

RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARASHAT VAYECHI- 2021 5782 ויחי

[FYI- At conclusion of this Parasha, we recite **חזק חזק ונתחזק** . The parasha contains 85 pesukim, 1158 words, and 4448 letters]

Yosef was “notified” that his father Ya’akov was gravely ill (48:1). Apparently, Yosef, on his own, did not know that his father was ill, and he had to be told by someone else. According to Rashi, that someone was Efrayim. But why wasn’t he himself on top of the situation? Where was his KIBBUD AV? According to Gemara Kiddushin (31b) taking care of a father’s physical needs, when needed, is the positive Mitzvah of Kibbud Av. This requires “doing”, by being around him and not a distance away.

According to R’ Yisrael Salanter, (1810-1883) it seems that Yosef intentionally and actively tried to avoid being alone with Ya’akov. Yosef feared that when the two are alone, Ya’akov will inevitably ask, “What actually happened between you and your brothers when I sent you to inquire about their welfare”? Yosef had two problems with that. He was under oath (cherem) never to tell his father about the event, and also, [this I believe was the main reason] he feared, that if he has to reveal the truth, Ya’akov would let out his anger on his sons before death and curse them instead of bless them. **Yosef felt, it is more important to forgo his Mitzvah of Kibbud Av rather than bring anguish and Klalah upon his brothers.**

What a powerful lesson! When our doing a Mitzvah, causes a hardship or pain to others, it is preferable to forgo the Mitzvah. Three examples that come to my mind; you are on an airplane flight and you have to wake up a sleeping passenger sitting on the aisle seat in order for you to get up from your window seat to daven. Or, waking up your spouse with the alarm clock so that you can make the early minyan while she is fast asleep. Or asking a guest in shul to vacate his seat of davening because that happens to be *your makom kavu’a*. I’m sure we can all add many examples to this list.

The Avot do not teach us Mitzvot; but what they do teach us is *how to perform the Mitzvot –by setting the example*. We learn from Yosef that it is not enough to simply do the Mitzvot, but we have to do them in a way that is pleasing and pleasant to others. Moshe Rabbeinu taught this as well by stating “You shall do what is fair and good in the eyes of HaShem” (Devarim 6:18). That we will receive greater s’char (reward) by forgoing the Mitzvah rather than causing discomfort or displeasure to others

May we have the Zechut to perform our Mitzvot in the right time, in the right place and in the right way..

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim
Rabbi Aharon and Libby Ziegler