

דרכים בפרשה וישב

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וישאל את סריסי פרעה אשר אתו במשמר בית אדניו לאמר מדוע פניכם רעים היום

And he asked Paraoh's courtiers who were with him in the ward of his master's house, saying, "Why do you appear downcast today?" (40:7)

The *Maharal* in Tiferes Yisroel writes that from this *passuk* we see very clearly that one's facial expressions tell a tale. A sad or depressed look announces to the world that things are not going all that well. On the other hand, a simple smile gives off a completely different message. To quote the words of Rav Yisroel Salanter *zt"l*, "A person's face is a *reshus harabim* (public property)".

There is yet another lesson to be learned from this *passuk*. Let us picture the scenario. A young Jewish boy is brought into the "white collar crime" prison. Clearly no one cares. But then, from his corner, he notices that someone looks sad. Unabashedly, he approaches and says four words. "מדוע פניכם רעים היום" - why the long-face today?" These four words change the course of history. As a result, the Sar HaMashkim, followed by the Sar HaOfim, open up to him, relating their dreams. Fast forward and the Sar HaMashkim is recommending Yosef to Paraoh, and, as they say, "the rest is history".

So often we underestimate the power of a few nice words, but in truth, it is a *koach* that each and every one of us has.

On a similar note, we find that at the beginning of the *parsha*, everything was going downhill for Yosef, but finally at the end of the *parsha* and the start of

the next one, Yosef's situation changed. The difference? Earlier, Yosef walked around asking, "Who wants to hear about *my* dreams?" In the end, he was saying, "Tell me about *your* dreams." When we show interest in *other* people, they pay attention to us, but when it is "all about me", no one is interested!

Yosef is called an *ish matzliach*. The letter "mem" in front of a word changes a word into its causative form. For example, the word "or" means light, but "ma-or" means to give off light. Yosef is known as an *ish matzliach*, because his success affects other people. If it's all about me, that cannot be called true *hatzlacha*.

The word for a hand is כף - *kaf*. The word for a mouth is פה - *peh*. The Shlah Hakadosh points out that the word "kaf" is spelled with a closed letter *chaf* (*kaf* *kefufah*) and an open letter *fei* (*fei peshuta*). This alludes to a closed hand (*kaf*) and an open mouth (*peh*), which is obviously not a good thing.

But what happens when the *kaf* is open and the *peh* is closed? The letters switch around to form a new word פך - "*pach*". When we open our hands but close our mouths, we have the opportunity of tapping into the yom tov of Chanukah which is symbolized by the *pach shemen*.

In a conversation that I had with a great *baal chesed*, he told me the following great quote: "Kiss the sefer Torah with your mouth and give others generously with your hand rather than the other way!"

This week, we begin the Yom tov of Chanukah. It is an opportune time to reach out to others and help shine the *Aibeshter's* light.

מחברי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos