

## And Aharon was silent. (10:3)

*Horav David, zl, m'Bohush* (eldest son of *Horav Yosef Friedman*, son of the saintly *Horav Yisrael* of Ruzhin), was a unique personality, noted for his piety, scholarship, and humility. Although he did not assume the position as *Rebbe*, he was deeply revered as a *tzaddik*, and he served as a spiritual guide to many. He died during his father's lifetime. In the court of Bohush, two *gabbaim*, aides, assisted the *Rebbe*: *Rav Avraham Chaim* and *Rav Avraham Mordechai*. The second *gabbai* (*Rav Avraham Mordechai*) was extremely close with *Rav David*. Thus, when he was *niftar*, passed away, *Rav Avraham Mordechai* stood by his *aron*, coffin, and wailed uncontrollably. All attempts to quiet him failed. When the holy *Rebbe* (the father) walked into the room, he said, "Take him from the room; he is disturbing me. I must recite the blessing *Baruch Dayan HaEmes*, 'Blessed be the Truthful Judge' (recited by a mourner) to the *niggun*, tune, of *Shalom Aleichem*." (This festive tune, which we sing at the beginning of the Friday night meal, is a joyous welcome to the *Shabbos*.)

During the *shivah*, seven days of mourning, people came from all over Romania to comfort the *Rebbe*. He did not speak at all. On the last day of *shivah*, as he was about to rise from his mourning, he related the following two Torah thoughts: "When a person receives a *pikadon*, a deposit (item to watch for safekeeping) and returns said item in as perfect condition as when he received it, he is considered a *shomer ne'eman*, a trusted watchman. In such a case, the *mafkid* who gave him the item to guard is in his debt. Certainly, if he returns the item in even better condition from when he received it, the *mafkid* is greatly in his debt. Clearly, I have returned the *pikadon* given to me (my son) in even greater condition than when I received it."

The second thought was based on the idea that the world is composed of four categories of Creation: *domeim*, inanimate objects, ie, rocks, water, soil (representing stability and foundational existence); *tzomeiach*, growing vegetation, including plants, trees and all flora (which grow and reproduce, but lack mobility and consciousness); *chai*, living creatures, all animals etc. which possess movement and instinct, but lack higher reasoning or speech (representing vitality and the pursuit of survival); *medaber*, speaking creatures, human beings, endowed with the capacity to think, speak and have free-will (representing the pinnacle of Creation, tasked with a unique spiritual role).

"Noticeably," said the *Rebbe*, "if three of these things 'break,' (*tzomeiach*, *chai*, *medaber*), such as the plant shrivels and dies, the living creature dies, or the speaking creature dies, all descend from their original conceived position/mission and are now like a *domeim*, an inanimate object. Concerning the *domeim*, however, even when it is broken – no change occurs. It had been inanimate before the break, and it continues to be inanimate afterward. This is the praise the Torah lavished on Aharon. Even after experiencing the tragedy of his sons' untimely deaths, he suffered (what we might consider) a break, it left no impression, no change, nothing transformed from the Aharon 'before' to the Aharon 'after.' He continued in the same measure of service/acceptance to Hashem. *Vayidom* – he was inanimate, unchanging, as before."