

Kindert Torah

Parashas Vayigash

T"01

Judgment Day

"Six hundred ninety seven, 698, 699, 700. Finished."

"What did you finish, Shaya?"

"I finished counting out the money that I am going to pay back to the king's loan officer."

"My dear husband, I did not know that you borrowed 700 silver pieces."

"I didn't."

"Then why are you paying it back?"

"I actually borrowed 1000 silver pieces, but I am only paying back 700."

"How do you propose to get away with that, Shaya?"

"Don't worry, Miri. I have it all worked out. I will tell the king's officer that

I performed many favors for him during the time of the loan. I am also paying him back with newer coins than he lent me. They should be worth more to him."

"My dear husband, I do not wish to spoil your plans. However, do you realize that you are dealing with the king's loan officer? He is an honorable and influential man. I would be surprised if he accepted such excuses. He wants the loan paid in full."

"I realize that, Miri. However, I am a very good talker. Trust me. I know what I am doing."

"Okay. Don't say that I didn't warn you."

The day of the loan payment approaches. Miri makes one last attempt to change her husband's mind, enlisting the children's help.

"Abba, we don't want anything bad to happen to you. Please pay back the whole loan to the king's officer."

Shaya becomes angry.

"Don't tell me how to conduct my business affairs! I am doing this for your own good. I will pay less money and we will have more left for ourselves. Stay out of my way!"

And so the day finally arrives. Shaya packs up his 700 silver coins and sets out for the royal palace. He comes to the gate and is ushered in to the chamber of the royal loan officer.

"Yes, loyal subject. What is your business here?"

The officer sits behind a large oak desk. He is dressed in royal robes. Surrounding him are his deputies and servants, who stand ready to carry out his every com-

mand. Shaya's knees begin to feel weak.

"I repeat, WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HERE?"

The voice thunders in Shaya's ears. The deputies and servants look on impatiently. Shaya wants to speak, but he is petrified from fear.

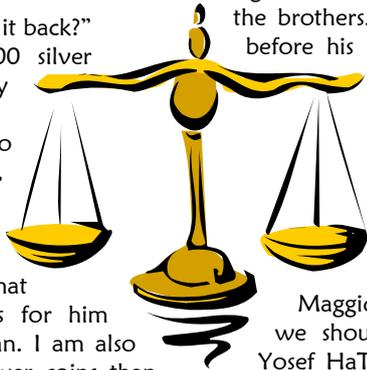


"We will be terrified on the Day of Judgment . . . Yosef was the youngest of the brothers, yet they could not stand before his reproof." (Medrash Rabba 93). As the verse states,

"And his brothers were not able to answer him because they were panicked" (Bereshis 45:3). The previous story was adapted from

a parable of the Dubno Maggid, illustrating the fear that

Yosef HaTsaddik was only flesh and blood, and the brothers were terrified by his reproof. How much more so should we be afraid of the judgment of The King of Kings, The Holy One Blessed Be He.



Kinderlach . . .

Many things are unpredictable in life. However, one thing is for sure: Yom HaDin will come. Many people try to help us prepare for that day. Our parents give us a good start in life. Teachers educate us in the ways of Hashem. Rabbis and community leaders try to keep us on the straight path. They are all here to help us. Just like Shaya's wife and children tried to help him. Listen to them. Do what they say. Help yourself. Prepare for the big day.

Everlasting Love

"Hashem loves you, Avi."

"That makes me feel very good and secure, Abba. How do you know that He loves me?"

"He explicitly states His love for every member of Klal Israel several times in the Torah, Avi. Our Elders have incorporated some of those passages into the tefillah. One of them appears in the second blessing before the evening Kriyas Shema, 'With an everlasting love, You have loved the House of Israel, Your people.' Its source is the verse, 'And I have loved you with an everlasting love.'¹ Another proof of His love for us is the exquisite gift that He gave us."

"I know what the gift is Abba – the Torah!"

"Precisely, Avi, as the blessing continues,

'Torah and mitzvos, statutes and laws, You taught us.' Rav Hirsch describes the Torah as our most precious possession – an eternal gift of Hashem's everlasting love. The blessing goes on to describe our demonstration of our realization of the wealth of the Torah. 'Therefore Hashem, our G-d, when we lie down and when we rise, we will discuss Your statutes, and rejoice in the words of Your Torah and in Your commandments forever. For they are our life and they lengthen our days, and upon them we will meditate day and night.'

"We love the words of Torah so much, that we cannot stop thinking about them."

"Indeed, Avi. The Maggid Tsedek points out two different categories of Torah laws. 'Chukim' are statutes or decrees whose reasons are not known to us. Therefore, we merely discuss them. 'Divrei Torah and mitzvos', on the other hand, were given by Hashem with a depth of understanding. As we exert ourselves to comprehend them, we become happy, as the verse states, 'The orders of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart'.² Hashem is so kind and generous, that in addition to the gift of happiness, He rewards us with long life for our Torah study, as the verse states, 'For He is your life and the length of your days.'³

"He really loves us, Abba!"

"Beyond any shadow of a doubt, Avi. Therefore, we request that He never remove His love from us. Lastly, we bless Him for His love of His nation, Israel. With that we are ready to say the evening Kriyas Shema."

"May it be with awesome kavannah (intention)!"

"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

We are so fortunate! Hashem loves us! The Almighty Creator of the universe, King of kings, the Holy One blessed be He cherishes us, His chosen nation! That alone should make us feel great. His affection for us is stated in the Torah and in the tefillos. He also demonstrates His caring by showering us with his most precious gift, the Torah. Contemplating His words brings us happiness and long life in this world, and eternal reward in the world to come. And so, we meditate on them day and night! May He never remove His love from us, and may we always learn His Torah and fulfill His mitzvos!

¹ Yirmiyahu 31:2

² Tehillim 19:9

³ Devarim 30:20