

## And you shall discern from among the entire people, men of accomplishment, G-d-fearing people, men of truth, people who despise money. (18:21)

Yisro advised Moshe *Rabbeinu* to seek Judges who possessed four exemplary attributes; most important, they were seeking *anshei chayil*, men of accomplishment. *Rashi* interprets accomplishment as referring to men of means who would not be swayed, who could resist pressure, thus enabling them to render their judgment not subject to external influence. *Sforno* interprets *chayil* to mean men who possess good judgment, common sense, and the ability to recognize when truth is being related and when it is not. Interestingly, after sifting through the ranks of the people, he found numerous *anshei chayil*, which is a strong indication of the overriding significance to be attributed to the ability to judge with common sense. This in no way ignores the other attributes. How far can one get in life, however, without *seichel*, common sense?

The *Mechilta* interprets *anshei chayil* to mean *baalei avtachah*, men upon whom one can rely, trustworthy people who are always there when needed (author's extended definition). What connection does *anshei chayil* have with reliability? *Chayil* is defined as valorous, with the various synonyms that fall under the rubric of valor. Reliability is not one of them. *Horav Baruch Dov Povarsky, Shlita*, quotes from Shlomo *HaMelech's* magnum opus on the *Eishes Chayil*, Woman of Valor (*Mishlei* 31:10), in which he describes the various exemplary attributes of the woman who has achieved this distinction. Shlomo *Hamelech* begins with his famous question: *Eishes Chayil mi yimtza*, "A woman of valor, who can find?" a question that indicates that such a woman is truly a rarity. Toward the end of the homily on womanhood, however, he states: *Rabos banos asu chayil*; "Many daughters have done valiantly, a statement that indicates that many women are capable – and achieve the distinction – of *chayil*."

The *Rosh Yeshivah* distinguishes between *asu chayil* and one who has earned the right to the appellation, *eishes chayil*. One who performs acts of valor, good deeds, is to be commended, but, for all intents and purposes, it might be a one-time deal or based upon convenience or comfort. It does not define the identity (so to speak) of the woman until she is to be relied upon to act in this manner always. It is who she is. Her essence is *chayil*. Such a person is *mi yimtza*, rare to be found.

With this idea in mind, the *Rosh Yeshivah* approaches *anshei chayil* as *baalei avtachah*, men of reliability. They do not come to the fore consistently, only when it is convenient. They are consistent in their *chayil*. A leader must be consistent, decisive, never vacillating and unambiguous. Moshe *Rabbeinu* discovered that men of quality who maintain consistency throughout, have indeed a vital, but rare, attribute. Such men must comprise our leadership, because one who is not reliable is incapable of leading.

Veritably, this quality is related to Hashem. *Chosamo shel HaKadosh Baruch Hu emes*, "The seal

of Hashem is truth.” We are used to translating *emes* as true/truth in the narrow western vernacular to mean that something which is conformable to an essential reality is considered to be true. In Hebrew vernacular, *emes* means being true to one’s word (trustworthy, reliable), adhering to a commitment. In his commentary to *Shemos* 6:3, *U’Shemi Hashem lo nadaati lahem*, “But through My Name Hashem, I did not become known to them,” *Rashi* interprets this as: “I was not recognized by them in My aspect of truth, because of which I am named Hashem, which implies *ne’eman l’ameis Devarai*, “I am faithful to uphold My word.” We derive from *Rashi* that *emes* means to uphold one’s word. This is an essential quality that must be part and parcel of leadership, without which one is deficient in the *middah*, attribute, of *emes*, truth.