

On The Heart

"And it was many days and the King of Mitzraim died" (Shemos 2:23). This verse refers to the period of time that Moshe Rabbeinu was in Midian after he fled from Mitzraim. How many days was it? The Ramban explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was twelve years old when he fled from Mitzraim. He returned as an eighty-year-old man. Sixty-eight years is a long time. Aharon was the leader of the Jewish people during Moshe's absence. Now Moshe, his younger brother was returning to take over the leadership.

"When he (Aharon) sees you (Moshe) he will rejoice in his heart" (Shemos 4:14). Rashi explains that one might think that Aharon would feel slighted because his younger brother was rising to greatness. Aharon rose above that. He was truly happy in his heart. Because of that, he merited to wear the *Choshen Mishpat* (Breastplate of Judgment) upon his heart.

"Into the *Choshen Mishpat* you shall place the *Urim ViTumim* (parchment with Hashem's Name written on it). They shall be on Aharon's heart when he comes before Hashem. And Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel on his heart constantly before Hashem" (Shemos 28:30). Wearing the *Choshen Mishpat* was a tremendous *zechus* (merit). When crucial questions of national importance arose, the Kohen Godol would ask the *Urim ViTumim*. The Ramban explains that only the Kohen's eyes were able to see the stones of the *Choshen* light up, conveying Hashem's answer to the question. This required a level of *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit). Aharon HaKohen rose to this level, in the merit of his humbling himself before his younger brother. (Heard from Rav Pesach Rosenzweig, Shlita)

Kinderlach . . .

"I'm older. I get the bigger piece of cake." "Me first. I'm the oldest." "Don't pay any attention to him. He's only my younger brother." These statements all lack humility. The person is only concerned for himself and his interests. A humble person always places the other person above himself. "I may be older, but you are smarter." "My younger sister won a prize for her good middos. I never did that." Kinderlach, be truly happy for other's success. Look up to them. Be humble in your heart.

Guiding Light

"Don't worry Chaim, I'm right behind you."

"That's what I'm worried about, Shimi. No one is in front of me and it is pitch black in here. I can't see anything."

Boom!

"What was that Chaim?"

"I fell down. I must have tripped over something. I think I found a light. Yes, here is an oil lamp. Let's light it."

"Wow. One little lamp lights up this whole dark place. Look at that, Chaim. You tripped over a rock."

"I see Shimi. Boruch Hashem we have this light, or I could have fallen into that pit over there."

"Boruch Hashem."

"And they shall take pure, pressed olive oil for the light, to kindle the lamp continually" (Shemos 27:20). The Medrash Rabba (36:3) compares this oil and the light that it sheds to the light of Torah. A person without Torah is likened to someone walking in the dark. He trips and falls over all sorts of obstacles. The obstacles are sins, and he falls into their trap. However, one who toils in Torah is compared to a person walking with a lamp in his hand. He will not stumble because the light guides his way. Similarly, the light of Torah steers us clear of sin, and guides us on our journey through life.

Kinderlach . . .

B'eiras Hashem you will have many challenges, tests, and opportunities in your lives. The Torah will always steer you in the right direction. Hashem's Torah is the "guidebook" for how to live our lives. Without the "guidebook" we will surely get lost. With it, we will accomplish tremendous things. Always learn as much Torah as you can. And seek the advice of Rabbonim whose "Daas Torah" will keep you on the right path.

Planned Obsolescence

"It is a real privilege to be your guest Mr. Shearim. Thank you for granting me this interview."

"The pleasure is all mine, young man. Ask whatever questions you like."

"Our school class wants to know how you became wealthy, Mr. Shearim."

"That's simple, young man. I developed a product and sold it to people."

"Many people do that, Mr. Shearim. However, they do not become multi-billionaires like you."

"Correct, young man. I kept changing my product, making the old one obsolete. People constantly came back to me for a new update of the product. I kept making sale after sale to the same people. That's my secret. I make customers dependent on me. If you make them independent, you'll never see them or their money again."

"Take pure pressed olive oil, for light, to keep the lamp (Menorah in the *Mishkan*) always lit" (Shemos 27:20). The Gemora (Shabbos 21a) comments that the flame must burn by itself, without any outside assistance. We all know that the light of the Menorah symbolized Torah. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains the wick is like a student of Torah, and the fire that lights the wick is like a teacher. The fire must light the wick and make it burn independently. Similarly, the teacher's goal is to make the student able to learn Torah on his own. The teacher must make himself obsolete! Then his student will burn brightly with the fire of Torah.

Kinderlach . . .

The wealthy man made his riches by making people dependent upon him. His goal is to take, take, and take from them. The more he takes, the wealthier he becomes. The Rebbe who teaches Torah is just the opposite. His goal is to give, give, and give Torah knowledge to his students. The more he gives, the wealthier he becomes. Who is really richer? Money comes and goes. Even the money that stays does not go into the next world. Torah is always with us. And. It is worth much more than money. Learn well, kinderlach, in order to teach. Then give, give, and give Torah. You will become wealth beyond your wildest dreams.

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