



Will Your Words Be Heard?

"This beach sure is beautiful, Avi."
"Yes, and so relaxing, Chaim. The waves keep rolling in and breaking on the sand. I could lay here for hours."
"Me too. This beach helps me appreciate the wisdom of Shlomo HaMelech."
"Really? In what way?"
"The verse (Melachim I, 5:9) states that Hashem gave wisdom and considerable understanding to Shlomo, and a heart as broad as the sand on the beach."
"That is beautiful, Chaim, but what does it mean?"

"The Ha'amek Davar explains. In this week's parasha, Yosef advises Paroh to find a man who is understanding and wise to govern (the years of plenty and famine in) Mitzraim, (Bereshis 41:33)."

"What is the difference between wisdom and understanding?"

"Wisdom is the gathering of knowledge and ideas. In order to be truly wise, one must have a lot of knowledge. The next step is understanding. One must spend time thinking about what he knows, and learn how to apply it. To weigh, compare and use his knowledge."
"Fascinating."

"There is another level of understanding, which the verse refers to as 'navon'. A 'navon' is one who knows how to apply the knowledge that he has acquired. One application is knowing when to keep quiet. A person may have a wealth of knowledge and information. He may also have 'seichel' (common sense) and discernment to understand many subjects and issues. Therefore he may wish to express his opinion on everything."
"That's only natural."

"Brilliant Avi. The Ha'amek Davar comments that this is the nature of a person. A 'navon' knows that his opinion may not always be appreciated. People may not be interested in what he has to say, although he is very wise. Therefore, he keeps quiet in those situations."

"Wonderful. How does that relate to the sand on the beach?"

"The sand keeps the water from crossing its boundary and entering the dry land. So too, understanding keeps a person from speaking in places where his words will not be heard."

"Chaim you are so wise. I am always ready to hear what you have to say."

Kinderlach . . .

"The bus is coming in three minutes, Imma! I must say 'Bircas HaMazone' very quickly and then run to the bus stop." Imma thinks to herself, "She wasted so much time this morning. She could have finished eating fifteen minutes ago and had plenty of time for proper blessings and a relaxed walk to the bus. I must tell her this. Not now, however. She is under a lot of pressure to make the bus. She will not accept what I have to say." Kinderlach, Shlomo HaMelech himself said, "There is time for everything under the sun. A time to be silent, and a time to speak." (Koheles 3:7). A "navon" knows when to keep silent.



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.

Parasha Questions

- How many years was Yosef in prison? (Baal HaTurim 41:1)
- How did Paroh's wizards interpret the dreams? (Rashi 41:8)
- How did Paroh give honor to Yosef? (41:42-45)
- How old was Yosef when he was appointed viceroy of Mitzraim? (41:46)
- How did Yosef speak to his brothers? (42:7)
- What did the brothers have to do to prove that they were not spies? (42:19,20)
- Which brother did he imprison? (42:24)

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