



SHOLOM BECKONS
HARAV Y. REUVEN RUBIN SHLITA

Did I ever tell you about the time I was put into the position of not only arbitrating between a brother and his sisters, but was actually the custodian for all of three minutes of a large sum of gelt that was transferred from one side to the other in an old paper bag. It all sounds a bit cloak and dagger, and it happened over twenty five years ago, but I share this tale of woe for a reason.

The whole saga is less than edifying but if you listen for a few moments to the bare bones of what I experienced you just may reconcile some of the sadder aspects of the story. I was the Rabbi of what can be called a community with many hues of observance. One of our members had an elderly mother who passed away at a ripe old age leaving over a large fortune that was meant to be divided equally between two daughters and a son. I am not getting involved in the Halachic niceties of this case, but it turns out that the daughters took it upon themselves to somehow exclude the brother out of spite for his so called disinterest in Mom's health over the years. Well, things were said, actions threatened, and after a lot of toeing and fro-wing, Rubin worked things out so everyone would be comparatively satisfied. The final transferring of the toxic gelt took place in the shul car park, don't ask. I share this sad tale as an introduction to a situation that is as old as history itself.

Family is the petri dish of our attitudes and memories. It is where our middos and reactions are born, often marking our path through life. Things are said, actions done that become imbedded in our psyche and set all future reactions almost in stone.



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I get it, I really do, old slights are often the most painful. One would hope that with time we could let go of things, sadly though such is not always the case. Instead irritants burrow themselves into our hearts and churn away, destroying our emotional wellbeing. It often seems that the progenitor of all this anguish can be those closest to us.

The Torah Hakodoshah clothes the Will of Hashem in very human terms, all the better to understand what the Eibishter wants of us. There is no greater example of this than the passages in Parshas Toldos concerning Yakov Avinu and his brother Eisav.

After Yakov Avinu received the brochos meant for his brother Eisav from his father, his mother Rivka told him to run away and stay in the land of her family until such time as Esav's anger will dissipate. She says:

So now my son, heed my voice and arise! Flee to my brother Lavan, to Charan, and remain with him a short while until your brother's wrath subsides....Until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you have done to him."

A question springs forward, why the Torah uses the same wording twice in recording Esav's anger and the need for it to subside before Yakov can return?

The The Rebbe of Amshinov, The Rebbe Rav Yaakov Dovid Ztl explains what Rivka was hinting to her son (and all further generations of the Jewish Nation). We see in Mishlei the famous words, 'As in water, face answers to face, so the heart of a man to a man.' (27:19)

This is hinting to us that for one to dispel another's rage at him, he has to first let go of any anger he harbours towards his antagonist.

How many hours, days, nay, even years, do we spend carrying grudges against those who really should be our closest brethren? Whole industries are built around lawyers, advocates and Din Torah experts, who answer our call to facilitate further our vendettas spurred on by senseless hatred over what usually is nothing. A Baal Bitochon knows that everything is from Hashem, tragically we lose clarity when we allow our inner voice to get stuck in the vortex of anger.

I started with a tale of family strife that led to a midnight meeting in a car park We must all look in the mirror and ask ourselves if all the small, and sometimes not so small, irritations we come upon on the highway of life are worth the pain and anguish they cause.

It is no easy task, this letting go, but it can be the elixir of a promising positive life. May we all share sun the peace that the Torah offers, and see generations of wholesome children and their children, living in Sholom.