

“By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread... For you are dust and to dust you shall return.” The man called his wife’s name Chavah, because she had become the mother of all the living. And Hashem G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin. (3:19,20,21)

The commentators question the sequence of the pesukim. The fact that Adam named Chavah should have been written earlier, at the end of Perek bais, where the Torah relates how Adam gave names to all the creatures. Why is the naming of Chavah juxtaposed to Hashem making garments for Adam and Chavah? The Kehillas Yitzchak explains that when Adam realized what Chavah’s act had catalyzed, when he understood that his death and the deaths of all future generations was the result of Chavah’s eating and sharing of the Eitz HaDaas, he immediately became severely depressed and angry. After awhile, it dawned on him that anger would be to no avail. It would not rescind the decree. Death was now an inevitable part of the human condition. At the same time, Adam was acutely aware of Chavah’s role in propagating life. He decided to be maavir al midosav. He overlooked his anger and decided to forgive Chavah. He transcended, passed over, his natural character traits that would predispose him to anger. This character trait was Adam’s distinction.

Imagine what we have just said. A man discovers that his wife has put poison into everyone’s food. She is about to feed this preparation to him and all of their descendants. Is there any question as to his reaction? He would undoubtedly call her a murderess at best and immediately go out to publicize his wife’s invidious act.

Is that not what Chavah did? She caused death to become a part of our lives. Everyone returns to dust as a result of Chavah’s actions. Should she be lauded for this act? Yet, Adam controlled himself and overlooked her error. He did not call her an evil serial killer or murderess. Instead, he accentuated her positive attributes. While it was true that she brought death to the world, she also brought life. Without Chavah there would be no life, no future — nothing! We must remember her positive contributions and name her accordingly.

When Hashem saw how Adam transcended his anger and harbored no enmity towards his wife, He made holy garments for them — an indication of His favor. This teaches us that when one

transcends his natural inclination for anger, revenge and hatred, Hashem overlooks his transgressions and gazes favorably upon him.

Great people are able to act in this manner. The Ohr HaChaim Ha'kadosh writes that Moshe Rabbeinu had every reason to be upset with Klal Yisrael. They caused his death. Because of them, he would never enter Eretz Yisrael. Yet, he still blessed them prior to his death. Great people overlook their contemporaries' shortcomings. They transcend slander and disparagement. They look beyond the pettiness that has become a major component in the daily endeavor for so many of us.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates that this middah, character trait, the ability to transcend anger and hurt in order to pursue peaceful reconciliation, was the hallmark of the previous Bobover Rebbe, Horav Shlomo Halberstam, zl.

The Bobover Rebbe was a wellspring of sensitivity for all Jews. His activities during and after World War II saved the remnants of Galician Jewry, both physically and spiritually. Men of distinction, however, will inevitably have detractors who are filled with envy, glory-seekers who resent sharing the limelight with anyone other than their own shadow. Shortly after the Rebbe emerged on the American scene, a rabbi who felt threatened by the Bobover Rebbe's activities on behalf of world Jewry lashed out strongly against the Rebbe. He did not mince words in his character assassination of the Rebbe. The Bobover Rebbe did not respond. It was only after the slanderous remarks were becoming downright humiliating that the Rebbe called together all of his chassidim in his bais ha'medrash.

The large shul was filled to capacity. There was not an empty seat, as everyone crammed the room to hear the Rebbe's response to the insults hurled at him. Everyone expected a fiery rejoinder that would put the rabbi in his place. The Rebbe entered the bais ha'medrash, ascended to the lectern in front of the Aron Kodesh, and, after kissing the Paroches, ark cover, turned to the gathering and spoke for fifteen seconds! He said, "I am declaring to everyone assembled, as I stand in front of the Aron Kodesh, that I absolutely forbid anyone from battling on my behalf. My honor is my honor — and it will remain my honor, if everyone acts appropriately and does not take sides.

Whoever does not obey me has no place in my bais ha'medrash." The Rebbe then descended the podium and left the bais ha'medrash.

A few hours later, the Rebbe asked his gabbai, attendant, to take him to the rabbi's home. Word of the Rebbe's response had already circulated throughout the community. The Rebbe arrived at the rabbi's home and ascended the steps to his apartment. He knocked lightly on the door until the rabbi himself answered. Ashen-faced, the rabbi realized who was standing before him. Words were not necessary, nor would they suffice. It was action that was needed. The Bobover Rebbe took the rabbi in both his arms, embraced and kissed him. He said, "You may go to any one of my chassidim and they will attest to the fact that I harbor no ill feelings towards you. As once we were friends, we will continue to remain friends."

Rav Zilberstein notes that the Bobover Rebbe left this world on Rosh Chodesh Av, the same yahrtzeit as Aharon HaKohen. They had one thing in common: ohaiv shalom v'rodef shalom; they were both individuals who loved peace and pursued peace. The common thread that coursed between them was their love of all Jews and unswerving desire to promote harmony within Klal Yisrael.