

And Yosef went up to bury his father. (50:7)

Yaakov suffered during the majority of his life from various afflictions: Eisav; Lavan; problems with his children; the premature death of Rachel. One would think that in death he would finally be able to repose in peace. In the *Talmud Sotah 13a*, *Chazal* tell us otherwise. When the funeral procession accompanying Yaakov's coffin arrived at his final resting place at *Meoras Ha'Machpelah*, Eisav confronted the mourners, contesting the title to Yaakov's plot. The tribes argued that Eisav had sold it to Yaakov. A debate ensued in which each side claimed right to this holy site. When Eisav asked for Yaakov's deed, certifying his purchase of the burial plot, the tribes decided to send Naftali back to Egypt to retrieve the deed. In the meantime, they would wait. Chusim ben Dan, who was deaf, was present during this dialogue and inquired regarding the cause of the delay. When he was told what was occurring, he exclaimed, "My grandfather will be compelled to lie in degradation until the deed is brought!" He immediately arose and killed Eisav. Why was it that Chushim was the only one who was so reactive? Was he more concerned about Yaakov's honor than Yaakov's own sons, who seemed to be negotiating with Eisav?

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, suggests that the *Talmud* implies the answer when it refers to Chushim's deafness. The brothers had slowly been drawn into a discussion with Eisav. While the debate continued back and forth they thought they were besting Eisav. Although this might have been true, during this time period Yaakov's body lay in shame. They did not realize what they were doing. Human nature causes one to adapt slowly to a given situation. The brothers' dispute with Eisav dulled their sensitivity to their father's shame. Chushim, who was not a part of the debate because of his impairment, was consumed with anger when he was told what was occurring. His senses were not dulled. He reacted in an expectable manner.

Horav Shmuelevitz goes on to explain that human beings are endowed with the gift of "*histaglus*", adaptability. We adapt to the conditions in which we are placed. We have seen people who had been exposed to the unspeakable horrors of the concentration camps, who experienced the most cruel and heinous torture, survive to rebuild their lives. As circumstances worsened, they found the ability to adapt to the situation, the courage and fortitude to go on. Indeed, one who has undergone a tragedy or has survived a horrifying incident will certainly be changed by the experience. The power to continue, to go on and start over again, is due to adaptability. This wonderful gift can, at times, be less beneficial. Like every attribute endowed to us by the Almighty, it all depends upon how we use it.