



**Parsha Hayyei Sarah**  
**I Kings 1:1-31**  
**October 25, 2013 / 21 Cheshvan 5774**

I know that none of you reading my commentary this week have ever experienced sibling rivalry, power struggles or self-centeredness, but this week's Haftarah includes it all. King David is old. His days are numbered, opening a Pandora's Box. Who would succeed him? His friends and enemies jockeyed for position, including his sons. And you thought that you have tzuris. This Haftarah reinforces the saying: "Where there's a will, there are.....relatives."

David's son Adonijah boasted that he would be king. David had never set him straight. Therefore, until Batsheva stepped in, to request that he make his choice clear, he was leaving his sons to fight it out. Not a good idea! Some would be disappointed after he made his decision, but it had to be done. Therefore, Batsheva is the hero this week. Power and money are seductive. We must be careful in how we leave them for the future -- guiding the future in the right direction even if it doesn't guarantee that it will flow smoothly.

I once shared that a father's will left the bulk of his estate to his daughter and a miniscule sum to his son. She had taken care of him for the last few years. The son called or visited on rare occasions even though he lived local. The son was outraged. Brother and sister stopped speaking. Years later he apologized and pleaded to restore their relationship. The sister agreed but commented, "I can forgive but I can't forget."

The daughter can be faulted for not sharing the will equally. She could have avoided resentment and anger. The brother also shared the blame by not recognizing his sister's devotion to their father. Still, the father was primarily at fault -- forgetting to communicate clearly to his children. His will created fierce antagonism. He could have done better for the sake of shalom bayit (peace in the house). He allowed a will to destroy his family.

King David had a more complicated issue. Only one son could be king. Still, he needed to be more proactive, guiding the future of his family. Until Batsheva stepped in he was too passive. This created the atmosphere for sibling rivalry and power struggle.

So many families have similar issues, in both making decisions and in reacting. We aren't always able to forget after the fact. It's hard to do. A husband once told me, "My wife has a perfect memory. She never lets me forget anything that I've done." Not such an admirable trait, because by remembering every hurt, we place an intolerable burden on ourselves and on others.

We need to cultivate the opposite; take the most worthwhile memories and allow them to remain in our hearts. We would benefit enormously through selective positive memory.

We may never forget all of our negative experiences, but, it's worth trying. We all hurt each other. If we never move past our hurts, we cut ourselves off from those who are most precious to us.

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