

Leadership Quality

“Abbas, can you please help me with my homework?”

“My pleasure, Chaim. What’s the subject matter?”

“This week’s parsha. What name did Paroh call Yosef after he was promoted to second in command over Mitzraim?”

“Let’s have a look here in the Chumash. Here it is – chapter 41, verse 45. “And Paroh called Yosef by the name *Tsafnas Paneach*.”

“*Tsafnas Paneach*. What an unusual name. Does it have a meaning?”

“Chaim, I had the same question. I looked at the commentaries of our sages on the Chumash. Rashi explains that *Tsafnas* means “one who explains hidden things”. Yosef was able to explain the hidden meanings of dreams.”

“What about the other name, Abba?”

The Netziv writes that the word *Paneach* is a combination of two words: ‘Pa’ is from the word ‘*hofah*’ means appearance and honor. ‘*Nach*’ is from the word ‘*nachas*’, a spiritual pleasure. Yosef received great honor, and was a pleasure to all who saw him.”

“Why did Paroh give him that name, Abba?”

“Paroh was amazed, Chaim. He never saw anyone like Yosef. Yosef was awesome. He was a young man, only thirty years old. He had spent the past twelve years in prison. He was so lowly that when Paroh summoned him, they drew him out of a pit, bathed him, shaved him, and changed his clothes. Then he proceeded to interpret Paroh’s dreams, and draw up a plan to save Mitzraim from the starvation of famine.”

“That is pretty awesome for a slave who has been in prison for twelve years.”

“True, Chaim, but Paroh was even more impressed by something else. When Yosef was given all of this honor and responsibility, he handled it perfectly. Normally, a lowly slave prisoner cannot become a royal officer overnight. Yet, that is exactly what Yosef did. He handled himself as if he had been born a prince. Paroh saw that Yosef was not really a slave, but a true leader. Therefore, he gave him a name which reflected his inner qualities.”

“Abba, this is great. Thank you so much.”

“My pleasure, Chaim. Do you know that we all have this quality of Yosef

within us?”

“Really Abba? In what way?”

“The Torah refers to the Jewish people as a ‘Kingdom of Kohanim and a Holy Nation.’”

“What does that mean Abba?”

“Hashem chose us from among all the other nations, to be a light to the world. We received the Torah, our guide to life. When we live according to the Torah, we have a perfect society, which is a shining example to the world.”

“What you are saying, Abba, is that we lead by example.”

“Exactly, Chaim. When we are on the job, we can be an example of how to conduct our business matters honestly and faithfully. Our relationships with our neighbors also show our commitment to peace and cooperation.”

“I can think of other examples, Abba.”

“Go ahead, Chaim.”

“When we give charity and help other people, we show how important it is to care for and help people. When we honor our parents and older people, we teach the world the importance of respect.”

“Wonderful, Chaim. In this way, we are like Yosef. The more that we live according to the Torah, the more we lead by example. And the more we lead by example, the more our true leadership qualities shine. Paroh recognized it in Yosef, and people will recognize it in you.”

“What a wonderful feeling, Abba, to know that we can have an impact on the world.”

“That is our leadership quality, Chaim. We inherited it from our ancestor Yosef.”

“I should get back to my homework, Abba. I have to learn the Torah well, to know how to live by its rules, and to be a good example.”

“Spoken by a true leader, Chaim.”

Kinderlach . . .

Chaim said it all. We are born leaders. The best type of leaders – ones who lead by example. Kinderlach, may we all be shining examples of perfected personalities, who follow Hashem’s Torah will all of our hearts.

Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin

“Can I see your menorah, Yossie?”

“Sure, Dovid.”

“Wow, it really is beautiful.”

“I am really looking forward to lighting all eight candles tonight. I have just enough oil left.”

As Yossie said that, he noticed that Dovid’s face fell.

“What’s the matter Dovid?”

“It’s really nothing, Yossie. Just that I do not have enough oil to light any candles tonight.”

“Oy vey. That’s terrible! Let me give you some of my oil.”

“You can’t do that, Yossie. You will not be able to light all eight candles.”

Yossie opened up the Chofetz Chaim’s masterpiece of halacha, the Mishna Brura to the halachos of Chanukah (671:2).

“It says clearly that if oil is scarce, and your friend has no oil, it is better to give him some oil, and you can both do the mitzvah. The *din* (minimum requirement of the law) is only one candle per night.”

“That is wonderful. I will be able to light my menorah tonight after all.”

Kinderlach . . .

We all know the halacha of “Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin” (doing the mitzvah in the most beautiful fashion). We light one candle the first night and add one each night until we light eight on the last night. Yossie has another type of “Mehadrin” in mind. The Mishna Brura allows one to sacrifice his own “Mehadrin” to give another the opportunity to do the mitzvah. Yossie wants to do a “Mehadrin” (beautiful) act of chessed (kindness) for his friend Dovid. This adds a new dimension to the “Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin” of Chanukah.

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