

He saw that serenity is good... He bowed his shoulder to bear. (49:15)

When one peruses the *brachah*, blessing, given to Yissachar, it appears as a lesson in contradiction. Yissachar symbolizes the *ben Torah* who devotes himself to Torah study under all circumstances. One would think that, if he is confronted with peace and serenity, it would be an opportunity for relaxation and rejuvenation; rather, the Torah tells us that the peaceful repose is not Yissachar's reaction to serenity. Instead of rest, Yissachar girds himself for hard work. Is this not counterproductive?

Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl, explains that, if one wants to raise a healthy, content and happy child, showering him with material bounty and giving in to his every whim and fancy are ineffective; these approaches will succeed in actually hindering the desired goal which he seeks to achieve. Catering to a child's desires creates a dangerous dependence, because the child becomes accustomed to getting what he wants – or he will not produce. The moment that he is not satisfied, that he feels lacking, he experiences pain and turmoil, and he becomes disjointed.

The road to contentment is achieved by becoming accustomed to not getting what one wants, to not having much of anything. The less one needs to survive, the easier it is for him to endure. This lack of neediness makes life peaceful. This is how soldiers are trained to survive under adverse conditions, under the most difficult circumstances. War is not fun. A soldier must focus on the battle, ignoring everything else.

The *ben Torah* must learn Torah without distractions. Yissachar observed that serenity allows one to study Torah unimpeded, giving him the opportunity to grow and thrive in Torah. In order to realize this, he must bend his shoulder and tolerate any annoyance. Additionally, he must avoid material pleasure and be oblivious to pain and discomfort. Once such self-control is achieved, he is able to sit and learn, in serenity and happiness, for nothing fazes him. He has transcended the hindrances to his success.

In his *hesped*, eulogy, for *Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl*, **Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl**, said, "I have never met an *oveid Hashem*, one who served Hashem (with such extreme devotion) as *Rav Chatzkel*, the *Mashgiach* (Mir, Ponevez)." Afterwards, his students asked him, "Did the *Rosh Yeshivah* not meet the *Chafetz Chaim, zl*, and *Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zl*?" (Certainly, their service of Hashem was without peer).

Rav Shach replied, "Every *tzaddik*, righteous person, has his individual unique approach to serving Hashem. The *Mashgiach* had an approach that was unlike any other I had ever seen. His *avodah* was such that, when he wanted something, he did not do it; when he did not want something, he did it." In other words, *Rav Chatzkel* went against his own will. Those endeavors which went against his grain, which he did not enjoy doing – those he did. Conversely, those endeavors which

he did enjoy doing – those he did not do. He refused in any way to defer to his desires.