

Bobbis and Zeidys in general, and this Bobbi and Zeidy in particular, are routinely accused of telling their children and grandchildren that everything in life is a teaching lesson. פרשה שלה is a prime example of this. As the famous רש"י in the beginning of שלה says, what does the מרגלים have to do with the צרעת of Miriam in the end of last week's פרשה? They didn't see what happened to Miriam and take note of it. And therefore they fell into the same trap, they didn't learn מוסר, they did not learn the example that they should be on guard and be a little bit better. That a very well-known vort.

I'd like to say something that's not so quite well-known from R' Chaim Kanievsky זצ"ל (13:16). משה להושע בן נון היה פשוט. R' Chaim has a unique פשוט here, which I thought would share with you, and it comes along with a terrific story. עניו says that when משה saw that that הושע was a very big עניו, he changed his name יהושע. What does his humility have to do with changing his name?

R' Chaim brings down a פשט from, of all people, a chassidish Rebbe, the Apter Rav, also known as the שער יסודות ספר. His name is Avraham Yehoshua Heshel from Apt. The מבי"ט says in a ספר called שערי יסודות that תחיית המתים will occur alphabetically. First those whose names begin with an א' will get up, followed by those with a ב', and וייטער. There's going to be only be one exception, and those are the ענווים, people who are humble, will be the first to have תחיית המתים, regardless of what the first letter of their name starts with. When משה wanted to change יהושע's name to daven for his success and call him יהושע, he was afraid that this would have a negative consequence. Initially, his name started with a ה', but now it's going to start with a ו', which would push him down by five letters. When משיח comes, he's going to lose his place in the order of תחיית המתים. However, once משה saw his ענויות, his humility, he didn't hesitate. יהושע would suffer no ill effects by his name change since his status as an עני would guarantee him priority in any case.

Someone once brought R' Chaim a copy of a newly printed ספר that discussed the positive attributes of various אמוראים, תנאים, and תלמידי חכמים. R' Chaim went through it and his eye fell upon an entry for an אמורא called עולא בר אבא, who was praised in the גמרא as פה עמוד דף פה סנהדרין: “עולא בר אבא was humble and modest, he enters and leaves quietly, he’s constantly learning תורה but does not take any credit for himself.” The author noted that we do not find עולא בר אבא’s torah thoughts recorded anywhere in ספרי חז"ל, and he explained that because of his extreme humility, he did not want to even have the credit of being quoted by name, willingly forgoing the reward of having his lips move in his grave, שפתותיו דובבות, when his תורה is quoted in his name, in order to maintain his modest silence.

R' Chaim immediately noted, of course, that the author seemed to have forgotten the גמרא כתובות דף ע"ד, עמוד א, where עולא בר אבא is mentioned by name as having transmitted the teachings of prior generations. R' Chaim then tells the following story. In his later years, the רב חזן איש used to take a short walk outdoors every day on the advice of his doctor. He had a regular route from his house until the end of block and then he would walk back, doctor's orders.

One day, a new resident of the area noticed the איש walking back and forth. Not knowing who he was, he assumed he was an unemployed man just strolling around to kill time. "Why are you wasting your time just walking around?" the stranger rebuked him. "Go do something productive." The איש was not fazed by this undeserved attack and calmly asked, "And what do you suggest that I do?" Not knowing the intellectual capacity of the person he was addressing, the stranger retorted, "At least say some תהילים." From that day on, R' Chaim said, the איש added reciting a פרק of תהילים to his already packed daily schedule. For this is how the true גדולי תורה conducted themselves, humbly accepting rebuke and direction from any quarter, no matter how baseless. If any of us פשוט people are told how to do something better, or we're corrected or rebuked by parents, relatives, friends, certainly by our children, we take it personally. We get very upset. We get very, "You're telling me what to do?" But we can learn a fantastic lesson from this story. If the איש could accept rebuke with humility, then so can we.

