



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Parashat Vayechi

"We Are All the Sons of One Man"

Questions:

- 1- In this week's *parasha*, we find that Yaakov blessed Yosef's sons, Ephraim and Menashe. He blessed them that all future generations should bless their own sons that they should be like them (48:20). This must be understood: Would it not have been more fitting for Yaakov to bequeath a blessing to future generations that their sons should be like **his** son Yehudah, the king of the tribes, or Yissachar, the pillar of Torah, or Yosef *Hatzaddik*? 2 – Furthermore, why, at the conclusion of the blessing, does the Torah state that Yaakov "placed Ephraim before Menashe?" The Torah already related that Yaakov switched his hands and said that Ephraim will be greater than Menashe. Yaakov even blessed Ephraim first. Why, then, must the Torah seemingly repeat this point?

Problems in Society

Sadly, not long ago, we were informed about the passing of the *Gadol Ha'dor*, an occurrence which stirred the hearts of the entire Jewish Nation. This is something that does not exist by the gentile nations and could not be comprehended by them. Furthermore, we heard about the terrible tragedy of the blaze in New York, which took the lives of the mother of the Azan family, as well as three of her children. The funeral took place on the last day of Chanukah in *Eretz Yisrael*. How heart-rendering it was to see the four dead bodies *rachmana litzlan*, as well as the remainder of the family, injured and hospitalized. Anyone who witnessed it could not help but shed tears and take part in their suffering. On the other hand, we were fortunate to hear good news, as the President of the US freed Rubashkin from prison, an incident that caused the hearts of the Jews to soar with happiness. From all of these events we see the special beauty of our Jewish Nation, which distinguishes us from the nations of the world. We see how both good and bad news relevant to the Jews affects Jews across the world. Each Jew feels either the joy or sorrow as if it happened in his own city or to his friend. There is no doubt that such a phenomenon arouses wonder over the special beauty of our nation, which distinguishes it from all other nations of the world. However, despite this, one of the problems facing our generation that must be dealt with is how to unite the hearts of our people on a day to day level. We understand that Jews unite when there are out of the ordinary occurrences, like those mentioned above. Yet how can we break down the barriers and take part in another Jew's life? People generally live their own lives and deal with their own problems. They therefore do not consider their fellow man. It is understandable in the sense that people have many difficulties in life, including supporting their families and educating them. People try to take care of their health, clothing, food, social needs, dealing with neighbors and the like. Therefore, everyone invests all their efforts into trying to succeed, saying, "If I will not be for myself, who will be for me?" As a result, man does not take notice of his friend's distress, nor does he extend himself to help the needy. He doesn't praise his fellow when he does well or help him in his endeavors. Consequently, there is simply not enough unity amongst our nation. However, our holy Torah transmits the message of our Forefather Yaakov, that the secret to receive blessing and success on a general as well as individual level, is specifically by uniting as one man with one heart. We should



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

rejoice over our friend's good fortune and help him as much as we can. Only then will blessing and success be bestowed upon us, enabling us to deal with all of life's issues that arise.

The Blessing of the *Kohanim*

Having explained the above, we can now begin to understand our *parasha* and the questions we posed above. The Torah teaches us (*Bamidbar* 6: 22-24) that Aharon *Hakohen* and his descendants merited the holy task of blessing the Jewish Nation. Why did they merit being such a source of blessing for the Jews?

Rejoicing Over the Good of Our Fellow

The answer can be found in Shlomo *HaMelech's* words in *Mishlei* (22:9), "A good eye will be blessed." Our Sages (*Sotah* 38b) expound on this and state, "Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: We only give an individual a cup of blessing to recite a blessing upon, if he has a good eye. This is as the *pasuk* states, 'A good eyes will be blessed' ... Do not read 'will be blessed,' but rather, 'will bless.'" The Torah (*Shemot* 4:14) relates about Aharon that despite Moshe *Rabbeinu's* concerns that Aharon would be upset over the fact that he was chosen to be the leader of the Jewish people, Aharon actually rejoiced over Moshe's good fortune and was not the slightest bit jealous. Furthermore, the Tanna states in *Masechet Avot* (1:12), "Hillel says: Be like the students of Aharon – love peace and pursue peace, love mankind and draw them close to the Torah." This was the personality of Aharon *Hakohen*, to the extent that our Sages tell us that when he passed away the Torah states, "And all of Israel cried over Aharon for thirty days," something which is not even said about Moshe. This is because when an individual possesses positive qualities such as these, like being able to rejoice over his friend's success despite the fact that he may feel that **he** may deserve it, such an individual can bless the Jewish Nation. For it is impossible for the average man to bless his friend that he should be better or more successful than he is; for if his heart burns with jealousy, then his blessing is not truly a blessing. We see, then, that the foundation and root of a blessing is grounded in truly loving one's fellow man, and not because of an ulterior motive. Without this love, he is not worthy of bestowing a blessing, and his blessing lacks value. This is why Aharon and his descendants merited being the source of blessings for the Jewish people.

Love that Depends upon Something Else

The Tanna has already taught us in *Masechet Avot* (5:16), "All love that is dependent upon something else, when the item no longer exists, neither does the love. However, love which does not depend upon something lasts forever. What is an example of a love that was dependent upon something else? That of Amnon and Tamar. An example of a love that did not depend upon something else was that of David and Yonatan." This means that when the love is genuine, there is no reason for it to be extinguished. However, love that is generated by various reasons, when the reasons have ended, so does the love. As a result, even during the period when there is love, each party does not truly love the other – they really love themselves and wish only to achieve a particular goal. What indicates which type of love it is depends on whether or not he rejoices when seeing his friend's success. This was the trait of Aharon *Hakohen*.

The Greatness of Ephraim and Menashe

Now we can understand the episode with Yaakov Avinu and the message to ensuing generations. What transpired between Ephraim and Menashe was as follows: Menashe was the assistant to his father, the king of Egypt. He possessed wealth and experienced the honor bestowed upon kings. On the other hand, Ephraim sat and studied Torah with his grandfather, and was totally uninvolved with the kingship in any way. He certainly did not have Menashe's social status. One would think that Ephraim certainly



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
שייבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

had what to be jealous about. Menashe, however, did not have anything to be jealous about because this was the path that he chose for himself, and he was satisfied with his good predicament. However, on the day that Yaakov blessed them and intentionally switched his hands, even stating that while he was aware that Menashe was the oldest son, nevertheless, Ephraim would be greater, there was certainly a chance that now Menashe would feel great jealousy, for both brothers knew how valuable the Forefather's blessing were. Despite this, there was still not an ounce of jealousy between the brothers. Yaakov sensed that Menashe was free of jealousy just like Ephraim, and on the contrary, he was happy for Ephraim, just as Aharon was happy for Moshe. This is as we pointed out in last week's *dvar Torah* in the name of the *Gedulei Teruma*, that not only was Yaakov telling Yosef that Ephraim would be greater than Menashe, but he saw with *Ruach Hakodesh* that Ephraim would even be **assisted** by Menashe in his ascent. While Yaakov had learned Torah with Ephraim, and therefore realized for years that he possessed the trait of rejoicing in another's good fortune, now he saw that Menashe possessed it as well. This is why the *pasuk* states (48:20) that Yaakov blessed them specifically "on that day." For it was on this very day that Yaakov came to the above realization. Additionally, the *pasuk* states that he blessed both of them in the singular expression, "By you [בך] shall Israel bless," and "May Hashem make you [ישמך]..." This was in the merit of their being united like one man with one heart, with each one rejoicing in the good fortune of the other. They therefore merited that the Jewish Nation should bless their children that they should emulate them and possess sterling character traits and love for their fellow man. There is no greater blessing than this, and this is why Jewish sons are blessed to be like them.

And Ephraim was Placed Before Menashe

We can now understand the double expression of, "And Ephraim was placed before Menashe." Yaakov did this to convey the reason for the fact that the Jews would bless their sons to be like Ephraim and Menashe. For it would seemingly also have been enough to bless future descendants that they should be "great like Ephraim." Why mention both Ephraim and Menashe? By placing Ephraim before Menashe, Yaakov wished to show that the reason for this was because "Ephraim was placed before Menashe," and nevertheless, love resided between them. Both possessed the wonderful traits of seeking unity, and they were therefore worthy of others being blessed to be like them. This is as we are taught in *Masechet Uktzin*, "Said Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta: Hashem found no vessel better at containing blessing than peace. This is as the *pasuk* states, 'Hashem gives strength to His Nation; Hashem blesses His nation with peace.'"

A Story From Present Times

During Chanukah, I was invited by our close and honorable friend, the *Gaon* and philanthropist, R' Tzvi Reizman *shlita* to an event celebrating the new intensive care unit in *Shaarei Tzedek* hospital. In his speech, he mentioned something that I really enjoyed and which pointed to his healthy outlook on life. He said that it is certain that he will be asked why donates money to hospitals. He answered wisely, that while he certainly donates to Torah institutions etc., but the reality today is that even places of Torah study are labeled according to which perspective, political association, and Jewish faction they belong to. There isn't one Torah institution that accepts all groups. Therefore, he donates to hospitals, for hospitals service all of the Jewish Nation, no matter which political group or perspective they adhere to. By doing so, one emulates the ways of Hashem; not only by giving, but in **how** to give. Wise words from a wise man, indeed. I mentioned to him that one could add that he was wise in donating specifically to an intensive care unit, for in intensive care there is certainly no difference between Jews.



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

It is also a unit that saves lives, and our Sages teach that one who saves even one Jewish life, is as if he sustains the entire world. This is a donation of both quantity and quality; fortunate is he and his lot.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that the blessing with which each Jew must bless his sons, according to our sacred heritage, is that they should merit possessing the traits of *ahavat Yisrael*, to the extent that each one is happy over the good fortune and success of his fellow. He should also be involved in everything that happens to his friend, like one man with one heart. Furthermore, to go in the ways of Hashem, his Torah, acts of kindness and deeds must be aimed at benefitting all Jews, no matter which political group, perspective, or faction they belong to. This is the way of the Torah and the Torah outlook. It is also the secret to the Jewish Nation's success and that of the Torah world in particular. It will only be actualized when each one of us internalize this truth, that there is no other way to succeed and raise the banner of Torah, other than our joining together like one man with one heart. This is the view that every man must instill in his home, to raise and educate children according to the sacred Jewish heritage, that the family should value all Jews, no matter who they are. This applies all the more in present times, when to our dismay, there is much strife within our midst. This is something that tarnishes the image of the Torah world as well. There is therefore an added requirement to do whatever we can to increase love and unity, for the *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed only due to baseless hatred and will be built with "baseless love." We should see this speedily in our days. *Amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka