

Kindert Torah

Parashas Vayigash

בס"ד

Turn the Wheel

"This farm sure is beautiful, Abba. Thank you for bringing us here."
"My pleasure, kinderlach. Let's see what's doing in that building over there."

The family walked through the door into a small room and found a man cranking a large wheel. He turned and turned and turned the wheel. Behind the crank was a series of gears and pulleys leading to a big grinding stone. A trough slowly fed kernels of wheat under the grinding stone. Freshly ground flour flowed out the other side.

"Excuse me sir, do you mind if we ask you a few questions?"

"Not at all. I welcome the company."

"It must be hard work turning this wheel."

"Not really."

"Well, then you must be very strong in order to power this contraption that grinds the flour."

"Not really."

"How then do you turn this big, heavy grinding stone?"

The man motioned to the family to come closer to him.

"Do you want to know a secret?"

"Yes!" the children answered excitedly.

"Look closely at this crank. Do you see any mechanical connection between the wheel that I am cranking, and the apparatus that is turning?"

The children looked and looked, searched and searched. Try as hard as they may, they found no connection.

"This is truly amazing, sir. Your crank is not connected to the apparatus at all."

"Correct."

"Where does the power that turns the grinding wheel come from?"

"There is a motor buried deep in the ground. A hidden cable connects it to the apparatus. That motor is turning the grinding stone. My crank wheel supplies no power at all."

"Fascinating. May we ask you another question, sir?"

"Sure."

"Why did the owner build a flour mill with a fake wheel and a hidden motor? It is very misleading."

"That is an excellent question, children. The answer is very deep, so listen carefully. The owner built this flour mill similar to the way that Hashem set up the world."

"Now you really have our curiosity going."

"Look in the 'Mesillas Yesharim' at the end of chapter 21. Rav Luzzato explains that a person's *parnassa* (income) is fixed on Rosh Hashanah."

"If so, then why do people work?"

"Excellent! Rav Luzzato himself asks the same question. Adam HaRishon was cursed with 'Bizeias apecha tochal lechem'

(By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread)[Bereshis 3:19]. This is like a tax that must be paid. In order to receive the *parnassa* that was decreed to him, a person must do some *hishtadlus* (preparative action) upon which Hashem's blessings can rest. We refer to this as work. A person's work is his *hishtadlus* that will allow Hashem's blessings of *parnassa* to come. The Mesillas Yesharim advises a person to not expend too much effort in *hishtadlus*. Hashem can bless a person with much *parnassa*, even though he only does a little *hishtadlus*. More work does not mean more *parnassa*."

"That is fascinating, sir, but how is it connected to the flour mill?"

"The crank that I am turning is like the *hishtadlus*. The grinding wheel is like the *parnassa*. The hidden motor is like Hashem's hidden control over *parnassa*."



My cranking (*hishtadlus*) does not make the ground flour (*parnassa*) come; for the crank is not connected to the wheel. The hidden motor (Hashem) does that. I just need to keep turning lightly and easily ('*Bizeias apecha tochal lechem*') and the motor will do the heavy work, and make the flour come."

"Sir, that is wonderful! You have given us a whole new perspective on work. There is no need to *shvitz* (sweat) over '*Bizeias apecha tochal lechem*.'"

Kindertlach . . .

"And now, do not be sad . . . because you sold me, because Hashem sent me ahead of you to be a provider" (Bereshis 45:5). Yosef was Hashem's agent of *parnassa* in Mitzraim. The *parnassa* that they were to receive was provided via Yosef. Hashem has many "*parnassa* agents". He uses them to send His blessings. We must always remember Who is powering the grinding stone, Who is sending the agents. He generates the *parnassa*, and sends it with one of His agents. We need only lightly turn the wheel. Kindertlach, may you always be blessed with a "*parnassa* kalla v'nikiya" (an easy and clean livelihood).

Don't Hurt Back

"Ouch!"

"What happened, Sari?"

"Rivkie hit me, Imma."

"Why did you do that Rivkie?"

"Because Sari pushed me, Imma."

"Why did you push her, Sari?"

"If you would know what she said about me, Imma..."

"I see. Sari is hurting Rivkie because Rivkie hurt her. And Rivkie is hurting Sari because Sari hurt her."

"Right, Imma."

"Each one of you thinks that it is okay to hurt someone who has hurt you."

"Isn't it, Imma? After all, if my sister does not treat me properly, why should I be careful about her feelings?"

"Let us see what Yosef HaTsaddik has to say about that. His brothers hurt him terribly. At first, they wanted to kill him. Then they left him in a pit to die. Finally, they sold him as a slave."

"That is truly horrible, Imma."

"Yes, girls. However, Yosef was a *tsaddik*. Hashem was with him. He did not stay a slave, but rose to become second in command of Mitzrayim. Twenty-two years after the sale, Hashem united Yosef and his brothers. He recognized them, but they did not know who he was. When he finally revealed himself they were shocked. What was his reaction?"

"He must not have treated them nicely after what they did to him."

"You might think so girls; however, Yosef was a *tsaddik*. He comforted and appeased them. Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt"l is in awe of Yosef's *middos*. We are all familiar with the obligations of the person who hurts someone else. He must apologize and repay the damage that was done. What about the obligations of the one who was hurt?"

"Obligations? He was wronged, Imma!"

"True, Sari, however, there are still *mitzvos* *bein adam lichaveiro* (between man and his fellow) telling us how to treat people. We may not insult them or hurt their feelings even if they wrong us. That is exactly what Yosef HaTsaddik did. He was careful with the feelings of his brothers. They felt so ashamed of what they had done. He could have hurt their feelings even more by telling them how much suffering they had caused him. Instead, he comforted them. 'And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, for having sold me here; for Hashem sent me ahead to be a provider' (Bereshis 45:5). Yosef knew that everything was *min HaShomayim* (from Heaven). The brothers were just agents to carry out Hashem's Will. Therefore, he appeased them."

"The greatness of Yosef is so compelling that it is frightening."

"That is exactly what Rav Yerucham says, Rivkie. We can take a big lesson from Yosef HaTsaddik - what *madraygas* a person can reach."

Kindertlach . . .

How do we react when someone hurts us? "I'll get him back!" Wrong! Besides transgressing two *mitzvos* in the Torah (bearing a grudge and taking revenge), you are showing very bad *middos*. "I won't hurt him, but I just won't be nice to him." Wrong again! You are still bearing a grudge, and you are hurting his feelings and not being nice to him. "I will realize that the hurt was *min HaShomayim*, forgive him in my heart, and attempt to speak to him about my feelings." Right! You have accomplished something truly awesome. You have shown a very good *middah*. You are on your way to being a *tsaddik*, just like Yosef.