

The Root of Self Confidence

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ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בי
אדני ידבר עבדך דבר... (מד, יח)

When I was younger, I had a friend who loved to play hockey. He was an incredible goaltender - until the other team managed to eke one by him. After that, his level of play would drop significantly. What essentially happened, was that after suffering a single setback, his confidence in his abilities was totally shattered, and his performance reflected this.

This week's *Parsha* begins with what might seem at first glance to be an astounding display of self-confidence. Yehuda approaches Yosef and tells him that he intends to speak harshly towards him. Yosef at that time was the viceroy of the most formidable country in world. He was in his palace surrounded by his personal company of warriors. Yehuda, on the other hand, was one of only 11 foreign laymen, far away from any allies. Confronting Yosef in such a context demanded tremendous courage. Yet, Yehuda displayed courage and risked his life to do what he felt was required.

Various *seforim* point out that what spurred Yehuda to do this though, was not confidence in his own abilities. Rather, it was his deep conviction that what he was doing was the *Ratzon Hashem*. Yehuda understood that the *Shechina*, which resides in every single Jewish person, would help him

succeed regardless of the obstacles that he may face. It was his belief in the presence of the *Shechina* inside of him, which enabled him to aggressively confront the viceroy of Egypt.

This, was the message which Yehuda conveyed to Yosef. "אדני בי. I am about to speak forcefully towards you. I am about to engage in something that might seem suicidal. I have the courage to do so because בי אדני, for inside of me is the *Shechina*."

The author of the *sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evne* explained once in a *shiur* that this idea needs to be the essence of a Jewish person's confidence. A Jew's confidence is not the result of his own abilities in the simple sense. Rather, a Jew internalizes that Hashem resides in the deepest part of his or her *neshama*. The *Shechina* is clothed by the person's *neshama* which serves as a garment that conceals Him. When a Jew is self-confident, it must not be a display of amour-propre in the typical sense, but an outgrowth of the realization that even his own essence, his very soul, is only a garment through which Hashem expresses Himself. And when a Jew does exhibit such confidence, he will be able to stride up to the most imposing personality and stand up for what is right.



TIDBITS...

In this week's *Parsha* the *Shevatim* are accused of stealing a goblet from Yosef. Here are interesting facts about stolen items.

- In July 2008, a beach consisting of 400 metres of white sand was stolen in Jamaica. The 500 truckloads of sand remain missing ten years later.
- The intellectual property law doesn't cover magic tricks. A magician has no recourse against someone stealing an original trick from him. (Except of course, to turn the thief into a rabbit).
- After about 900 of the country's 3,500 pay-phones were stolen, Malaysian authorities discovered that fishermen had cut off the handsets and connected them to high-powered batteries. The reason why they did this was that the electricity passing through the microphones produced a high-pitched sound that attracted fish.

RIDDLE



Although I am not a Levi, I still wash the hands of the *Kohanim* before they *duchen*. Who am I?

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THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO SENT IN AN ANSWER TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: What *Shaila* may not be asked to a *Rav* in *shul*?

ANSWER: A person may not bring a long knife into a *shul*. Therefore, a person may not ask a *Rav* to look at a *chalif* to see if he may use it for *Shechita*. (*Orach Chaim* 151, 6)

WINNER OF LAST WEEK'S PRIZE: Moshe Chaim Brogna



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Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

I had a snack of crackers and grapes, however, I'm not sure if I ate a K'zayis of grapes. Should I insert al ha'etz bracha achrona should I recite?

The *Shulchan Aruch* (208, 18) discusses a case regarding a person who ate cake together with a drink. The person is unsure, however, if the drink was wine or a regular *shehakol* drink. The *halacha* is that in such a case the person may not include the insert for wine in the *bracha* of על המייה. The *Mishna Berura* explains that this is because if the drink was in fact not wine, the mentioning of wine in the *bracha* would be considered inappropriate and a hefsek. Rav Moshe Feinstein in *Igros Moshe* (*Orach Chaim* II, 109) infers from this, that if a person ate enough *mezonos* for an *al hamichya* but drank less wine than the amount required to recite an *al haGefen*, he may add על הגפן to his *bracha achrona*. This is because in such a case, the mention of *gefen* is not inappropriate, as the person did ingest wine. Although many *Poskim*

disagree with Rav Moshe's *p'sak*; see, for example *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa* in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach 54, 71 and *Orchos Rabbeinu* pg 89, they do so only in a situation where the person was certain that he drank less than a *shiur*. In your case since you are unsure if you had a *shiur*, everyone would agree that you should include *al ha'etz* in your *bracha achrona*.

Please note: In the last publication it was written that wrapping a *challah* in foil and placing it in an oven which is set at a low heat setting is forbidden, as it would constitute *hatmana*. This is not correct. Although wrapping a hot *challah* with foil in order to preserve its heat would constitute *hatmana*, this is only the case when the purpose of the foil was to insulate the *challah*. However, when a person puts a *challah* wrapped in foil into the oven, the foil is not meant to serve as insulation but merely serves as the "pot" which contains the *challah* as it prevents the *challah* from drying out.

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The 650 Ruble Kvittel

In the previous edition, R' Shachna had a very successful wine store. But then his life took a devastating turn and he soon was left with very little money. He managed to borrow enough to purchase wine at the fair in Hungary. On the way, he decided to stop by R'Tzvi Hirsch in order to receive a *bracha*. He presented his 'kvittel' to the Rebbe.

Along with the paper, R' Shachna placed a few coins on the Rebbe's desk, as was customary in most places. R' Tzvi Hirsch scanned the 'kvittel' for a few minutes, then looked up at R' Shachna and told him, "Requesting a *bracha* of such abundance requires a much greater donation than a few coins. I would say that 650 rubles should be the appropriate amount. Without that, I'm afraid there is nothing I can do for you."

R' Shachna stood frozen, but his mind was racing – that was the exact amount he was able to borrow for this trip! What a dilemma – Should he could keep the money and continue on to Hungary? This would be without a *bracha*. Or, should he steel himself in his belief that *tzadikim*, because of the great levels of piety and holiness that they've reached, are privy to some very lofty information. His better instincts prevailed. His *Chasidic* heart beat loudly as he intuitively handed over, with some trepidation, his entire pouch full of coins – 650 rubles! The Rebbe was so thrilled at the sight of the full money bag, that he didn't bother getting it counted. He smiled broadly at R' Shachna and showered him with rich and heartfelt *brachos* for his overall success, and in particular, for a successful trip to Hungary!

True, R' Shachna was now penniless and worse yet, in terrible debt, but he was no longer being

guided by his money. He was now being led by the direction and *bracha* of the holy Rebbe. With this thought, he continued on to Hungary, comforted by the firm belief that he was following the right path.

It was fine to travel in a dreamy daze of hope, but when he arrived at the great wine fair, the stark reality of his having nothing with which to do business, left him scratching his head as to what he could do. Finally, he decided to go to the grand hotel. Every year, the lobby of this hotel was transformed into a hectic marketplace. Brokers darted around the large room, forging deals between buyers and sellers. The activity was somewhat chaotic, but at the end of the trading days, most people exited from there with smiling, satisfied faces. R' Shachna sat there, watching the action like a spectator and calmly waiting for Hashem's mysterious ways to reveal themselves with the help of the Rebbe's *bracha*.

As the days passed, most of the merchandise had been sold and the grand hotel lobby emptied out. R' Shachna, on the other hand, found himself the only merchant still in the great hall, still waiting for...

Suddenly, one of the local brokers burst into the hall breathlessly, seeking out somebody, anybody for one final deal. The broker had heard about R' Shachna's difficulties, but it didn't matter now, "Even Shachna can make this deal happen," he thought to himself as he ran over to R' Shachna's well-worn chair.

To be continued....

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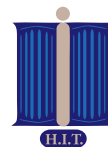
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