



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT VAYECHI

From Failure to Fuel

A vice president of an illustrious company once made a \$1 million mistake, losing the company a staggering sum on a critical deal. Wracked with guilt and shame, he assumed his career was over. Summoning his courage, he walked into the CEO's office with his resignation letter in hand. "I know I failed," he said, his voice heavy with regret. "This mistake was too big to recover from. I understand I'm being fired, so here's my resignation."

What happened next left him stunned. Instead of firing him, the CEO calmly took the resignation letter, tore it into pieces, and tossed it into the trash. "Why would I fire you?" the CEO asked. "I just spent \$1 million educating you. That mistake wasn't just a loss; it was an investment in your growth. I know you've learned from it, and I know you'll never make that mistake again. Do you think I'm going to let my competition benefit from the experience you've gained here? Not a chance. You're staying right here and putting that hard-earned knowledge to work." [1]

Towards the end of the parsha, after Yaakov Avinu had passed away, the brothers were fearful that Yosef still harbored negative feelings towards them. Despite the immense suffering and pain he had endured, Yosef saw the bigger scheme of things and assured them that he forgave them wholeheartedly. He hadn't come to obsess over the mistakes of his brothers. His healthy perspective, cultivated with years of emuna, allowed him to see past the betrayal for what it really was: G-d's way of orchestrating his ultimate rise to save the world.

With a shift in our perspective, too, we can begin to see our own mistakes not as failures, but opportunities for growth. By reframing challenges as steppingstones rather than roadblocks, we unlock the potential for resilience and learning.

[1] Shared by R' Yossi Bensoussan

The Burnout Cure

"So he blessed them that day, saying: 'By you shall Israel bless, saying: *May G-d make you like Efraim and like Menashe...*'" (Genesis 48:20)

Simply understood, the words "ויברכם ביום ההוא" [*he blessed them on that day*] is merely telling us that it happened to be that Yaakov blessing Yosef's children was "on that day" that Yosef brought them to visit their grandfather. However, there is so much more profundity behind those few words. The Slonimer Rebbe once pointed out that "ויברכם ביום ההוא" is not simply marking the date of Yaakov's blessing; that itself was the blessing.

Read homiletically, the verse is conveying: "ויברכם" – Yaakov blessed them that they should live their lives with the outlook of "ביום ההוא" – fully living each day independently as a separate life. In other words, his blessing was that they utilize the potential of each and every day – that every day, they should make the best of whatever situation they find themselves dealing with. Yaakov was not only blessing them, but also teaching them a fundamental aspect to achieving success in life. A person should have his mindset in "ביום ההוא" – i.e. TODAY! We often get distracted and sometimes even overwhelmed by where we think we can or should be right now, failing to appreciate the current moment and living in the here and now. Every day is a gift – albeit a different, new one. To be successful, our Sages teach, we mustn't worry about what will be tomorrow or what happened the day before. Live today! The idea is to tailor your goals to the reality of each day. When you're feeling strong and optimistic, set a high bar and go for it. But on days when life feels heavy and struggles weigh you down, be kind to yourself and set more manageable expectations. Bad days are natural and nothing to feel guilty about. Even if an inner voice – or the yetzer hara – pushes you to overreach, simply do what you can and take satisfaction in your effort. This is what many spiritual giants and masters of *chassidut* have emphasized: utilize the "good" days to push yourself and boost productivity, and take the hard days to appreciate how much you have been accomplishing and how far you've come in life's journey. The Satan may attempt to pushing towards burnout and eventual failure, but the approach outlined here reflects the wisdom of staying attuned to your soul and its needs each day, a distinct "ביום ההוא".

The Klausenberger Rebbe once remarked that he knew of a few people that grew to be extremely successful in their Torah study and *avodat Hashem* while many others who had such potential didn't quite reach that level. Addressing the core difference between the two groups, he explained that it was their outlook that differed. The first group had set their goals for each day, utilizing their strengths to achieve success day by day, while the second had only set long-term aspirations, making resolutions at the beginning of each year but failing to establish daily regimens suited to meet those goals. When they found trouble living up to their high standards, they felt defeated and gave up. It was those who played the game day by day that ultimately achieved success and maximized their potential.

May we, too, internalize the blessing of "ביום ההוא".

(Based on a *d'var Torah* shared by R' Menachem Goldberger)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rahamim Ben Shifra Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol Chana Bat Malka David Ben Rivka
Avigayil Bat Tehillah Noach Ephraim Ben Elka Sarah Rena Bat Bakol Ariella Bat Hila Yitzhak Ben Naama

"Not every closed door is locked. Push."