

And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom. (28:3)

Chachmei lev; “wise-hearted people,” is in the plural form. “Whom I have invested”; *m’leisiv*, is singular. Is Moshe *Rabbeinu* to speak to all of the wise-hearted people, collectively, or is he to speak to each one individually? Why does the *pasuk* change mid-sentence from plural to singular? Simply, this is referring to Moshe who personally merited to be filled with wisdom. He was to speak to the wise-hearted people, because he was especially filled with wisdom. The *Chasam Sofer* explains that *mileisiv* applies to the *chachmei lev*. Hashem instructed Moshe to speak to each individual craftsman to inform him that Hashem had filled him with unusual wisdom. Hashem imbued him with a potential for greatness, an ability to create extraordinary, beautiful appurtenances for the *Mishkan*. Their wisdom would allow them, not only to construct the physical images, but also to imbue them with *kedushah*, holiness.

The *Chasam Sofer* explains: “Wisdom is implanted within the hearts of the individuals. They require someone to arouse and inspire them to unlock their potential, thus giving them the opportunity, empowering them to reveal to the world their extraordinary talents and abilities. Without the inspiration, their lack of motivation will only push them inward. Similar to a seed that is planted deep within the soil, the ground must be plowed, sowed, watered and weeded. As a result, it will grow strong and tall, providing sustenance for those in need. Otherwise, it will rot in the ground and become a total waste.

Hashem explained to Moshe that imbuing the men with wisdom was like planting a seed. Unless someone would rouse them, it would come to nothing. That someone should be Moshe, who should tell them that they were to be the beneficiaries of an incredible Heavenly gift. If they did not act accordingly, with honor, this gift would not have much efficacy.”

A number of gifted and talented people are in our proximity, often individuals with whom we interact on a regular basis. Regrettably, these talents and abilities serve no one, frequently because this person lacks positive self-esteem. If he is unmotivated, if he does not believe in himself, because he thinks no one believes in him, he will give up without trying. If someone would come by and whisper in his ear, “You are great! You can do it!” he would.

Students engage when they act as their own learning agents, working to achieve goals meaningful to them. They must believe that they can learn and succeed. Also, they must learn to cope with failure – with which one can deal most effectively when he believes in himself. I may add that a teacher with high self-esteem is likely to engender high self-esteem in his or her students. Perhaps this is why the individual who was best suited to awaken the *chachmei lev* was Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who had reached the apex of spirituality.

It would be wonderful if, in today’s society, we could encourage a child’s affinity for Torah study

simply by explaining the infinite value of Torah in him. Unfortunately, we must employ other means of enticement in order to draw him to the *bais hamedrash*. Once he is there, the next step is keeping him there, but, if he does not enter, we need not worry about his leaving.

The *Alter, zl, m'Slabodka, Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl*, was a strong believer in external encouragement, even simple prizes which would motivate a student to success. He felt that even the simplest, inexpensive prize or favor could make a difference. He remembered walking through the marketplace in Vilna where a woman vendor was selling beans. She vigorously called out to passersby the quality and price of her wares. Suddenly, another woman who was selling her wares offended her, causing the first woman to feel that the other vender was taking away her business. Words, accompanied by denunciations, flew back and forth; it was getting out of hand. Suddenly, a customer approached the woman who was selling beans and asked to purchase one penny's worth of beans. Out of the blue, the women's attitude changed. Her demeanor was immediately altered, a smile appearing across her face. She thanked the buyer, heaping blessings upon him.

Anyone who had been a spectator to the earlier proceedings would have been hard-pressed to understand what had just transpired. Five minutes earlier, this woman was screaming and cursing. Now, she was all sugar and sweetness. What happened? The *Alter* explained: It was one penny. She gained a penny from selling her beans. She was a changed woman. With a simple prize, we can alter a student's path of learning – from failure to success. A prize encourages; a prize engenders belief in oneself; a prize indicates that someone believes in him.

We can motivate a student by presenting him with a goal and indicating to him that the mentor believes in the student's ability to achieve this goal. Achieving this goal because realistic, since the mentor believes in the student.

In 2013, Rabbi Paysach Krohn interviewed Rabbi Berel Wein. One of the questions he asked him was how he had been able to achieve so much, in preparing oral tapes and cd's, writing books and papers, and lecturing all over. Very few individuals – however successful in their careers - have been able to achieve so much. It is obviously the result of a relentless pursuit of success, a man on a mission. What motivated him to have accomplished so much? In *Illuminations of the Maggid*, Rabbi Krohn records the incident that quite possibly changed Rabbi Wein's life. While it is impossible for the written word to capture an oral inspiration, I would like the reader to take pause while reading the story to reflect on his own life and ask: Was there ever an inspirational opportunity in my life that I let go by?

It was 1946, and *Horav Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog, zl*, Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael* was visiting Chicago. The building was packed, standing room only, as the *Rav* first gave a *shiur, halachic* lecture, then addressed the gathering which consisted of lay people, Torah scholars and *yeshivah* students. (There were not many, but there were not many of anything in those days.)

After concluding his *shiur*, *Rav* Herzog turned to the *yeshivah* students and addressed them –

exclusively. "I have just returned from Rome," he began, "where I met with Pope Pius. I had with me the names of 10,000 boys and girls whose parents had placed them in Catholic institutions or with families for safekeeping during the terrible war. The parents knew that they would probably not survive; their hope was for their children. I said to the Pope, 'Give me back these children! These are our children! You are well aware why they were given to you. Now we ask you to return them to us – where they belong.'

"And the Pope said, 'I cannot give you even one child.' I pleaded with him, but he refused to budge. 'We have a rule,' he said, 'that once a child is baptized, it cannot be revoked. He cannot leave for another religion. All of these children were baptized. They are now ours!' I pleaded; I begged; he refused to listen to my cries."

Suddenly, *Rav* Herzog began to weep incessantly, unable to stop. He put his head on the lectern and wept mournfully. Everyone in the *shul* was silent, almost afraid to say anything. When the *Rav* raised his head, his face tear-stricken and red, he looked like a lion. He looked at us (the students) and called out, "I cannot do anything for those 10,000 children, but what are you going to do for the children of *Klal Yisrael*? It is your responsibility to help raise the future of our people. What are you prepared to do about it? Are you listening? Will you remember what I am asking of you?" He repeated himself again, "What are you going to do for the children of *Klal Yisrael*?"

Rav Herzog was finished. We then all lined up to shake his hand. "When he took my hand," Rabbi Wein said, "he looked me straight in the eye and asked, 'Are you going to forget what I said? Will you remember what I said? What are you going to do for the children of *Klal Yisrael*?'"

Rabbi Wein concluded, "Every time I am tired, every time that I am about to put down my pen – I am haunted by those words: 'What are you going to do for the children of *Klal Yisrael*?'"

These memorable moments (that we all have) should motivate us to rise to every occasion and do what is necessary. As an aside, it was fourteen years ago, *Baruch Hashem*, when a non-Jewish nurse came over to my bed, as I lay in the ICU, and asked (rather she demanded), "Are you going to give up like the others (patients), or are you going to fight it? If G-d let you live, He had a purpose!" I have never forgotten those words.