



## My Dear Brothers

### Parshas Vayetze

#### Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

#### Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

The sobbing of one of Migdal Ohr's directors shook the entire building that morning. He stood in front of the empty cabinet and kept on saying: "This can't be." I was called from my home, and met him as he was crying: "This can't be, I have no life." I put a reassuring hand on his shoulder, offered him a glass of water and asked him why he was so distraught.

"Do you remember the trip to Miami I made on behalf of Migdal Ohr?" he had spent an entire month there, and returned with handsome contributions for the benefit of the children of Migdal Ohr. He showed me that the envelope containing the gifts was now missing.

I tried to reconstruct with him the events of the last day in an attempt to find an explanation for the missing envelope. "It must be the cleaning lady", he decided. I silenced him, but understood why he was so upset; anyone who has fundraised knows what a difficult task it is. We tried every option, and at last we were forced to ask the cleaning lady about the incident.

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In our weekly parsha we are taught a great lesson. We are taught a life lesson of how to talk, how to approach people and how to succeed in life.

Yaacov arrives at Haran and comes to the well. He meets shepherds standing by the well, which was covered by a massive rock. "And Yaacov said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran... And he said, "The day is yet long; it is not the time to take in the livestock. Water the sheep and go, pasture."<sup>1</sup>

Rashi explains: "Since he saw them lying down, he thought that they wished to gather the livestock to return home and that they would no longer graze. So he said to them, "The day is yet long," i.e., if you have been hired for the day, you have not completed the day's work, and if the animals are yours, it is, nevertheless, not the time to take in the livestock."

The situation is a bit odd: why should the local shepherds listen to him? Who is he to teach them how to work? Surprisingly, they don't dismiss him, but apologize and explain why they were waiting: "And they said, "We cannot do that, until all the flocks are gathered together, and they will roll the rock off the mouth of the well, and we shall then water the sheep."<sup>2</sup> How is it that that they accepted Yaacov's words in such calmness?

Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman<sup>3</sup> was once asked about his renowned personal charm. He answered: "Every time I speak to a crowd, no matter who they are, I begin with 'Dear brothers'."

When we take a closer look at the verses we see that's what Yaacov did:

"And Yaacov said to them, "**My brothers**, where are you from?" When one commences with the words 'My brothers' he can say even the most painful words and they will be heard.

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I called my wife and asked her to accompany us as we went to the cleaning lady's home. When I met with the woman I first commended her for her hard work. I further remarked that all were pleased with her work and a raise in her salary was also being considered. Hearing these words she momentarily went to a different room. She then came back with the missing envelope. She returned the entire sum.

I did not ask her how the money came into her possession, nor did she did not tell me; even though we both knew how she got it. The use of the proper approach and words made her regret her actions, and peace and quiet were restored to the Migdal Ohr institutions.

<sup>2</sup> Beresheit 29:8.

<sup>3</sup> Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman (1886–1969), was an [rabbi](#) and [rosh yeshiva](#) of the [Ponevezh yeshiva](#). He was a renowned [Torah](#) and [Talmudic](#) scholar, a distinguished member of the [Council of Torah Sages](#) of [Agudath Israel](#).

<sup>1</sup> Beresheit 29:4-7.