בֹּא יִשְׁעִיהוּ וְהַעֲמִידֵן עַל שֵׁשׁ, דְּכָתִיב "הֲלֵךְ צְדָקוֹת, וְדַבֵּר מִיִּשְׁרִים, מֵאִס בְּבֹצֵעַ מַעֲשִׂקוֹת, נִעַר כַּפָּיו מִתְּמֹךְ בַּשָּׁחַד, אֵטֵם אָזְנוֹ מִשְׁמַע דְּמִים, וְנִצֵּם עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בָּרָע".

Yeshaya came and established the 613 mitzvos upon six, as it is written: "He who walks righteously, and speaks honestly; he who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands from holding of bribes, who stops his ears from hearing blood, and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil".

condensed the 613 מצוות into 6 and one of them was "דובר מישרים" - "Speaks honestly"

This shows how integral אמת is to our מצוות. The נביא, Yeshaya counted it as one of the 6 מצוות that together summarize all the מצוות in the תורה.

A seal or stamp represents a person's identity. When someone puts their stamp on something, it means they put their name on it. The

שבת נה.

דָּאָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: חוֹתָמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא "אֵמֶת".

The seal of Hashem is אמת - truth. This means that this is Hashem's essence. This is who Hashem is inside and out and all around.

רש"י: חותמו של הקב"ה אמת - אמצעית לאותיות וראשון ואחרון, על שם "אני ראשון ואני אחרון ואני הוא":

The seal of Hashem is Truth. The word אמת is comprised of the first letter in the aleph bais - א, the middle letter - מ, and the last letter - ת. This shows that אמת is everything!

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יבמות סג.

רב הוה קא מצערא ליה דביתהו, כי אמר לה "עבידי לי טלופח", עבדא ליה חימצי. "חימצי", עבדא ליה טלופחי. כי גדל חייא בריה, אפיך לה. אמר ליה: איעליא לך אמר! אמר ליה: אנא הוא דקא אפיכנא לה. אמר ליה, היינו דקא אמרי אינשי: דנפיק מינה, טעמא מלפך. את לא תעביד הכי, שנאמר: "למדו לשונם דבר שקר העוה וגו'".

Rav's wife would constantly cause him trouble. When he would say to her: Prepare me lentils, she would prepare him peas; if he asked her for peas, she would prepare him lentils. When Chiya, his son, grew up, he would give his father's requests to his mother. When he saw how she would always do the opposite of what he asked for, Chiya had an idea. He would ask his mother for the opposite of what his father wanted and this way Rav would get what he wanted.

Rav said to his son Chiya: Your mother has improved now that you are the one giving over my requests.

Chiya said to Rav: It is I who reverse your request to her.

Rav said to him: This is an example of the well-known adage that people say: He who comes from you (your son) shall teach you wisdom; I should have thought of that idea myself. You, however, should not say the opposite of what I request because that will end up training you to not say the truth.

In this case, R' Chiya was changing the requests to get his father what he truly wanted. Even so, Rav was teaching him that אמת is so important that you shouldn't even do something for the right reason if it can cause you to become accustomed to saying falsehood.

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An amazing true story that shows the importance of the אמת of מדה:

On an ordinary day in 2009, the telephone rang in the office of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim in Queens, New York. The caller was an official in the state government in Albany who asked to speak with the rosh yeshiva, Rav Henoch Leibowitz.

Rabbi Chaim Schwartz, the executive director of the yeshiva, took the call and explained apologetically that Rav Henoch had passed away a year earlier. "Is there something I can do for you?" he asked.

The caller was chagrined to discover that the rosh yeshiva was no longer alive. "I just came from a staff meeting in the government," he told Rabbi Schwartz. "A bill was proposed that wasn't completely ethical, and there was some debate as to whether it should be passed. Governor David Paterson then spoke up and announced that the bill was unacceptable because it does not pass the 'Rabbi Leibowitz smell test,' and he voted it down. Of course, none of us had ever heard of the 'Rabbi Leibowitz smell test,' and we asked him to explain what he meant."

Rabbi Schwartz was enthralled as the caller shared a remarkable story that took place twenty years earlier. After ending the phone call, he contacted the previous executive director of the yeshiva, Rabbi Avrohom Ginsburg, to hear the full details of the incident.

In the 1980s, the New York State government offered a grant for the installation of high-efficiency light fixtures in schools. Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim was eligible for the grant, and Rabbi Avrohom Ginsburg, applied for the funding after receiving professional estimates that put the cost at around \$75,000. The grant was approved, and the funds were transferred to the yeshiva so that the work could be performed. However, Rabbi Ginsburg was resourceful enough to find a professional who was willing to do the job for a much lower price. The final bill came out to only \$60,000, and Rabbi Ginsburg was pleased. It seemed that the yeshiva would be able to pocket an unexpected windfall of \$15,000, which was sorely needed due to its precarious financial position at the time.

When he apprised the rosh yeshiva, Rav Henoch Leibowitz, of the situation, Rabbi Ginsburg was surprised by Rav Henoch's reaction. "We cannot keep this money under any circumstances," Rav Henoch insisted. "It must be returned to the government."

"But I don't feel that I can do that in good conscience," Rabbi Ginsburg objected. "The yeshiva is struggling; how can I give up such a large sum of money? Surely it must be legitimate for us to keep it, since the government already made the allocation. It was only because of my own careful research that we were able to get the job done for a lower price."

Rav Henoch was adamant. "The money was given to us only for the light fixtures; it was not meant for anything else," he said. "I will make the call myself to return it, if that is what is necessary."

Rav Henoch Leibowitz placed a call to the government office, where a newly hired young clerk answered the phone. The rosh yeshiva explained the situation and asked for instructions on returning the surplus funding to the state. "I am not sure how to do that," the clerk admitted. "I will have to call you back."

One week later, the clerk called the rosh yeshiva and informed him that he had been unable to come up with the information. "No one can remember something like this ever happening before," he informed Rav Henoch. "No one has ever asked to return part of a grant, and there is no protocol in place for taking the money back. You can simply keep the funds."

The rosh yeshiva was not about to give up so easily. "I don't feel comfortable keeping this money," he said. "Please find a way for me to return it."

The clerk promised to call him back, but when he spoke to the rosh yeshiva again, he had nothing further to report. "I checked again," he said, "and there is no way for us to take this money back. Please, just keep it for your school."

But Rav Henoch Leibowitz would not be dissuaded. "I am going to write a check to your office and send it back to you," he informed the clerk. "I cannot keep money that isn't rightfully mine."

That clerk was a young man named David Paterson. Years later, as the governor of New York, Paterson was still awed by his dealings with Rav Henoch Leibowitz. "He is the most honest person in the state of New York," the governor told the puzzled officials at the staff meeting that day in 2009. "In my view, he is the gold standard of personal integrity. I measure everything I do with the question of whether it would pass his rigorous standards."

Rav Henoch Leibowitz demonstrated with the impression he made, that if we reflect Hashem's attributes, our impact on the world can be incalculable.

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Now that we better understand how crucial אמת is and how careful we must be with it, we can look further into factors that can impede אמת. We saw in the רלב"ג that if יוסף was interested in luxuries and extras, it would have tainted his מדה of אמת. Being happy with what we are given by Hashem - שמח בחלקו not only gives us happiness, but also enables us to act with אמת and ישרות in our lives.

אבות ד,א

בן זומא אומר, ... איזהו עשיר, השמח בחלקו, שנאמר (תהלים קכח) יגיע כפיו כי תאכל אשריו וטוב לך.

Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot, as it is said: "You shall enjoy the fruit of your labors, you shall be happy and you shall prosper"

רש"י

השמח בחלקו. בחלק שהקב"ה מזמין לו הכל נוטל בעין יפה. נ"א שיש לו חירות נפש ולב טוב באותו חלק שהקב"ה מזמין לו בין טוב בין רע בין רב בין מעט ואינו מצטער להיות רודף ולהוט לאצור ולקנות יותר מחלקו ואילו לא היה שמח מיגיע כפיו שהוא אוכל מאי אשרי איכא אפילו עשיר שבעשירים ודואג ועצב בחלקו הרי הוא כעני שבעניים אלא ודאי באכלו בשמחה קאמר ומדקא משבח ליה קרא הכי אלמא עשיר קרי ליה:

Someone who is really rich is someone who is happy with his lot - and looks at what Hashem gave him with a positive outlook. A different understanding - that he is content with the portion that Hashem provides him, whether it is good or bad, big or small. And he is not distressed, to pursue and be obsessed about saving and acquiring more than his share. If someone is always worrying about acquiring more, they can never be happy no matter how much money/riches they have.

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רבינו יונה

איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו. האומר די לי בחלקי אחר שאני יכול לפרנס את עצמי ואת ביתי ולעסוק בתורה. מה לי לממון אחר אך להיות לי כדי צרכי ולהקים את דבר ה'..... כי מה יתרון לאדם בכל עמלו אך לקיים את התורה והמצות:

Who is the rich one? He who is happy with his lot. He says, "I have enough with my lot: since I am able to support myself and my household and to engage in Torah study. What is the point of money in this world? It is only for me to have what I need to serve Hashem and fulfill the תורה and the מצוות.... As it says in קוהלת 'what is the advantage to man in all of his work,' except to fulfill the Torah and the commandments.

This concept of using one's wealth solely to serve Hashem was perfectly embodied by a very special woman named Naomi Adir. Naomi's eighth yahrtzeit is this week on ה' טבת.

נחמה רייצא בת ר' אברהם אבא חיים ע"ה

Naomi was a blind woman who lived the most simple life. She supported herself with the minimum that she needed and used every bit of extra money that she had to support mosdos of Torah. She lived in the same apartment that her family lived in during the Great Depression. She never upgraded. Although she was not wealthy, she gave millions to צדקה over her 99 year life-time. Her only regret at the end of her life was that she needed to spend money to get home health aids to allow her to stay at home and that she was not able to give that money to צדקה as well. Naomi was never privileged to marry and have children, but her legacy is the thousands of talmidim that have benefited from her generous support of Yeshivos around the world.

יהי זכרה ברוך