

But his father refused, saying, “I Know, my son, I know.” (48:19)

Yosef made a move to show his father that Menashe was his older son; thus, he warranted the blessing on the right/stronger side. One would have expected Yaakov *Avinu* to simply inform him that Ephraim will ultimately be the greater of the two. Why does he preface his response with *Yadaati, b’ni, yadaati?* *Horav Yisrael Aharon Kupshitz, Shlita* (Torah Ohr, quoted by *Horav Eliezer Turk, Shlita*), comments that the Torah is teaching us an important principle with regard to our seeking advice from a *gadol*, Torah giant. We must never forget that the reason he is where he is, and we are where we are, is that he devoted his life to Torah. As such, he is blessed with an acute cognitive appreciation of the profundity of every issue that is presented to him. Thus, when we ask a question of him, we should allow him to give his response/advice without our prompting him to view the situation from our perspective. He knows and understands far more about the situation than we think. His mind is honed by the wisdom garnered from studying Torah, in addition to the inspiration he receives from up on High. This is the meaning of *Yadaati b’ni yadaati*, “Yes, my son, I know what you know.” I also know what you are not privy to know. The *gadol* is always one step ahead of us.

The *Chazon Ish* once commented concerning the advice he rendered concerning a certain project, “I have ten reasons for everything (to which I respond). However, I do not reveal the actual reason (which motivated my response).” They are always one step ahead of us.

Rav Turk cites a story related by a *Rav* in Petach Tikvah, which he includes in his preface to the *sefer* he published in 1929. The preface is addressed to *Horav Yechezkhel Sarne, zl*. Apparently, this *Rav* was serving as the spiritual leader of a European community. He was visited by the venerable *Rav* of Lodz, Poland, *Horav Eliyahu Chaim Meisel, zl*, who was well-known throughout Europe as a brilliant Torah scholar and a *pikeach atzum*, exceptionally smart, perceptive and alert. “Coincidentally,” his visit coincided with that of the Czar’s minister.” (Nothing happens by coincidence. It is a pejorative term, and thus in quotation marks.)

The *Rav* gave the minister a tour of the community which ended with a visit to the *shul*. The minister was greatly impressed until he arrived at the *shul* and noticed that a picture/painting of the Czar could not be found anywhere in the edifice. He immediately ordered the *Rav* that prior to his return visit, a picture of the Czar (who was a rabid anti-Semite) should be hung prominently in the *shul*.

The community was in a quandary. On the one hand, how could they deface the sanctity of the *shul* with an image of the Czar? On the other hand, if they refused to adhere to the Minister’s command, it could spell an end to the Jewish community.

Rav Eliyahu Chaim came to the rescue. First, he commissioned a large painting of the Czar and

had it framed in a glass frame. He had them hang the frame in the *shul*. The community was aghast. How could the esteemed *Rav* allow such a travesty in the *shul*? The next thing he did was to tell the members of the community to have their young children use the *shul* as a playground. Once again, they thought the *Rav* had become distanced from reality. He intimated to them that they should be patient.

The next day, the children played ball in the *shul* and, lo and behold, the ball hit the glass frame and bounced off – not before smashing it to smithereens. *Rav* Eliyahu Chaim instructed them to take the frame to a craftsman to have it repaired, but to instruct him to hold on to it. This was not to be a rush job.

The community now understood the brilliance of the *Rav* from Lodz. Had they left the picture hanging, quite possibly the minister would have been so impressed that he would insist that every *shul* under the Czar's dominion follow suit. Had they refused to hang the picture, a pogrom might have ensued. This way, if – and when – the minister returned, they would inform him that the picture was being repaired. *Yadaati, b'ni, yadaati*, always one step ahead of us.