

## TORAH THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

### PARSHAS VAYIGASH

Copied from AISH HATORAH

“Keep Smiling!”

Pharaoh said to Yaakov, “How many are the days of the years of your life?” (Genesis 47:8)

Pharaoh asked Yaakov, who appeared to be extremely old, “How old are you?” Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz<sup>1</sup> expounds on this verse, explaining that Yaakov was punished with a shorter lifespan because he looked older than his years. God was telling him, “There was no reason for you to age from the ordeals of Yoseph, Dina and Eisav. You should have had faith and been in a state of happiness!”

David, a jolly young fellow, got into a yellow cab in downtown Manhattan and began conversing with the driver. After being on the road the whole day, the driver was not in the best of moods and had no interest in talking to David. However, due to David’s cheerful personality, he transformed the driver’s mood within minutes into a pleasant one. Finishing work, the cab driver came home and to his wife’s surprise this was the first time ever that she had seen him come home in a good mood. The two of them spent an enjoyable evening together. The next morning his wife went to work and was still in high spirits from the night before. She didn’t fight with her co-workers and nothing seemed to bother her. Tony, her boss, who usually came home after work with a migraine from listening to his employees quarrel, came home that night calm, with a pleasant attitude. He decided to reunite with his son, Jim, whom he hadn’t spoken to for months, due to his hectic schedule.

He was walking with Jim and noticed that he was being quiet, with tears streaming down his face. Alarmed, Tony asked, “What’s wrong? Are you okay?”

His son slowly took a crumpled paper out of his pocket and handed it to his father. His father opened the note and it read as follows:

To whom this may concern: I committed suicide because no one in the world cares about me. --Jim

Tony looked at him with tears in his eyes and put his arm around him. Choking on his tears Jim explained, “For the past few months I was lonely and depressed. I felt no one cared about me and I planned to commit suicide. Three minutes before the jump I got your phone call that you would love to spend time with me...!”

Joy is contagious. Just walking around with a positive attitude you can affect many lives. A smile enriches those who see it and those who give it; it takes just a moment, but it lasts forever. It is a form of sunshine which nurtures, sustains, and heals, and can be produced on demand. It is needed by all: rich, poor, for the home, business, and in the street. A smile costs a little and creates a lot. Scientists say that it takes 13 muscles to smile and 112 muscles to frown. Why work so hard?

### NOTES

1. Sichas Mussar pg. 124