

## The Shortest Verse in Torah

A chasid by the name of Reb Yaakov Yitzchak of Brizin once came to see Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Radoshitz with a bitter plaint: his offspring had all died in their childhood. The rebbe told him that when his wife would next be close to the time of childbirth, he should visit him again. When his wife entered her seventh month, the chasid duly journeyed to Radoshitz. The rebbe asked him for the name of his late father, and when he answered "Yirmeyahu", he told him to call the son who was to be born: Chaim (meaning "life") Yirmeyahu.

Before the chasid left town he visited the rebbe once more, according to custom, to receive his farewell wishes. The rebbe offered him his blessing that the son to be born should survive into maturity, and concluded with a verse from the Torah: "And the sons of Dan were Chushim". (Gen. 46:23) Not being able to muster the courage to ask for the meaning of this strange addendum, the chasid took his leave and returned home, and when his wife gave birth he named the infant according to the rebbe's instructions. The chasid was burning with curiosity to discover the meaning of the rebbe's mystifying quotation...

All this time, understandably enough, the chasid was burning with curiosity to discover the meaning of the rebbe's mystifying quotation. He repeated it to every sage and chasid in his town, and they all excelled each other in the ingenuity of their interpretations. None of them satisfied him. He wrote to his brother-in-law who was a rabbi in Pshischah, but he and his learned colleagues were as baffled as the local sages. After a whole year had passed fruitlessly, he posed the riddle afresh to the scholars of his hometown, and this time they agreed to one interpretation, as follows.

Paradoxically, the verse in question employs the plural form - "The sons of Dan were" - even though Dan had only one son, Chushim. The Talmud explains that this plural form is a hint at Dan's later posterity, for through the offspring of Chushim, Dan became the progenitor of a large tribe. This, suggested the Chasidim, was the import of the rebbe's quotation.

They proved to be right. Chaim Yirmeyahu remained indeed an only child, but with the passage of years his seed bore fruit and the family multiplied and flourished.

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Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sippurei Chassidim by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin and other oral sources

Biographical note:

Rabbi Yissachar Dov [1765-18 Sivan 1843], the "Sabba Kadisha" ("Holy Grandfather") of Radoshitz, was a disciple of the Seer of Lublin and of the Holy Yid of Peshischa. Famed as a miracle maker, he lived in poverty as a simple tutor.

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