

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's Parsha Chavei-Sorah, the Torah speaks about how Avrohom Avinu (Abraham) purchased a burial plot for his beloved wife and Aishes Chayil Sorah Emainu. The Torah takes great pains to detail Avrohom's purchase from the local populace.

Perhaps the Torah's intention in this regard is to teach us a lesson of how we must conduct ourselves when dealing with non-Jews. Avrohom Avinu was very meticulous in dealing in business with the non-Jews, in order to make the best impression on them. The Talmud in fact teaches us that when a Jew behaves the way he is supposed to, he causes others to say, "how great is G-d," in that the Jews are Hashem's chosen people. (Yoma 86a) The following story illustrates the power of "Kiddush Hashem" - behavior which makes Hashem 'look good.'

Yaakov Leiner was driving through Connecticut on his way home to New York when his car broke down. It was almost evening and there was no chance of getting the car repaired until the next day.

Yaakov found his way to the nearest motel and checked in for the night. Tired and thirsty, he entered the motel lounge and headed for the soda machine. Heading in the same direction was a burly young man, sporting a leather jacket and jeans, with a motorcycle helmet in his hand. The other man took one look at the yarmulka-sporting Yaakov and jeered, "Does that thing on your head keep you good and warm?"

Yaakov shot back: "Have I bothered you in any way? Did I do anything to you that should make you want to ridicule me?" As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Yaakov regretted having said them. Had he ignored the fellow's remarks, the incident might have ended right there. Now that he had answered back, his antagonist would surely have more to say.

"Why didn't you keep your mouth closed?" Yaakov chided himself. His antagonist did have more to say: "I'm sorry," the non-Jew responded. "You're right. You did nothing to me and I was wrong for starting up with you."

Yaakov could not believe his ears. He was even more surprised by the fellow's next words. "Come," he said, "let me buy you a soda and we'll sit down and talk." They sat down opposite each other. Yaakov recited a brochah and sipped his soda as his new-found acquaintance began talking.

"My grandfather always used to tell me that I should be nice to Jews. He fought in the Second World War and had a very good experience with a Jew like yourself. The man was a Jewish chaplain in my grandfather's regiment. A real nice, sincere type. My grandfather liked him a lot.

After the war, the chaplain dedicated his every free moment to finding Jewish children who had been hidden by non-Jews during the war. A lot of these non-Jew families were not too keen on giving the children back. One day, the chaplain returned to base looking very upset.

"What's wrong?" my grandfather asked. The chaplain replied, "There are some families who I know for a fact have Jewish children, but when I went to speak to them, they slammed the door in my face."

At this point, Yaakov, who had been listening intently to every word, interrupted. "Allow me, please, to finish your story..." Yaakov said to the non-Jew, who nodded in agreement.

"Your grandfather," Yaakov began speaking to the non-Jew, "suggested the following to the Jewish Chaplain: 'You know what, Rabbi? Tomorrow, when you go looking for those children, my buddy and I are going to accompany you.'"

The next day, the chaplain knocked on someone's door. It was opened halfway, but when the person saw the Rabbi standing there, he started to slam the door shut — but your grandfather's foot got in the way. "Just a minute, buddy!" he said, making no attempt to conceal his rifle. "Don't you go slamming the door. The Rabbi came here for a reason and you'd better listen to what he has to say!"

"And thanks to those two soldiers," Yaakov concluded, "the chaplain succeeded in returning a number of children to their Jewish roots." The motorcyclist was sitting open-mouthed, seemingly in shock.

Finally, the non-Jew asked, "How did you know what I was going to say?"

"Simple," came the reply. "That chaplain was my uncle and he told me the story." Yaakov waited a few moments before continuing. "My friend, I don't know for sure why G-d caused you and me to meet tonight, but I know one thing — it happened for a reason. Perhaps it was a way of telling you that if you ever find yourself in a situation where you can help a Jew, be sure to help him, just as your grandfather did." The two shook hands and parted with a deeper appreciation for Hashem's wondrous world! **Good**

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