



Turn the Wheel

This farm sure is beautiful, Abba. Thank you for bringing us here."
"My pleasure, Kinderlach. Let's see what's doing in that building over there."

The family walked through the door into a small room and found a man cranking a large wheel. He turned and turned and turned the wheel. Behind the crank was a series of gears and pulleys leading to a big grinding stone. A trough slowly fed kernels of wheat under the grinding stone. Freshly ground flour flowed out the other side.

"Excuse me sir, do you mind if we ask you a few questions?"

"Not at all. I welcome the company."

"It must be hard work turning this wheel."

"Not really."

"Well, then you must be very strong in order to power this contraption that grinds the flour."

"Not really."

"How then do you turn this big, heavy grinding stone?"

The man motioned to the family to come closer to him.

"Do you want to know a secret?"

"Yes!" the children answered excitedly.

"Look closely at this crank. Do you see any mechanical connection between the wheel that I am cranking, and the apparatus that is turning?"

The children looked and looked, searched and searched. Try as hard as they may, they found no connection.

"This is truly amazing, sir. Your crank is not connected to the apparatus at all."

"Correct."

"Where does the power that turns the grinding wheel come from?"

"There is a motor buried deep in the ground. A hidden cable connects it to the apparatus. That motor is turning the grinding stone. My crank wheel supplies no power at all."

"Fascinating. May we ask you another question, sir?"

"Sure."

"Why did the owner build a flour mill with a fake wheel and a hidden motor? It is very misleading."

"That is an excellent question, children. The answer is very deep, so listen carefully. The owner built this flour mill similar to the way that Hashem set up the world."

"Now you really have our curiosity going."

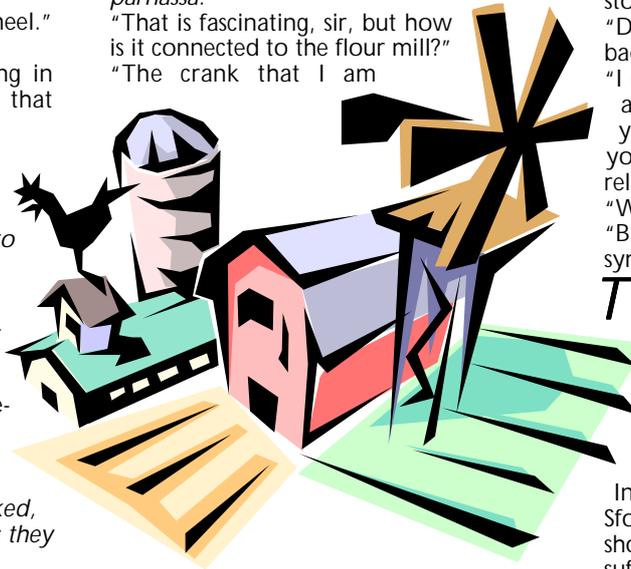
"Look in the 'Mesillas Yesharim' at the end of chapter 21. Rav Luzzato explains that a person's *parnassa* (income) is fixed on Rosh Hashanah."

"If so, then why do people work?"

"Excellent! Rav Luzzato himself asks the same question. Adam HaRishon was cursed with 'Bizeias apecha tochal lechem' (By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread)[Bereshis 3:19]. This is like a tax that must be paid. In order to receive the *parnassa* that was decreed to him, a person must do some *hishtadlus* (preparative action) upon which Hashem's blessings can rest. We refer to this as work. A person's work is his *hishtadlus* that will allow Hashem's blessings of *parnassa* to come. The Mesillas Yesharim advises a person to not expend too much effort in *hishtadlus*. Hashem can bless a person with much *parnassa*, even though he only does a little *hishtadlus*. More work does not mean more *parnassa*."

"That is fascinating, sir, but how is it connected to the flour mill?"

"The crank that I am



turning is like the *hishtadlus*. The grinding wheel is like the *parnassa*. The hidden motor is like Hashem's hidden control over *parnassa*. My cranking (*hishtadlus*) does not make the ground flour (*parnassa*) come; for the crank is not connected to the wheel. The hidden motor (Hashem) does that. I just need to keep turning lightly and easily ('Bizeias apecha tochal lechem') and the motor will do the heavy work, and make the flour come."

"Sir, that is wonderful! You have given us a whole new perspective on work. There is no need to *shvitz* (sweat) over 'Bizeias apecha tochal lechem.'"

Kinderlach . . .

"And now, do not be sad . . . because you sold me, because Hashem sent me ahead of you to be a provider" (Bereshis 45:5). Yosef was Hashem's agent of parnassa in Mitzraim. The parnassa that they were to receive was provided via Yosef. Hashem has many "parnassa agents". He uses them to send His blessings. We must always remember Who is powering the

grinding stone, Who is sending the agents. He generates the parnassa, and sends it with one of His agents. We need only lightly turn the wheel. Kinderlach, may you always be blessed with a "parnassa kalla v'nikiya" (an easy and clean livelihood).

Gently

Imma, I'm home. Did you hear the news?"

"What news, Devora?"

"About the bus."

"Uh oh. Is it good or bad news?"

"Why do you ask, Imma?"

"I'll tell you Devora. Good news is wonderful. We always want to hear good news. However, bad news is a different story."

"Do you mean that I shouldn't tell you bad news, Imma?"

"I depends, Devoraleh. If it is news about a sick person whom I can pray for, then you should definitely tell me. However, you should be very careful about how you relate such news."

"What do you mean, Imma?"

"Break the news gently, with a lot of sympathy and empathy."

They (the brothers) broke the news (to Yaakov) saying, "Yosef is still alive, and he rules over all the land of Mitzraim." But his (Yaakov's) heart became numb, for he could not believe them" (Bereshis 45:26). Rav Daniel Travis, in his book, "Priceless Integrity" relates the commentary of the Sorno on this verse. The news was such a shock to Yaakov that he passed out and suffered minor heart dysfunction. We see how important it is to consider how the listener will receive the news.

Kinderlach . . .

Think twice and three times before telling someone bad news. Is there a good reason for them to hear this? Be very careful. Bad news can very often contain loshon hora. Even if you must tell the news, say it as gently as possible. Be sympathetic with the listener. Imagine how you would feel hearing such news. Kinderlach, may we all hear only good news!

Parasha Questions

- How do we know that Yosef spoke harshly to his brothers? (Rashi 44:18)
- Who sent Yosef to Mitzraim? (45:8)
- In the merit of which four things were the Jews redeemed from Mitzraim? (K'li Yakar 45:4)
- "Do not get agitated on the road" Agitated about what? (Rashi 45:24)
- Why did Yaakov's spirits lift when he saw the wagons? (Rashi 45:27)
- What blessing did Yaakov give Paroh? (Rashi 47:10)