

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS  
VAYECHI

# בשבת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS  
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

## WISDOM OF AGES

In the beginning of our *Parshah*, Yosef brings his sons, Ephraim and Menashe, to receive a *Brachah* from their grandfather, Yaakov. Surprisingly, Yaakov placed his right hand on the younger brother, Ephraim, and his left hand on Menashe. Yosef attempted to intervene, but Yaakov told him that what he did was purposeful, as he knew Ephraim's offspring will become greater than Menashe's.<sup>1</sup>

The *Medrash*<sup>2</sup> says that this wasn't the only time Yosef attempted to correct Yaakov. In fact, the chronology unfolded as follows. 1. Yaakov refers to Yosef's sons as Ephraim and Menashe - verbally placing the younger son before the older. 2. Yosef, in response, deliberately places his sons facing Yaakov with the older one on Yaakov's right. 3. Yaakov crosses his hands, placing his right hand on Ephraim, the younger son. 4. Yosef attempts to physically move his father's hand. 5. Yaakov says, "Are you attempting to move the hand that was victorious against an angel?" 6. Yosef responds, "But father, this one is the oldest." 7. Yaakov says, "I understand, but I know something that you are unaware of - the younger son will be greater than the older."

All in all, the *Chidushei HaLev*<sup>3</sup> points out that at three points Yosef was under the impression that Yaakov made a mistake, until Yaakov finally explained what he was doing. Yosef was a great man, and certainly understood the greatness of Yaakov. Nevertheless, Yosef, on some level, had a hard time recognizing that it was he who was in error, and not his father. Because of this, it took three instances for the great Yosef to be told that it was he who was not seeing the entire picture.

There are people in our lives who have a broader view of the world, and understand the workings of the world better than we might. These people are our *Rebbeim* and *Rabbonim*, people who have spent years learning Torah, and understanding how to properly weigh and measure all of life's circumstances, and decide the correct course of action, according to Hashem's will.

Not only is it important to reach out to these people when we need advice, it is important to have ongoing communication beforehand. By growing close to our *Rebbeim* and *Rabbonim*, we can use their wisdom to help us better serve Hashem.

1 Bereishis 48

2 Pesikta Rabbasi 3:4, Tanchumah Vayechi 6:8, Rabbah 97:4

3 Bereishis 48:13

**By growing close to our *Rebbeim* and *Rabbonim*, we can use their vision and wisdom to help us better serve Hashem.**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Even if we are motivated to find someone who we can ask advice, it is not always so easy to create that sort of relationship. One of the more daunting or frustrating aspects is the fact that sometimes we may reach out to someone, only to find that they are too busy to help - and certainly too busy to develop an ongoing rapport. What can one do under these conditions?

It is important to realize that everyone, even the smartest and most wealthy among us, need guidance in life, and especially in *Avodas Hashem*. When we understand how important this is, it is easier to keep trying (without being an annoyance) to be in touch with a *Rebbi* or *Rav*.

Even if we can say, "It's not my fault that the *Rav* is so busy," - we may be right, but we will still be lacking this integral resource in our lives.

The more central our *Avodas Hashem* is to us, the more important it will be to surround ourselves with people who can help us. And the more important that becomes, the easier it will be for us to push ourselves to develop the relationships necessary to serve Hashem.



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Gershon Edelstein, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevezh,  
Darkei HaChizuk pg. 487

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## WORTH THE BATTLE

It had been decades since childhood friends Shimmy and Naftali\* had seen each other. It didn't take long to catch up, though, almost as if they had never been apart. After discussing their professions, where they live, and so on, the conversation turned to more serious matters. "I have to tell you, Shimmy, things have been pretty tough recently. I lost my job a couple of years ago, and have used up all my savings. Also, I'm going through a rough patch in another area in my life, and can use the advice of a Rav."

Shimmy nodded thoughtfully, "Here are two phone numbers - one is a friend who is in real estate, Chezky Cohen. Great guy, and he might be able to help you financially. Not charity - he'll help you find a good deal. And this number is for a Rebbi of mine, Rabbi Hochberg. I've been very close with him since high school. I know you don't know him, but he has a very good understanding of the world, he might be helpful. I'll just warn you, they are both very busy, so it might be some time until you can actually reach them."

Months later, Naftali and Shimmy were speaking by phone. "I have to tell you, I'm very frustrated with Rabbi Hochberg!" said Naftali. "I called him and left a voicemail, and he never returned the call!"

"I'm sorry, but remember, I did say that he's very busy. Maybe try again?"

"Try again? Look, I understand that he's busy, but I'm not in high school. I'm an adult, and I think he should have gotten back to me." Shimmy didn't know how to respond so he decided to change the subject. "How're things going on the financial front?"

"Oh, right. Well, I reached out to your friend Chezky, but I didn't hear back from him. I plan on giving him another call - the truth is, this'll be the third phone call, but I know you said that it might take some patience."

Shimmy was flabbergasted. "Naftali! Did you hear what you just said? When it comes to finances you are willing to put in the effort to make it happen. But when it comes to advise, all that falls to the wayside?"

The line went silent. "You're right," said Naftali. "What can I say? I'm going to give Rabbi Hochberg another call, and I'll do it before I call Chezky Cohen."

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- A person who learns Torah properly will not only be able to give good advice, but others will appreciate and enjoy the advice they give.<sup>1</sup>
- Though finding a Rebbi for life may be very difficult, it is imperative to do so - and both parties will ultimately benefit.<sup>2</sup>
- If one mentally considers someone their Rebbi, they will better retain what they learn from them, even if they are both equally intelligent.<sup>3</sup>

1 Avos 6:1

2 *Lechem Shamayim* on Avos 1:16, s.v. עשה לך רב

3 *Rabbeinu Yonah* on Avos 1:6 s.v. יהושע בן פרחיה